

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

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALLUM, James	Fort Garry-Riverview	NDP
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	NDP
BINDLE, Kelly	Thompson	PC
CLARKE, Eileen, Hon.	Agassiz	PC
COX, Cathy, Hon.	River East	PC
CULLEN, Cliff, Hon.	Spruce Woods	PC
CURRY, Nic	Kildonan	PC
DRIEDGER, Myrna, Hon.	Charleswood	PC
EICHLER, Ralph, Hon.	Lakeside	PC
EWASKO, Wayne	Lac du Bonnet	PC
FIELDING, Scott, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
FLETCHER, Steven, Hon.	Assiniboia	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, April 12, 2017

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

Please be seated.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Madam Speaker: Introduction of bills?

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs

Fourth Report

Mrs. Sarah Guillemard (Chairperson): Madam Speaker, I wish to present the Fourth Report of the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs.

Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): Your Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs—

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS presents the following as its Fourth Report.

Meetings

Your Committee met on the following occasions in the Legislative Building

- October 6, 2016 (1st Session – 41st Legislature)
- April 3, 2017 (2nd Session – 41st Legislature)

Matters under Consideration

- Recommendation for the appointment of the Children's Advocate

Committee Membership

Committee Membership for the October 6, 2016 meeting:

- Mrs. GUILLEMARD

- Ms. FONTAINE
- Ms. KLASSEN
- Mr. LAGASSÉ (Vice-Chairperson)
- Ms. LATHLIN
- Mr. MARTIN
- Mr. MICHALESKI
- Ms. MORLEY-LECOMTE
- Mr. REYES
- Mr. SMITH
- Mr. WIEBE

Your Committee elected Mrs. GUILLEMARD as the Chairperson at the October 6, 2016 meeting.

Committee Membership for the April 3, 2017 meeting:

- Hon. Mr. FIELDING
- Mrs. GUILLEMARD (Chairperson)
- Ms. FONTAINE
- Ms. KLASSEN
- Mr. LAGASSÉ (Vice-Chairperson)
- Mr. MARTIN
- Ms. MORLEY-LECOMTE
- Mr. SMITH
- Mr. SWAN
- Mr. WIEBE
- Mr. YAKIMOSKI

Motions agreed to at the October 6, 2016 Standing Committee meeting:

- THAT a sub-committee of the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs be struck to manage the process of hiring a new Children's Advocate for the Province of Manitoba, under the terms and conditions as follows:

(a) the subcommittee consist of four Government Members, two Official Opposition Members and one Independent Member;

(b) the subcommittee have the authority to call their own meetings, the ability to meet in camera, and be able to undertake duties it deems necessary in order to fulfil its responsibilities in the hiring process;

(c) the subcommittee may only report back to the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs with

a recommendation that has been agreed to by all members; and

(d) the Committees Branch staff as well as the Legislative Assembly Human Resource Services staff be authorize to attend all meetings of the subcommittee.

Motions agreed to at the April 3, 2017 Standing Committee meeting:

- THAT the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs now meet in camera.
- THAT the report and recommendations of the Sub-Committee be received. (in camera)
- THAT the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs recommends to the President of Executive Council that Daphne Penrose be appointed as the Children's Advocate. (in camera)

SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT

At the April 3, 2017 meeting of the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs, the Sub-Committee presented the following report.

Meetings:

Your Sub-Committee met on the following occasions:

- December 14, 2016 at 10:30 a.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building
- December 21, 2016 at 10:00 a.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building
- January 19, 2017 at 1:30 p.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building
- February 2, 2017 at 9:30 a.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building
- February 27, 2017 at 9:30 a.m. in Room 302 – 386 Broadway (Legislative Assembly Human Resources Services Office)
- March 6, 2017 at 6:00 p.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building

Matters under Consideration:

- Recruitment and Selection of the Children's Advocate

Sub-Committee Membership:

Sub-Committee Membership for the December 14, 2016 meeting:

- Ms. FONTAINE
- Mrs. GUILLEMARD
- Ms. KLASSEN

- Mr. LAGASSÉ
- Ms. LATHLIN
- Mr. MARTIN
- Mr. SMITH

Your Sub-Committee elected Mrs. GUILLEMARD as the Chairperson and Mr. MARTIN as the Vice-Chairperson during the meeting on December 14, 2016.

Sub-Committee Membership for the December 21, 2016 meeting:

- Ms. FONTAINE
- Mrs. GUILLEMARD (Chairperson)
- Ms. KLASSEN
- Mr. LAGASSÉ
- Mr. MARTIN (Vice-Chairperson)
- Mr. SMITH

Sub-Committee Membership for the January 19, 2017 meeting:

- Ms. FONTAINE
- Mrs. GUILLEMARD (Chairperson)
- Ms. KLASSEN
- Mr. LAGASSÉ
- Ms. LATHLIN
- Mr. MARTIN (Vice-Chairperson)
- Mr. SMITH

Sub-Committee Membership for the February 2, 2017 meeting:

- Ms. FONTAINE
- Mrs. GUILLEMARD (Chairperson)
- Ms. KLASSEN
- Mr. LAGASSÉ
- Ms. LATHLIN
- Mr. MARTIN (Vice-Chairperson)
- Mr. SMITH

Sub-Committee Membership for the February 27, 2017 meeting:

- Mrs. GUILLEMARD (Chairperson)
- Ms. KLASSEN
- Mr. LAGASSÉ
- Ms. LATHLIN
- Mr. MARTIN (Vice-Chairperson)

Sub-Committee Membership for the March 6, 2017 meeting:

- Mrs. GUILLEMARD (Chairperson)
- Ms. KLASSEN
- Mr. LAGASSÉ

- Ms. LATHLIN
- Mr. MARTIN (Vice-Chairperson)

Staff present for Sub-Committee meetings:

- Deanna Wilson, Director, Legislative Assembly Human Resource Services
- Monique Grenier, Clerk Assistant/Committee Clerk
- Andrea Signorelli, Clerk Assistant/Committee Clerk

Sub-Committee Agreements:

Your Sub-Committee reached the following agreements during the meeting on December 14, 2016:

- The Sub-Committee reviewed and adopted the following documents prepared by Legislative Assembly Human Resources Services:
 - Advertisement plan
 - Advertisement
- The Sub-Committee adopted the following "Terms of Reference"

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

Terms of Reference for Hiring of Independent Officers of the Assembly

December 14, 2016

Purpose:

On October 6, 2016, the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs Committee passed a motion to strike a Sub-Committee to manage the process of hiring a new Children's Advocate for the Province of Manitoba. The Sub-Committee consisting of four Government Members, two Official Opposition Members and one Independent Member has the authority to call its own meetings, the ability to meet in camera, and be able to undertake duties it deems necessary in order to fulfil its responsibilities in the hiring process. The Sub-Committee will be assisted in their duties by the Committees Branch staff and the Legislative Assembly Human Resource Services staff who are authorized to attend all meetings of the Sub-Committee.

Roles and Responsibilities:

1. The Sub-Committee will devise a hiring process which includes an advertising plan, a paper screening process, an interview process and a selection process that incorporates the use of reference checks.

2. The hiring process will include these provisions:
 - a) All applications will remain with Legislative Assembly Human Resource Services.
 - b) The Sub-Committee will conduct all interviews.
3. Legislative Assembly Human Resource Services will conduct reference checks. The Sub-Committee will draft an advertisement, paper screening criteria and selection criteria.
4. The Sub-Committee must complete the hiring process within six months of the vacancy or expected vacancy of the position as set out in clause 8.1(2)(b) of **The Child and Family Services Act**.
5. The Sub-Committee will provide a Report to the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs that includes a recommendation for a new Children's Advocate for the Province of Manitoba to the President of the Executive Council.

Your Sub-Committee reached the following agreement during the meeting on December 21, 2016:

- The Sub-Committee reviewed and adopted the following revised documents prepared by Legislative Assembly Human Resources Services:
 - Advertisement plan
 - Advertisement

Your Sub-Committee reached the following agreement during the meeting on January 19, 2017:

- The Sub-Committee reviewed and adopted the following documents prepared by Legislative Assembly Human Resources Services:
 - Paper Screening Criteria
 - Selection Criteria
 - Interview questions

Your Sub-Committee reached the following agreement during the meeting on February 2, 2017:

- To interview three candidates for the position of Children's Advocate.

Your Sub-Committee reached the following agreement during the meeting on March 6, 2017:

- It was agreed to recommend to the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs that Daphne Penrose be appointed as the Children's Advocate.

Sub-Committee Activities:

Your Sub-Committee considered applications for the position of the Children's Advocate as follows:

- Fifty-three applications were received for the position.
- Three individuals were interviewed for the position on February 27, 2017 and March 6, 2017.

Mrs. Guillemard: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Seine River (Ms. Morley-Lecomte), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Madam Speaker: I'm pleased to table the annual report of the Legislative Assembly Management Commission for the year ending March 31st, 2017. Copies of the report have been placed on members' desks.

Ministerial statements?

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**Annual Skills Competition Participants**

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): Tomorrow, the 20th Annual Skills Manitoba Competition will be underway at Red River College campus. Over 500 students from across the province will compete to show off their skills in everything from cooking to carpentry.

Among those competitors are three Frontier Collegiate Institute students who are with us in the gallery here today: Leon Spence and Robert Brightnose from O-Pipon-Na-Piwin Cree Nation at South Indian Lake; and Northwind Colomb of the Mathias Colomb Cree Nation at Pukatawagan.

Leon and Robert are in grade 12 and currently enrolled in FCI's power mechanics program, specializing in automotive equipment. They already put the skills that they've learned to good use running a small repair business back in their home community during the summers, fixing everything from boats to cars. After graduation, they are looking to further their education and get an apprenticeship to achieve their Red Seal certification.

Northwind is in his second semester of the carpentry program at FCI. Tomorrow, he'll be putting his skills he's learned to the test, competing in the

carpentry section of the competition. This one-year program has allowed students like Northwind to learn skills like blueprint reading, roofing, cabinet-making. He started out with smaller projects like garden sheds, but recently he and his classmates have begun construction on much bigger project: a 760-square-foot, ready-to-move house.

The achievements of Leon, Robert and Northwind highlight the success of vocational programs like the ones offered at Frontier Collegiate Institute, and the commitment and support of their parents, Arvel and Gary Spence, Suzette and Marvin Brightnose, Marvin Colomb and Helen [phonetic] Castel, as well as their instructors Mike Wesner and Sheldon Yaremchuk.

On behalf of our NDP caucus, I would like to congratulate Leon, Robert and Northwind on all of your success so far and wish you the best of luck in tomorrow's skills competition. I know you'll do Frontier Collegiate Institute—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

An Honourable Member: Madam Speaker?

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Flin Flon.

Mr. Lindsey: Madam Speaker, I ask for leave to have the students' names, their parents' names, their instructors' names and Frontier Collegiate Institute officials read into the official Hansard transcript.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave to have the names allowed into Hansard? [Agreed]

Students: Leon Spence, Robert Brightnose, Northwind Colomb.

Parents: Arvel and Gary Spence, Suzette and Marvin Brightnose, Marvin Colomb and Helena Castel.

Instructors: Sheldon Yaremchuk, automotive technologies instructor; Mike Wesner, building construction instructor.

Frontier Collegiate Institute Officials: Tyson McGillivray, assistant superintendent, senior years and career program; Grant Krueger, technical vocational co-ordinator; Darren Kinden, superintendent Area 4.

All Seniors Care Games

Mr. Scott Johnston (St. James): Today, I would like to acknowledge the Sturgeon Creek Retirement

Residence, located on the banks of Sturgeon Creek in the heart of sunny St. James.

Today, we have, as guests to the Legislative Assembly, 10 resident seniors who have recently completed the 8th Annual All Seniors Care Games.

These games brought out 100 competitors. All residents were engaged physically, mentally and were socially connected to the event.

My colleagues and I, my honourable friends—friend, the member from Kirkfield Park and the member from Assiniboia, have opened these games and had the good fortune to meet these lovely people and witness first-hand their zest for life.

These games are held annually throughout Canada at 28 different retirement properties during the same week. There are eight events where competitors can receive medals and three events that they receive national medals that they get to keep and certainly cherish. These events are Wii bowling, Wii golf, bocce, bridge, whist, cribbage, shuffleboard. The residents also walk non-competitively up to one mile by walking all floor—four floors of their building.

I would like to recognize the seniors' achievements in the 8th Annual All Seniors Care Games in sunny St. James: Yvonne Sellers, 90 years old; Keith Dyson, 92 years old; Agnes Kennedy, 101 years old; Nancy Ford, 84 years old; Joan Wilson, 81 years old; Al Woods, 95 years old; Bette Brown, 87 years old; Olive Robinson, 90 years old; Vi Miller, 90 years old; and Vera Hogg, 95 years old.

Accompanied today with them is the director of health and wellness, Karen 'Signal'—Single and her assistant, Alison Dreger.

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Kyden Turner

Mr. Bob Lagassé (Dawson Trail): Madam Speaker, today I would like to bring attention to my 10-year-old cousin, who by far is one of the strongest preteens I know, especially when it comes towards his attitude in life and the challenges it has presented him so far.

* (13:40)

Kyden Turner was born on December 4, 2006, with an incredibly rare form of muscular dystrophy called Bethlem Ullrich collagen VI congenital muscular dystrophy.

Despite the complications that Kyden's condition possesses to his day-to-day routine, he still maintains a positive outlook on life. Kyden self-describes as funny, smart, artistic, polite and witty. Because of his form of muscular dystrophy, he is only able to attend school for about half of the week. In the face of this, Kyden works extremely hard, and as a result is at the top of his class.

Kyden's resilience and spirit are remarkable. He is rare—he rarely lets things affect him. An example of this is a time when he was in the hospital. He had just had an operation, was in full two leg casts and on pain medication. When the doctor asked him how he was doing, Kyden smiled and said, I'm good.

Kyden says that his outlook on life is to just keep going, and he often tells his mom, if I can do it, you can do it, when she gets discouraged.

Kyden has recently become 2017 youth's ambassador for the Walk for Muscular Dystrophy Winnipeg. Some of his duties will include various speaking engagements and charity work throughout the year.

Madam Speaker, Kyden is an extraordinary young man and his unrelenting positivity and kindness is characteristics we all can hope to cultivate in the face of adversity. And this is what makes Kyden a Dawson Trail hero.

I'd like to ask my fellow members to join me in recognizing Kyden, his mom, Bridgette Lagassé, sister Caléa, grandparents Art and Diane.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Bell's Trailer Hitches

Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise in the rise in the House today to congratulate the Bell family of Headingley who are marking their 100th anniversary of the family business, Bell's Trailer Hitches.

Five generations of Bells have worked at the same location in Headingley on Highway 1. Their customers come as far away as northwestern Ontario and southwestern Manitoba. They're known to the biggest hitch manufacturers in the world, as their business is one of only two in Manitoba that specialize in installing hitches.

The business was started by Robert Bell in 1917, the great-great-grandfather of the current owners, brothers Jack and Craig, who recently took over from

their father, Ken, who now serves as an employee. The shop began by stabling horses, repairing the first vehicles and now fitting hitches on all sizes of vehicles.

When the Bells first opened, the Trans-Canada Highway was still a dirt road, this Legislative Building was under construction, streetcars ruled the city of Winnipeg and people were celebrating Canada's 50th birthday. Just think about that for a moment, Bell's Trailer Hitches have been open for two thirds of Canada's existence.

It is a testament to the hard work and perseverance shown by the Bell family that the business has stood the test of time. These kinds of values embody the spirit of every Manitoba entrepreneur. They're the pillars that stabilize communities across our province.

The longevity of their family business is remarkable given the changes that have occurred, and I'm sure there have been many long days and nights that have kept the family in business.

So, today, not only as their local MLA but as a satisfied customer, I would like to take this—like this Legislature to recognize and congratulate the Bell family on 100 years.

Thank you.

Rodeo Events in Swan River

Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River): I rise in the House today to share some very special events in my constituency of Swan River.

Manitoba is home to many events, and like all community events, requires many volunteers, something our province is known for. I am referring to the triple crown of rodeo events. These include the Swan River high school rodeo, May 12 to 14; provincial high school rodeo, June 9 to 11; and the Northwest Roundup in the last weekend of July.

The Swan Valley High School Rodeo will include local students as well as riders from Saskatchewan, Ontario and North Dakota. Events will include saddle bronc, bull riding, barrel racing, steer wrestling and other featured events like the Little Buckaroos, an attraction for the kids. On Friday night there will be a cowboy-cowgirl prom which will include a graduation ceremony followed by a rodeo dance and crowning of a rodeo queen.

The Manitoba High School Rodeo in June will include a multitude of events that'll give

competitors the opportunity to compete at the Canadian championships.

The finale of the triple crown will be the Northwest Roundup and Exhibition.

Swan has 116 years of rodeo history, beginning in 1901 where diversified farming was the theme. This transitioned into the pony chariot and chuckwagon races and many other rodeo events.

As well, education has always been important, and the 4-H achievements provided this dimension.

For some of us who are old enough to remember, legends like Gordy Tapp, fiddler Al Cherney, The Rhythm Pals, Wilf Carter and Ronnie Prophet have all performed in the long history of the Roundup.

The Swan Lions will be hosting their delicious pancake breakfasts, and Kinsmen Club concession will be popular.

Madam Speaker, Swan is the place to be this summer for rodeo fun and fellowship, so I encourage everyone to put on your rodeo attire and come on down.

Thank you.

Introduction of Guests

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

Seated in the public gallery from Holy Cross School, 49 grade 4 and 5 students under the direction of Danielle Martens. This group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for St. Boniface (Mr. Selinger).

And on behalf of us here, we welcome you to the Manitoba Legislature.

An Honourable Member: Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for The Maples.

Mr. Mohinder Saran (The Maples): I have a point of order.

On April 10th—

Point of Order

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for The Maples, on a point of order.

Mr. Saran: Yes, I am on a point of order.

Madam Speaker: Okay.

Mr. Saran: Yes, Madam Speaker, on April 10th, in my member's statement I asked the provincial government to declare the month of April as Sikh heritage month.

British Columbia has done it, Alberta has done it, and I was hoping today in ministerial statements maybe the minister will announce it. But they have not announced it. And I ask the—I'll ask you to direct the minister to declare this month as heritage—Sikh heritage month.

Madam Speaker: I would point out to the member that a point of order is to indicate a breach of a rule or practice of the House, and I did not hear that in the member's comments so that is not considered to be a point of order.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Elimination of Education Tax Rebate Impact on Students and Recent Graduates

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Leader of the Official Opposition): Yesterday's budget was completely unfair for Manitobans starting out in life. Students had already been hit with a frozen minimum wage and skyrocketing tuition. Yesterday's budget announcement will take over \$50 million from graduating students. The Premier suggests that bursaries and scholarships will replace this, but he is only providing \$2 million more while pulling over \$50 million from new graduates' wallets.

Young Manitobans relied upon the province's affordability advantage to afford a first house, a car to get to work and to start a life in Manitoba.

Why is the Premier making life unaffordable for those just starting out in life?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Well, I appreciate any question from the member opposite and her party on affordability because she speaks about a house being affordable, yet the previous administration put the PST on home insurance for the first time in Manitoba history—not a 1 per cent increase, I want to emphasize, Madam Speaker, an 8 per cent increase on owning a home and insuring it.

As well, she referenced a car and the affordability of a car, Madam Speaker, yet the previous administration introduced, of course, a car tax and put that on every car.

So we don't need advice of that nature in terms of affordability, Madam Speaker, though we're always open, of course, to advice.

That being said, on the assertion that we are helping Manitoba students, which she did not make, she should have, Madam Speaker, because that's exactly what we're going to do. We're going to lower the barriers for entry to post-secondary education and training for Manitoba students. That will be our focus, and we will achieve results where the previous administration failed to do so.

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

* (13:50)

Ms. Marcelino: Please consider this. Previously, a newly graduated nurse could look forward to job security, to fair compensation and to a tax credit that honours their commitment to working in Manitoba. Now the Premier has disrupted their workplace without a plan, refused to guarantee their job and imposed a wage freeze on them through heavy-handed legislation.

Adding yet more insult to injury, the Premier is taking tens of thousands of dollars directly from the wallet of a newly graduated nurse.

Why is the Premier so disrespectful to our front-line nurses?

Mr. Pallister: Well, the question itself, Madam Speaker, is disrespectful. The price of doing the same old thing is far higher than the price of change, and the same old thing wasn't working for nurses.

Nurses have told us time and time again how the previous administration built up the health-care system above them so that they couldn't be hurt in the system. We are addressing that by trimming at the top of the organization to protect the workplace for our nurses to be sure that their advice is heard. We have listened to nurses; we have heard from them; they have given us valuable input and we are acting on the advice that they gave us and, Madam Speaker, that's something the previous administration can't claim they did because they were defending the status quo out of a fear of change.

Change will make our system better, Madam Speaker, and we will pursue that change with the input of our nursing people.

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

Ms. Marcelino: That was not the sentiment of many nurses we've heard so far.

Madam Speaker, nurses are right to feel anxious. They weren't told the truth. Last year the Premier told them he would invest in health care and that he would protect the jobs of nurses. Now he's disrupted their workplace without a plan, walked away from his promise to protect their jobs and imposed a wage freeze on them.

Nursing is one of the highest demand jobs in North America, but the Premier has no respect for them. He is doing all this, yet still keeping the PST.

Madam Speaker, why is the Premier making life harder for our graduating nurses?

Mr. Pallister: I appreciate any question from members opposite which contains an accusation of making life harder and reference to the PST in the same preamble, Madam Speaker.

The very fact that the member tries to, of course, appeal to the sentiments of all of us who are sympathetic to the nursing profession is fine, Madam Speaker, but when one looks beneath the preamble one sees a previous administration that demonstrated repeatedly disrespect for that profession. They did it by not listening to the front-line nurses. That's what we're doing. That's why we had input in our prebudget process alone from over—from several thousand front-line civil servants across the province who've given us excellent advice. And our performance evaluation appraisal that we looked at in terms of getting suggestions from thousands of Manitobans, we are now acting on those suggestions just as we are in the areas of health reform.

The world does dislike change, but, certainly, most people understand that it is the only thing that has ever brought progress to our province and country and the world itself and so, Madam Speaker, we will have the courage to pursue those positive changes where the previous administration, well, cowered in fear.

Education Affordability Jobs Plan for Youth

Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview): Madam Speaker, yesterday the Finance Minister climbed to the top of the budget high tower and then performed one of the worst belly flops in the history of budget making in this province, dousing the

hopes, dreams and aspirations of young people and their family. No job plan for young people, and they've made life unaffordable for students in this province.

So can I ask the Finance Minister today: Why is he abandoning our young people in the primes of their lives?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance): Well, Madam Speaker, if only flowery rhetoric could pass for ideas.

Madam Speaker, Budget 2017 is a solid plan for Manitoba, giving Manitobans a clear sense of where this government will go to protect front-line services, to make significant investments and go on the road to recovery.

That member stands on the side of the status quo. He says, look at the failed approaches and lean in to them more. This government takes a different view: better value for Manitobans' dollars, a sensible, comprehensive plan that puts us on a road to recovery. And, Madam Speaker, we invite him to read the documents and see what our real plan for Manitoba is.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Fort Garry-Riverview, on a supplementary question.

Mr. Allum: Well, Madam Speaker, I did read the budget, and maybe the Health Minister can point to the page number where there's a jobs plan in the budget, because you won't find one.

Education is becoming increasingly affordable for Manitoba's young people. *[interjection]* No investment in training—

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Allum: —no shops at our high schools, no hope, no future for Manitoba's young people and killing the dreams of their parents at the same time.

So I ask the Finance Minister again: Why is he pulling the rug out from under young people in the very prime of their lives?

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order. Order.

Mr. Friesen: Now, the member could not be more wrong in his assertions. He knows that what his government made available for students trying to access secondary institutions. In our prebudget consultation, the largest consultation of its kind in Manitoba history, we clearly heard from students

who said re-profile; do this right; put the support for students at the front end of their educational experience; create accessibility for those who need it most.

That is exactly what Budget 2017 does by raising to \$20 million per year the support that is available for all students in this province, putting accessibility over those old, tired ideas that simply did not work, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Fort Garry-Riverview, on a final supplementary

Mr. Allum: Well, Madam Speaker, if a jobs plan is an old, tired idea, then I'm for it, and I don't care if he's against it.

But not only is there not a jobs plan and not only are they making education unaffordable for young people and their parents, they're actively working against their future.

Yesterday, the Finance Minister cut tax credits for innervation and tax credits for R & D. Just where are these people supposed to get jobs in the future? Under this government, well, there'll be none.

Mr. Friesen: So the member claims that he read the budget, but he missed that part where we reminded Manitobans that job numbers are up 6,000 over the same time last year.

But that's okay because that member isn't really interested in evidence. This government is interested in evidence, an evidence-based approach. We will undertake that comprehensive examination of the tax-credit system in Manitoba. We said we would do it. We are bringing coherence to that. We are bringing accountability to that. We are delivering results in Budget 2017 for all Manitobans.

Education Tax Rebate Request to Retain

Mr. Wab Kinew (Fort Rouge): Happy International Day of Pink, Madam Speaker.

This government would have you believe that raising taxes on recent graduates will help keep young people in Manitoba. It's not right.

Yesterday, I heard from a recent graduate with a master of science from the University of Manitoba who has continued to work and live here in our province. He said, and I quote: I really have no reason to stay here now. I won't even save on taxes. I guarantee this move will dissuade many, many students from staying in Manitoba. Big mistake. Say

goodbye to many young professionals who would've been contributing and paying taxes in Manitoba. Terrible move. End quote.

Will the Premier reverse course and keep the tuition tax rebate for current students and recent graduates?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Madam Speaker, this is my first opportunity to wish the member well in his efforts to—as he seeks the leadership of the NDP, and I want to encourage him in his campaign and thank him for the courage he's demonstrated in entering into the race.

* (14:00)

I would also like to say that I appreciate any preamble from members opposite in respect of taxes. They have demonstrated expertise in raising taxes. I know that the member wasn't there at the time and would like to disassociate himself with a sense of newness from the reality of the decisions that have been made by his own party in respect to students in this province, but that will be very difficult for him to do because the students are still enduring the consequences of a record number of tax increases on themselves and their families as a result of the previous administration's lack of courage—*[interjection]*—and respect of looking within to find—

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: —savings and simply going to Manitoba's young people, seniors and working families, and saying pay us more because we can't find the savings ourselves.

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

Mr. Kinew: So, under the budget which was brought forward yesterday, a recent graduate will pay \$2,000—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: —more in taxes this year and \$2,500 more in taxes next year, potentially, under this Premier's plan. So, basically, this budget makes it more expensive to get an education in Manitoba and then to get a good job and then stay here in our province.

Yesterday, student leaders described it as a government trying to balance books on the back of Manitoba students.

So how can the Premier expect that forcing recent graduates to pay more taxes is a recipe to help keep them in Manitoba?

Mr. Pallister: Well, again, I thank the member for the question and I thank him for any question in respect to taxes. Because, Madam Speaker, we are still recovering from the NDP's decision to jack up the PST on all Manitobans after they promised they would not do so. We are still, as a province, making a recovery in respect of that disrespectful decision.

Now, the member quotes a student. Let me quote someone who's been around the educational institutions of our province and other provinces for over three decades, the president of the Assiniboine Community College, who says: I think that all the evidence points out that the tax rebate was very ineffective as a mechanism for retaining graduates.

Madam Speaker, because it was ineffective we decided to move the resources into play to help people overcome the barriers of getting into training in the first place.

Had the member bothered to attend the budget speech in full yesterday he would've known that and not have asked this question. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

The honourable member for Fort Rouge, on a final supplementary.

Mr. Kinew: I was reviewing the budget yesterday afternoon and I did notice that the tuition tax rebate being cancelled would take \$2,000 away from Manitoba students. It would force recent graduates to pay \$2,000 more in taxes under this Premier next year.

I also noticed that The Affordable Utility Rate Accountability Act is repealed in this budget, which means in addition to raising tuition, in addition to forcing students—recent graduates to pay more taxes, this Premier is also paving the way for higher hydro and Autopac rates here in the province.

So why has the Premier not asked the wealthiest in our society to contribute more, and only taken money away from those who are at the very beginning of their careers? *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order. Order.

Mr. Pallister: I appreciate any question from any NDP member on affordability and on taxes, and here we have another one, Madam Speaker.

The reality is, of course, that this was the previous government that made the decisions to jack up taxes at a faster rate than any other Canadian jurisdiction, and Manitoba families paid a price for that and they are paying the price now.

Now, this is a courageous government that is taking steps to alleviate those concerns, but doing it in moderate and a balanced way.

The member addresses concerns, which we share, about post-secondary education and training. Our concerns are that it be available for people who struggle and who lack financial resources. That is why we are increasing the amount of scholarships and bursaries available to students who need them by 40 per cent, Madam Speaker. That's millions of dollars that will be made available to assist people to get the training they need, and that, according to experts, is the right approach to take.

Other provinces have moved away from the failed tax credit schemes of the past, but the members opposite defend a failed status quo that did not serve the interests of young Manitobans.

We are moving to a better system now, Madam Speaker, that will serve the interests of all Manitobans.

Concordia Hospital Impact of ER Closure

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): This government's callous decision to make drastic cuts to our health-care system is hitting people in the community hard. Yesterday, over 100 people gathered on the steps of Concordia Hospital to let this government know just how important their emergency room is for their community. Doctors, nurses and other front-line workers were joined by the community to voice their concerns over the future health of their families if this government continues to cut their health-care services.

Will the minister tell the people of northeast Winnipeg: Why doesn't he think that their community deserves an emergency room?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): Madam Speaker, the residents of northeast Winnipeg and all residents of Winnipeg deserve an emergency room system that actually works. And I appreciate the fact that the leaders of CUPE organized a rally. I certainly think, in our democratic system, that is certainly

appropriate and that is certainly something that union leaders are welcome to do.

I only wish in the last 17 years that they would have organized a rally to protest the 'creasingly long wait times in emergency rooms that became the worst in the country. I surely wish they would have organized a rally to protest that, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Wiebe: Madam Speaker, I can tell this minister first-hand, that when a situation is critical, that our emergency rooms and the people that staff them are there to save lives.

Yesterday's budget reinforced what is already being felt in our communities: this government's obsession with cuts are going to have real-world impacts on our front-line services. A 20 per cent decrease in health capital spending coupled with an overall program funding that is less than inflation means the health system is facing more pressures and cuts.

With no new money for ER beds or nurses in this budget, how does this minister expect them to handle the increased pressures?

Mr. Goertzen: Madam Speaker, according to the most recent Canadian Institute for Health Information—CIHI—report, the average wait time at the ER in Concordia was 6.8 hours. That is twice what the national average is for ERs in Canada.

That means that an individual who was looking for help at the Concordia ER could've gotten into their vehicle, drove into Regina and gotten their help sooner than waiting in the ER at Concordia.

The member might want to defend that, and I understand the emotion around that, but that is not providing the care that Winnipeggers deserve, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Wiebe: I repeat for the minister that when seconds count, our emergency room staff are there to save lives. And I've heard stories from countless Manitobans that have told me that their lives have been saved because of the front-line workers at our emergency rooms and I'd like him to answer to them.

This minister announced the biggest cuts in our health-care system in a generation and he's leaving the patients and the front-line workers, the nurses, in

the dark. This minister clearly has a cut-first-ask-questions-later mentality.

With tens of thousands of additional patients now streaming into St. Boniface, into Health Sciences Centre, will the minister commit to expanding ER beds so that it can handle this increase of people?

Mr. Goertzen: Well, Madam Speaker, I don't know if the member was with his colleague, walking the halls during the budget speech yesterday, but he should know that the budget yesterday announced record investments in health care. There will be a record amount of investments in health care this year than any year under the former NDP government.

Fact, I'm pleased to say that there will be record investment in dialysis support, pleased to say that there'll be record investment in chemotherapy and cancer treatment. In fact, it was the same member that during the election tried to scare people and say there wouldn't be cancer treatment; now, there's record investments.

He's doing the same pattern as before and trying to scare people. He should have learnt during the election.

Madam Speaker: Prior to proceeding, I would just like to caution all members that according to the rules of this House we are not to be making reference to the absence of members from this Chamber.

* (14:10)

Education Affordability Cabinet Minister Salaries

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): Yesterday, the Pallister government's budget egregiously targeted Manitoba's young people the hardest: no commitment for a livable minimum wage, skyrocketing tuition and now tens of thousands of dollars from the wallets of graduating students.

There was one winner in yesterday's budget, though, Madam Speaker. The Premier (Mr. Pallister) and his ministers will still get to keep their 20 per cent raise as a bonus at Public Accounts time. Think of it as Christmas—but in the fall—for Cabinet.

While the Premier and his Cabinet enjoy their raise, they've taken it to students, and the simple question is: Why?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance): Well, the member for St. Johns continues to put false

information on the record, so I will take this opportunity to correct once again for that member.

Every member of that government gave themselves a 20 per cent raise when they declined to take the legislatively required reduction for failure to meet their budgetary obligations to get further towards a path of balance. They decided they didn't like the idea of responding to the legislated requirements, so they changed the rules. They brought a period of—they called it artificial period of recovery. They said the rules don't apply. They did it for five years. It was a cost to Manitoba over \$1 million.

Is the minister—is the member on that side ready to give that money back to Manitoba?

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

Primary Caregiver Tax Credit Elimination in Budget 2017

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): The Premier is reducing tax credits for those who take care of the most vulnerable and weakest among us. The Primary Caregiver Tax Credit rewards families and friends for unpaid work they do to help the sick and elderly remain in their home for longer periods of time. The government should be encouraging community support rather than putting more strain on our primary health-care system.

Madam Speaker, it's simply unfair to punish those that are doing phenomenal work yet continue to protect their own 20 per cent salary raise.

Will the Premier reverse this cut to the true heroes of our community, and will he give it back, his salary raise?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance): Well, that member continues to suggest somehow that we're not following the rules, when, in fact, the record shows that that government—when they were in government they did not follow the rules and gave themselves a raise for five years.

On this question, the member puts false information on the record, as well. This government understands only too well the value of the Primary Caregiver Tax Credit. That is why we have re-profiled and kept this tax credit. We have made no maximum number of claimants for an individual who wants to claim this credit. The individuals do not have to reside in the same household. There is

maximum flexibility here. It is a refundable tax credit, unlike the federal one.

We see the value in this. We have stated our value by keeping this credit tax. It will serve all Manitobans.

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

Ms. Fontaine: The Premier has cut supports to those who work unpaid supporting sick and elderly Manitobans to stay in their home. The government should be rewarding Manitobans who take the strain off our primary health-care system. Yet, at the same time as they've made this foolish decision, they are financially rewarding those who make thousands of dollars in contributions to political campaigns by giving them an additional break.

Madam Speaker, really, the question needs to be asked: Where is this government's priorities, and who are they working for?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Well, where were the previous government's priorities when they introduced a vote tax subsidy for their own political party and members, Madam Speaker?

The member speaks of—the member speaks about vulnerable people: 10th in educational outcomes in Canada was the record of the previous government, and students and their families feel exceptionally vulnerable less so, now that they have a government that is focusing on early years reading and math skills; 10th in poverty, Madam Speaker—that was the record of the previous government, and we're focusing resources on enhancing benefits to those who need support, not those who don't, like political parties opposite; and 10th in wait times for health care—people felt extremely vulnerable waiting with their mother or aunt while they were hours in an emergency room—an emergency room—without service, without a blanket when it was cold.

This is vulnerability. We're addressing the needs of vulnerable Manitobans, where the previous government had a record of making them even more vulnerable.

Elimination of Education Tax Rebate Impact on Students and Recent Graduates

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, the Premier broke his promise yesterday to not raise taxes. He did raise taxes. He has increased the income taxes to be paid by students and recent

graduates by a whopping 46 and a half million dollars.

Why did the Premier break his promise and raise the amount of income taxes to be paid this coming year by students and recent graduates by 46 and a half million dollars?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance): I thank the member for the question.

Before the 2016 election we made the fundamental pledge to Manitobans. We said Manitobans pay enough tax after years of tax hikes of the NDP and we said we're going to bring a fundamental change, a shift when it comes to taxation, introducing a principle that is almost universal across other provinces, and that is the principle of indexation and raising a basic personal exemption every year. *[interjection]* We did that in Budget 2017.

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Friesen: That effort alone returns into the pockets of Manitobans—*[interjection]*—a value—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

I have asked this House for order a number of times and I would ask the co-operation of the member for Wolseley to please heed the request. I would really appreciate if we could reach that point where when I am asking for order that we have order so that I can hear the comments that are being made. Thank you.

The honourable Minister of Finance, to conclude his response.

Mr. Friesen: The decision of this government to make a principled decision—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order. Order. Order.

The—just for clarity, there are no points of order allowed during question period. If the member have—of Wolseley has made some comment and wishes to make a further comment in response to what may have been heard in that section, we would hear it.

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): Madam Speaker, I did verbalize to myself my displeasure at your recent comment. I did not mean for that to be a reflection on your judgment or on your role as Chair. I think, perhaps, a discussion with the House leaders on whether heckling is going to happen at all in the Chamber would perhaps be useful.

Heckling is a long-established tradition in this House, and I certainly withdraw the comment that I made afterwards. That was just to myself; I did not realize I said anything verbally and I apologize to everyone in the House for that.

But you do, I think, understand my confusion on whether heckling is happening or not. If it isn't, I will absolutely comply. If it is allowed, then I will continue to heckle. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: I would just point out to the member that he is reflecting on the Chair in those comments and that comes pretty close to being a serious breach of rules in this House.

And I would indicate that we have—I think it's pretty clear that decorum in the House and heckling is something that we have all been working hard towards trying to contain.

There is certainly an opportunity for passion in questions and answers, but sometimes the heckling does get out of order; it interferes with the business of the House and is certainly—when I ask for order and then immediately have people that are disobeying that, it certainly becomes a reflection of respect—or disrespect against the Chair.

So I would caution all members that showing respect for this Chair is critically important and I would all—ask all members, and especially on a day when we're all wearing pink, to be a little bit cautious about what is happening around the civility in this House. And I do think that we all need to move that a little bit further in our agendas in terms of trying, as we did at the beginning of our session to try to reign in some of the heckling.

* (14:20)

I'm not saying that it should all disappear. Good, smart heckling is probably going to be something that we see, but it is this continuous comment, especially after the Speaker has made a ruling. So I would ask members for their co-operation in this matter.

The honourable Minister of Finance, to conclude his comments.

Mr. Friesen: Thank you, Madam Speaker. This government made a principled decision to index tax brackets and the basic personal exemption. These were measures that the previous government did not take. It was a backdoor tax to all Manitobans. By

taking that principled decision, we return \$23 million to Manitobans this year and \$35 million to Manitoba in just two more years.

Madam Speaker, this is tax reduction.

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

Mr. Gerrard: Madam Speaker, a rose is still a rose by any other name. A tax increase is still a tax increase by any other name.

The Premier is trying to hide the fact that eliminating the tuition rebate is an income tax increase. The elimination of the tuition rebate means that students who stay in Manitoba after they graduate will see a large increase in the income taxes they will pay, a time when they are just trying to establish themselves, a very critical time in their career.

Why is the Premier breaking his promise and introducing an austerity budget which most severely hurts our students and our recent graduates?

Mr. Friesen: Well, I thank the member for the question, but he's missing the point, which is this: we listened to Manitobans. In our prebudget consultations, students told us: change your thinking; this measure was not working; put the support for students at the front end of their education experience.

So that member is talking about the growth but he ignores the fact that, in terms of net investment, 40 per cent up from the previous government, investment for students at the front end through bursaries, that will exceed \$20 million a year. That is a measure that students will really see and can really support.

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

Mr. Gerrard: Madam Speaker, the government has said the tuition rebate was not effective. I beg to differ.

I've talked to many recent graduates who spoke of how important this tax break was to them as they started their career. Whether enabling them to consider having a family or buying a home or starting a business or just paying off their debts, this tax credit was one of the most important ones and it came at a critical time.

The government has said it works on evidence. The government is hiding its evidence instead of making it public.

Why is the government increasing taxes on students and recent graduates? Why in this budget did it target students and graduates?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Madam Speaker, this question and line of questioning from the member is disappointing. I have great affection for the member, but nonetheless he continues to represent Ottawa to Manitoba rather than Manitobans to—Manitobans' best interests—Ottawa-west when it comes to breaking promises.

While this government was keeping its word to Manitobans and leading in the challenges of standing against cuts to health care, the member was adopting Ottawa's position and advocating for Ottawa here in this Chamber. When we were standing up for the aerospace industry in this government, on this side of the House, the member was standing up for Ottawa's decisions to cut aerospace and to threaten aerospace's development further. While we were standing up for maintaining and strengthening Manitoba's well-deserved reputation for being a home of hope around the world to refugees, the member was defending Ottawa's inaction and unwillingness to partner and develop a strategy that would assist those very people.

Madam Speaker, in terms of breaking promises, the member stood for election to represent the people of his riding, not in Ottawa, not as a senator, but as a member of the Legislative Assembly, and I encourage him to do that now.

Presentation of New Budget Manitoba's Financial Outlook

Mr. Kelly Bindle (Thompson): For years the previous government failed to meet budget targets and was irresponsible with Manitoba's finances.

Yesterday the Minister of Finance presented this government's second budget, a budget that sets a new course for Manitobans, confronts a—confronts the fiscal dangers we face with prudence and lays out a path forward that is responsible.

Could the Minister of Finance please explain to this House the importance of putting forward a responsible budget?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance): Madame la Présidente, je dis merci pour la question. Comme j'ai dit hier, le Budget 2017 est conçu pour et par la population manitobaine.

Translation

Madam Speaker, I say thank you for the question. As I said yesterday, Budget 2017 is built for and by Manitobans.

English

We are on a road to recovery. We are arresting the out-of-control growth in expenditure, and we have done so. We put innovation in front of ideology. We acknowledge together the serious challenges that we face as a province. We are demonstrating results for all Manitobans. We invite all Manitobans on this journey with us. It will take all of us to pursue the course of a more sustainable Manitoba in the future. We have made choices that put Manitoba on a path to sustainability, a road to recovery.

**Grace Lake Airport Closure
Consultations with First Nations**

Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas): Mathias Colomb Cree Nation has been running Missinippi air out of Grace Lake airport for 30 years. Imagine their surprise when out of the Premier's (Mr. Pallister) blue sky a letter arrived stating that the airport will permanently close on June 15th.

Madam Speaker, no one from the government consulted with Mathias Colomb Cree Nation before the decision was made. Chief Arlen Dumas feels that his people were not treated equally and he would like to meet with the government before this plan moves forward.

Will the Minister for Infrastructure consult with Mathias Colomb Cree Nation before he permanently shuts down Grace Lake airport?

Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Minister of Infrastructure): Let's see, Winnipeg, Regina, Saskatoon, Calgary, Edmonton all have one airport. The Pas has two airports currently.

The mayor of The Pas is very pleased that we will continue to support the town's airport, Clearwater airport, which is longer, paved and much safer for all uses.

Ms. Lathlin: The taxi fare costs roughly \$80 to get from The Pas—to the town of The Pas.

This airport is located at Clearwater Lake, the next closest airport to The Pas. It's very difficult for a lot of people in The Pas to absorb that cost. Moreover, it's going to take an extra 30 minutes for someone who needs a medevac to get to The Pas airport.

I've been medevac'd from Grace Lake airport. My daughter has been medevac'd out of Grace Lake airport. An extra 30 minutes can mean the difference between life and death.

Will the Minister for Infrastructure please reconsider his decision and take the time to consult with the people with the people of Mathias Colomb Cree Nation before he shuts down Grace Lake airport?

Mr. Pedersen: Well, Madam Speaker, the members opposite continue on their reckless path towards a \$1.7-billion deficit had they remained in government.

This government is about seeking responsible recovery of taxpayers' money. We are going to clean up the fiscal mess left by our predecessors. And we are on the road to recovery, and we will get there, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: The time for oral questions has expired.

PETITIONS

Taxi Industry Regulation

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The taxi industry in Winnipeg provides an important service to all Manitobans.

(2) The taxi industry is regulated to ensure there are both the provision of taxi service and a fair and affordable fare structure.

(3) Regulations have been put in place that has made Winnipeg a leader in protecting the safety of taxi drivers through the installation of shields and cameras.

(4) The regulated taxi system also has significant measures in place to protect passengers, including a stringent complaint system.

(5) The provincial government has moved to bring in legislation through Bill 30 that will transfer

jurisdiction to the City of Winnipeg in order to bring in so-called ride-sharing services like Uber.

* (14:30)

(6) There were no consultations with the taxi industry prior to the introduction of this bill.

(7) The introduction of this bill jeopardizes safety, taxi service, and also puts consumers at risk, as well as the livelihoods of hundreds of Manitobans, many of whom have invested their life savings into the industry.

(8) The proposed legislation also puts the regulated framework at risk and could lead to issues such as what has been seen in other jurisdictions, including differential pricing, not providing service to some areas of the city and significant risks in terms of taxi driver and passenger safety.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to withdraw its plans to deregulate the taxi industry, including withdrawing Bill 30.

This petition, Madam Speaker, is signed by many Manitobans.

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

Mr. Ted Marcelino (Tyndall Park): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

The taxi industry in Winnipeg provides an important service to all Manitobans.

(2) The taxi industry is regulated to ensure there are both the provision of taxi service and a fair and affordable fare structure.

(3) Regulations have been put in place that has made Winnipeg a leader in protecting the safety of taxi drivers through the installation of shields and cameras.

(4) The regulated taxi system also has significant measures in place to protect passengers, including a stringent complaint system.

(5) The provincial government has moved to bring in legislation through Bill 30 that will transfer jurisdiction to the City of Winnipeg in order to bring in so-called ride-sharing services like Uber.

(6) There were no consultations with the taxi industry prior to the introduction of this bill.

(7) The introduction of this bill jeopardizes safety, taxi service, and also puts consumers at risk, as well as the livelihood of hundreds of Manitobans, many of whom have invested their life savings into the industry.

(8) The proposed legislation also puts the regulated framework at risk and could lead to issues such as what has been seen in other jurisdictions, including differential pricing, not providing service to some areas of the city and significant risks in terms of taxi driver and passenger safety.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to withdraw its plans to deregulate the taxi industry, including withdrawing Bill 30.

This petitions was signed by many Manitobans.

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Leader of the Official Opposition): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The taxi industry in Winnipeg provides an important service to all Manitobans.

(2) The taxi industry is regulated to ensure there are both the provision of taxi service and a fair and affordable fare structure.

(3) Regulations have been put in place that has made Winnipeg a leader in protecting the safety of taxi drivers through the installation of shields and cameras.

(4) The regulated taxi system also has significant measures in place to protect passengers, including a stringent complaint system.

(5) The provincial government has moved to bring in legislation through Bill 30 that will transfer jurisdiction to the City of Winnipeg in order to bring in so-called ride-sharing services like Uber.

(6) There were no consultations with the taxi industry prior to the introduction of this bill.

(7) The introduction of this bill jeopardizes safety, taxi service, and also puts consumers at risk, as well as the livelihood of hundreds of Manitobans, many of whom have invested their life savings into the industry.

(8) The proposed legislation also puts the regulated framework at risk and could lead to issues such as what has been seen in other jurisdictions, including differential pricing, not providing service to some areas of the city and significant risks in terms of taxi driver and passenger safety.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to withdraw its plans to deregulate the taxi industry, including withdrawing Bill 30.

Signed by many, many Manitobans.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The taxi industry in Winnipeg provides an important service to all Manitobans.

(2) The taxi industry is regulated to ensure that there are both the provision of taxi service and a fair and affordable fare structure.

(3) Regulations have been put in place that has made Winnipeg a leader in protecting safety of taxi drivers through the installation of shields and cameras.

(4) The regulated taxi system also has significant measures in place to protect passengers, including a stringent complaint system.

(5) The provincial government has moved to bring in legislation through Bill 30 that will transfer jurisdiction to the City of Winnipeg in order to bring in so-called ride-sharing services like Uber.

(6) There were no consultations with the taxi industry prior to the introduction of this bill.

(7) The introduction of the bill—of this bill jeopardizes safety, taxi service, and also puts consumers at risk, as well as the livelihood of hundreds of Manitobans, many of whom have invested their life savings into the industry.

(8) The proposed legislation also puts the regulated framework at risk. That could lead to issues such as what has been seen in other jurisdictions, including differential pricing, not providing service to some areas of the city and significant risks in terms of taxi driver and passenger safety.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to withdraw its plans to deregulate the taxi industry, including withdrawing Bill 30.

And this petition is signed by many Manitobans.

Kelvin High School Gymnasium and Wellness Centre

Mr. Wab Kinew (Fort Rouge): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Manitobans recognize how important it is to provide young people with quality learning spaces to succeed in school.

(2) Sport and recreation and the spaces to engage in them are critical to the health and welfare of all students.

(3) All forms of educational infrastructure, including gymnasiums and recreation centres in general, represent an incredible value-for-money investment, whereby the return is improved physical and psychological health and wellness.

(4) Kelvin High School is one of the largest high schools in the province, with over 1,200 students.

(5) Kelvin High School spent several years raising almost \$1.2 million towards the construction of a new gymnasium and wellness centre.

(6) Some Kelvin students currently have to pay to use outside facilities to obtain their mandatory physical education credit.

(7) The provincial government, in a regressive and short-sighted move, cancelled funding for the Kelvin gym and wellness centre for political reasons, despite the extensive community support, fund-raising and engagement.

(8) It is wasteful and disrespectful to the dedicated efforts of students, staff and the community in general to simply lay their goals aside without consultation.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to recognize the need for excellent recreational facilities in all Manitoba schools, to reverse this regressive cut and

to provide Kelvin High School with the funding necessary to complete a new gymnasium and wellness centre.

Signed by Patricia Alberto, Nicole Stewart, Ashley Toews and many other Manitobans.

Taxi Industry Regulation

Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The taxi industry in Winnipeg provides an important service to all Manitobans.

The taxi industry is regulated to ensure there are both the provision of taxi service and a fair and affordable fare structure.

* (14:40)

Regulations have been put in place that has made Winnipeg a leader in protecting the safety of taxi drivers through the installation of shields and cameras.

The regulated taxi system also has significant measures in place to protect passengers, including a complaint system.

The provincial government has moved to bring in legislation through Bill 30 that will transfer jurisdiction to the City of Winnipeg in order to bring in so-called ride-sharing services like Uber.

There are—there were no consultations with the taxi industry prior to the introduction of this bill.

The introduction of this bill jeopardizes safety, taxi service, and also puts consumers at risk, as well as the livelihood of hundreds of Manitobans, many of whom have invested their life savings into the industry.

The proposed legislation also puts the regulated framework at risk and could lead to issues such as what has been seen in other jurisdictions, including differential pricing, not providing services to some areas of the city and significant risks in terms of taxi driver and passenger safety.

We petition the legislative of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to withdraw its plans to deregulate the taxi industry, including withdrawing Bill 30.

This petition has been signed by many, many Manitobans.

St. Boniface QuickCare Clinic

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

And the background to this petition is as follows:

(1) QuickCare clinics support the health-care system by offering important front-line health services that help seniors and families.

(2) The six QuickCare clinics in Winnipeg are accessible, located within communities and have extended hours so that families and seniors can access high-quality primary health care quickly and close to home.

(3) QuickCare clinics are staffed by registered nurses and nurse practitioners who are able to diagnose and treat non-urgent care needs, as well as perform procedures and interpret diagnostic tests.

(4) The bilingual St. Boniface QuickCare clinic actively offers an essential health-care service in French to Winnipeg's Franco-Manitoban community.

(5) Having access to bilingual services is essential to ensuring the ongoing vitality of the Franco-Manitoban community.

(6) The provincial government have announced the closing of the St. Boniface QuickCare clinic on January 27th, 2017, leaving St. Boniface and the St. Vital seniors and families without access to community health care.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to both recognize the importance of bilingual health-care services in Manitoba and reverse their decision to close the St. Boniface QuickCare clinic.

And this petition is signed by many Manitobans.

Taxi Industry Regulation

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

The taxi industry in Winnipeg provides an important service to all Manitobans.

The taxi industry is regulated to ensure that there are both the provision of taxi service and a fair and affordable fare structure.

Regulations have been put in place that has made Winnipeg a leader in protecting the safety of taxi drivers through the installation of shields and cameras.

(4) The regulated taxi system also has significant measures in place to protect passengers, including a stringent complaint system.

(5) The provincial government has moved to bring in legislation through Bill 30 that will transfer jurisdiction to the City of Winnipeg in order to bring in so-called ride-sharing services like Uber.

(6) There was no consultation with the taxi industry prior to the introduction of this bill.

(7) The introduction of this bill jeopardizes safety, taxi service, and also puts consumers at risk, as well as the livelihood of hundreds of Manitobans, many of whom have invested their life savings into the industry.

(8) The proposed legislation also puts the regulated framework at risk and could lead to issues such as what we have seen in other jurisdictions, including differential pricing, not providing service to some areas of the city, and significant risks in terms of taxi driver and passenger safety.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to withdraw its plans to deregulate the taxi industry, including withdrawing Bill 30.

And this petition has been signed by many Manitobans.

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The taxi industry in Winnipeg provides an important service to all Manitobans.

(2) The taxi industry is regulated to ensure there are both the provision of taxi service and a fair and affordable fare structure.

(3) Regulations have been put in place that has made Winnipeg a leader in protecting the safety of taxi drivers through the installation of shields and cameras.

(4) The regulated taxi system also has significant measures in place to protect passengers, including a stringent complaint system.

(5) The provincial government has moved to bring in legislation through Bill 30 that will transfer jurisdiction to the City of Winnipeg in order to bring in so-called ride-sharing services like Uber.

(6) There were no consultations with the taxi industry prior to the introduction of this bill.

(7) The introduction of this bill jeopardizes safety, taxi service and also puts consumers at risk, as well as the livelihood of hundreds of Manitobans, many of whom have invested their life savings into the industry.

(8) The proposed legislation also puts the regulated framework at risk and could lead to issues such as what has been seen in other jurisdictions, including differential pricing, not providing service to some areas of the city and significant risks in terms of taxi driver and passenger safety.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to withdraw its plans to deregulate the taxi industry, including withdrawing Bill 30.

This has been signed by many fine Manitobans. Thank you.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

BUDGET DEBATE (Second Day of Debate)

Madam Speaker: Resuming debate on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen), that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government, standing in the name of the honourable interim Leader of the Official Opposition, and prior to her beginning her comments, I would just like to indicate that I have received a letter from the interim leader giving her unlimited speaking time for the budget response to the member for Fort Garry-Riverview (Mr. Allum).

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Leader of the Official Opposition): Madam Speaker, whenever a government brings out a budget, as the elected representative for Logan my first reaction is to ask

this question: How will this budget affect my constituents whom I was chosen to represent?

Madam Speaker, I will try to answer the question, but before I do, first, I would like to thank my constituents in Logan who have elected me three times to look after their interests and speak for them at this Legislature. I fully appreciate the honour and privilege they have accorded me and take my role very seriously.

Madam Speaker, I'm mindful that there are distinct and clear responsibilities attached to this role. Each and every day my words and actions are guided by these responsibilities that I take to heart.

I also thank you, Madam Speaker, for your guidance in this House in making our proceedings orderly and unbiased.

I also thank our Clerk for her always ready sage advice. We also receive timely and appropriate advice from our Deputy Clerk, a man of many talents, and music is just one of them.

I also wish to thank each and acknowledge each and every table officer's contribution to the orderly functioning of this House in this Chamber and in committee rooms, and I welcome and congratulate the new Sergeant-at-Arms in his new role.

* (14:50)

It is sad to see someone leave the post. But that sadness is mitigated by the coming of a new individual to fill that role, especially when the new one is a very nice guy such as Ray.

And now I'd like to discuss the budget, which, by every measure, is a failure of leadership and a failure to grasp the deep responsibilities that come with being in government.

In this budget, the government has ignored the needs of many Manitoba families and seniors by renegeing on their promise to protect front-line services. Instead, this government has followed an ideological agenda of austerity and cuts to the services family-families depend on. They say they're doing this for savings purposes, for money-for-value, but these are simply cuts and cuts to the services that are vitally needed by many, many Manitobans. There are so many cuts to services it's difficult to know where to start but let me list some of the most damaging to families.

This government is closing three emergency rooms and an urgent care centre in Winnipeg,

leaving families in north and south Winnipeg and eastern portion of Winnipeg without timely access to emergency or urgent care. This government is cutting health infrastructure budget by 20 per cent after cancelling one billion in health projects, including critical facilities like CancerCare and ACCESS centre or primary care clinics in the North.

Furthermore, this government is ignoring their campaign promise to build thousands of personal-care-home beds after eliminating the Hospital Home Team program and cancelling personal-care-home projects in Winnipeg and in rural Manitoba. This damage is confounded-compounded by the failure to make any investments in preventive health care and healthy living programs, which keep families and seniors out of emergency rooms.

Anyone looking at this budget would think the government has no sympathy for low-income families. There's no hike to the minimum wage for a second year, hurting low-income workers, who are predominantly women, while failing to offer any job creation strategy to Manitoba workers.

Besides hurting women, many, many young people are also hurt because of the minimum wage freeze for a second year. These are young people, many of whom are students, striving between minimum wage jobs and schools. They want to work and have money for their tuition, but the minimum wage freeze is not helping them at all.

At the same time, the government is cutting millions of dollars from Manitoba's housing budget and failing to match the federal government's housing commitment.

There are more failures in this budget. The government is doing nothing to make communities safer by refusing to make any new commitments to prevent crime and deal with the root causes of crime.

On the immigration file, this government is refusing to reverse changes to the Provincial Nominee Program including removing the additional fee and removing any incentives for newcomers to settle down in Manitoba.

On this Provincial Nominee Program, I have spoken to many individuals, families, friends of newcomers who are so sad and disappointed that this government is imposing a \$500 head tax to new immigrants even before they have started their life in Manitoba.

These nominee program applicants, Madam Speaker, are individuals who have gone through education, extensive education, most of them post-secondary and even 'masteral' or Ph.D. programs in their respective countries. Many of these nominee program applicants have valuable technical vocational skills that will enable them to work right away upon arrival in Manitoba. Many of these applicants—most of these applicants have the work ethic and the attitude that will make them settle successfully in Manitoba, thus contributing to the economic boom that Manitoba had experienced over the last decade.

Yet this government is putting additional barriers and burden to these applicants to the nominee program without even investing in their education, without even contributing to the training and—the training that enabled them to have the high skills that they bring to this province. Not a single cent was contributed to their education and training, yet, right away, after filling out the application to the nominee program and spending so much money, time and effort to making this application and proving that they are highly qualified to be applicants to this program, they are being levied this \$500 head tax.

This is unfair and this is regressive and this is unkind, and this government does not even care for these people. And the Premier (Mr. Pallister) even wrongly saying or making a statement that they are—that 64 per cent of them come here without job offers and they end up in the welfare rolls—which is totally, totally unfalse. Although they may not have the job offer, yet because of their connection to families, friends and the community to which they belong, be it communities coming from all parts of Winnipeg or communities in rural Manitoba, they have this deep connection and because of that connection they—and network that they have built even before coming over—they are able to find a job. And within their first year of arrival they report income, which means they're employed. And they pay their taxes. Their children go to school. Their—they have a good work ethic and employers love them because they are dependable, efficient, loyal and capable employees.

Now, when it comes to equality for women, this government is failing to provide any investments in promoting gender equality or toward closing the pay gap for women in the workplace. It's investing so little into Manitoba's child-care system that it only addresses 3 per cent of the current child-care wait-list.

* (15:00)

Madam Speaker, this government has totally failed to present a clear, strategic and inclusive vision for the future of Manitoba. Its single-minded obsession with austerity is hurting the economy and clouding the province's future.

Post-secondary students will see their tuition fees jump by up to 7 per cent while their course fees will rise with no controls. Balancing the budget on the backs of students by raising taxes on recent post-secondary graduates up to \$2,500 a year, while refusing to make new investments in universities and colleges, is simply bad policy.

But this government compounds that error by failing to present any kind of strategy for training and long-term job creation in Manitoba to grow the province's economy or support youth in changing and uncertain economic times.

We hear crickets chirping when we should be hearing a commitment to build new K-to-12 schools, such as Waterford Green or in south Brandon. There's silence when we should be hearing about new investments in science labs, shops, classrooms and gyms for public schools. Instead of investing in a brighter future for our children, this government is cutting the education infrastructure budget by nearly 30 per cent.

Madam Speaker, I had the pleasure of meeting two young female students some time in 2011, and they were high school students then. Last year, I had the chance to meet one of these two young ladies, and she happens to live in the Logan constituency, in one of the Manitoba Housing complexes in the downtown area. I was so delighted to have met her again after a few years, and I learned that she is graduating from the University of Manitoba in a well-needed science program. She's a woman and graduating from that program that traditionally is stored for male students. I learned further that they were refugees a few years back, and the mother, a single mother, raised them very well. The mother worked hard. They're still in a housing complex because the children are students. But it was—I was so impressed and so heartened to see how the investments made by our NDP government to Manitoba Housing, to post-secondary education and supports for new immigrants and refugees have done amazing things for this family. And there are many, many more families of this kind.

I haven't gotten back to this young lady yet, but I'm interested in getting in touch with her again because I would like to see how she's doing, if she's working here or if she would be staying here now that the tuition rebate for graduates was cancelled by this government. It's people like her, who rose from very challenging situations, being a refugee and with all the trauma and hard work and difficulties, is able to graduate and finish a program that will be well suited for this province and the need—and is needed by her community.

So, Madam Speaker, instead of in—that follows on the government's short-sighted elimination of small class size initiative.

Madam Speaker, even agricultural producers are going to suffer under this government. It's eliminating their Riparian Tax Credit which encourages farmers to use environmentally responsible management of lakeshores, rivers and stream banks.

In summary, Madam Speaker, this government has failed every—many, many Manitobans in this province who put their trust in it. This budget is an abdication of responsibility and should not be passed by this House.

And so, Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the member from Elmwood,

THAT the motion be amended by deleting all of the words after "House" and submitting:

therefore regrets that this budget neglects the priorities of Manitobans, ignores the needs of families and seniors, and fails to present a clear, strategic and inclusive vision for the future of Manitoba by:

- (a) going back on the promise to protect front-line services and making deep cuts to the services families depend on; and
- (b) closing three emergency rooms and an urgent-care centre in Winnipeg, leaving families in north and south Winnipeg without timely access to emergency or urgent care; and
- (c) cutting the health infrastructure budget by 20 per cent after cancelling \$1 billion in health projects, including critical facilities like CancerCare, and ACCESS centre or primary care clinics in the north; and

- (d) ignoring the campaign promise to build thousands of personal-care-home beds after eliminating the Hospital Home Team program and cancelling personal-care-home projects in Winnipeg and rural Manitoba; and (c)—and
- (e) making no real investment in health-care prevention and healthy living programs which keep families and seniors out of emergency rooms; and
- (f) refusing to raise the minimum wage for a second year, hurting low-income workers who are predominantly women, while failing to offer any job creation strategy for Manitoba workers; and
- (g) cutting millions of dollars from Manitoba Housing budget and failing to match the federal government's housing commitment; and
- (h) failing to make the community's families and seniors live in a safer without any new commitments to prevent crime and deal with the root causes of crime; and
- (i) refusing to reverse their changes to the Provincial Nominee Program, including removing the additional fee and removing an incentive for newcomers to settle down in Manitoba; and
- (j) failing to provide any investments in promoting gender equality and closing the pay gap for women in the workplace while removing capacity within the Status of Women Secretariat; and
- (k) investing so little into Manitoba's child-care system that it only addresses stiffer—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

The member's time has expired.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Official Opposition House Leader): Madam Speaker, I would ask for leave to allow the leader to finish her reading of the amendment which she is getting very close to finishing.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave to allow the interim leader to continue with her motion?

Hon. Andrew Micklefield (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, we'll allow an extra 60 seconds and no more.

Madam Speaker: The honourable interim Leader of the Official—*[interjection]*

The honourable Government House Leader either has to give a yes or a no answer. There are no conditions that can be applied to the question.

The honourable Government House Leader, is there leave?

Mr. Micklefield: No, there is not leave. Thirty minutes is the agreed-on time, so.

Madam Speaker: Leave has been denied, and I'm going to need a moment to consult on where we go next.

Mr. Maloway: Madam Speaker, I wonder if there would be leave to give the leader an additional two minutes to complete the amendment—reading of the amendment.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave to allow the official opposition, the interim leader, two more minutes to finish the motion? *[Agreed]*

And I would indicate that leader—the interim leader was on part (k).

Ms. Marcelino: Thank you to the Government House Leader (Mr. Micklefield).

- (k) investing so little into Manitoba's child-care system that it only addresses 3 per cent of the child-care wait-list, and
- (l) raising post-secondary tuition fees by up to 7 per cent and deregulating course fees; and
- (m) balancing the budget on the backs of students by raising taxes on recent post-secondary graduates up to \$2,500 a year while refusing to make investments in universities and colleges; and
- (n) failing to present any kind of strategy for training and long-term job creation in Manitoba to grow the province's economy and support youth in changing and uncertain economic times; and
- (o) making no new commitment to build new K-to-12 schools such as Waterford Green or in south Brandon, as well as no new investments in science labs, shops, classrooms or gyms for public schools and

cutting the education infrastructure budget by nearly 30 per cent following the provincial government's short-sighted elimination of the small class size initiative; and

- (p) cutting tax credits for post-secondary students but giving political donors a tax break on donations;
- (q) cutting spending on highways by nearly \$30 million on top of a previous cut of nearly \$50 million in the previous budget at a time when investment in strategic infrastructure is necessary to grow the economy; and
- (r) making almost no investment for northern Manitoba with a long-term strategy to grow the North's economy or a plan to revive the economy of Churchill or plan to work with indigenous groups to create a sustainable vision for the communities in the North; and
- (s) failing to provide any real strategy to combat climate change after the provincial government brought aggressive bills to weaken water protection standards and environmental regulations;
- (t) —; and
- (u) —; and

As a consequence, the provincial government has thereby lost the confidence of this House and the people of Manitoba.

Point of Order

Madam Speaker: The honourable Government House Leader, on a point of order. Oh. The honourable government—

Mr. Micklefield: The member went over the time a second time, contrary to our agreement.

Madam Speaker: For clarity, in the point of order that was just raised, I would indicate to the honourable Government House Leader that I was just giving her the few seconds to finish the one sentence.

Madam Speaker: And also, as there is some deviation between the verbal and the written motions, is there leave of the House to consider the motion as printed and provided to the Speaker, keeping in mind that two points were left out? Number (t) and (u) were not included in the motion.

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Madam Speaker: Okay. Order—leave has been denied.

Order, please.

The motion will therefore be considered as read, and a written copy will be provided to members. And the motion is in order. Debate can proceed.

* (15:20)

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade): I appreciate the opportunity to speak to this budget.

I'm not completely surprised by the last few minutes here that—in terms of trying to get the motion on the record, pretty clear that—you know, it's pretty clear if you look back the last—I think it was—seven budgets in a row, the NDP were over budget and in quite a few cases, quite substantially. I think the last budget was about \$400 million over budget.

So clearly here we are—

An Honourable Member: You're double that.

Mr. Cullen: No, we're going to be—actually, we're going to do what we said we did. And that's something the NDP very rarely do, is actually accomplish what they say they were going to accomplish.

So—and they were having trouble managing a 20-minute clock today, Madam Speaker, and I think that's a sign that we had from the previous government, as well. And clearly a year ago Manitobans decided it was time for change.

Mr. Doyle Piwniuk, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

And we know—we actually know where previous government was headed in terms of their budgets. Our numbers reflect that within—in the Budget 2019-2020, they would have had a \$1.7-billion deficit. Clearly, that's not what Manitobans are looking for. And certainly we, as a government, we've been consulting with Manitobans for a number of years now and certainly on this particular budget, for a number of months. And Manitobans are telling us it's time to get our act together here financially. And we intend to do just that.

So I want to congratulate the minister for bringing forward this budget. I also want to con-

gratulate his team, and his team of 38 other colleagues, that helped put this budget together based on the consultation we've had with Manitobans. And certainly it's—this budget is a step in the right direction.

Mr. Acting—sorry—Deputy Speaker, I just wanted to acknowledge the good work that Manitobans are doing, too, in terms of joining us on this road to recovery. We've witnessed so far this year already over 6,000 jobs created by Manitobans, and we're extremely excited about that optimism that we see in Manitoba.

A recent survey by the Canadian 'frederation' of independent business indicates dramatically that Manitoba businesses are the most optimistic across our country. And that is exciting. And we're excited as a government to join them in growing our economy. We certainly believe as a government it's our responsibility to create a positive framework for growth here in Manitoba. And that's what we're undertaking to do in consultation with Manitobans.

Clearly, when we formed government—one of the first few days into government, we came across the situation in The Pas in northern Manitoba with Tolko, and recognizing there was challenges there. And we recognize previous governments had offered short-term bailouts to keep that operation going. They came to us seeking some of those short-term bailouts. We, as the new government, had a different philosophy in dealing with that situation, and it was really one of working in partnership. And we firmly believe that positive partnerships will lead to prosperity for Manitobans, and ultimately for the government of Manitoba as well.

And so what happened in that particular case, we were able to bring all the stakeholders together, the industry, potential buyers, the industry that was there, labour came to the table, the community came to the table, management from all sides came to the table and certainly various government departments were at the table to try to work out a resolution.

And, certainly, one of the key stakeholders there were the First Nations communities in the area which were—would have been dramatically impacted by this closure of this particular mill. And they came to the table, as well. And there was some very positive agreements coming forward on that, and we're looking forward to a very positive outcome and a signing in the very near future in terms of the sustainability of that project going forward.

So, certainly, it's something that a new government brought to the table: a new way of doing business. And we're certainly excited about that.

And, in respect of northern Manitoba, I just wanted to say we're optimistic about the future. Clearly there are some challenges now throughout northern Manitoba, but we firmly believe in the long term there will be good things happening in northern Manitoba.

You know, as part of that and as part of our Look North strategy, we're having further consultations with Manitobans. We just completed a comprehensive summit, an experience over the last week in northern Manitoba. And, additionally, we're having a number of meetings through various communities across northern Manitoba to have a discussion about how we grow the economy in northern Manitoba into the future. And we certainly are excited about that.

We're also excited about the opportunities in rural Manitoba. And we certainly want to look forward to increasing the capacity in the rural Manitoba, too, to create jobs and, in fact, create wealth.

And certainly, when we look at the capital region, there's a number of sectors here that we identify real opportunity for growth in Manitoba. And we're excited about working with our various stakeholders in that regard.

Certainly, I want to recognize our Premier's Enterprise Team. We're working diligently in providing sound advice to government on various aspects of the economy. We're excited about this undertaking; it's going to be an ongoing process. And we're quite excited about the talent that we'll be able to assemble around the table.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I just wanted to point out, too, that obviously, in terms of economic growth and prosperity, Manitoba relies on trade, and trade is very important to us. We recognize that as a government. And one of the first initiatives we undertook was a discussion with our neighbours to the west, and we were able to sign the New West Partnership Agreement. We're just getting through some of the legislation to make sure that we've got things tied up from our end from a Manitoba perspective but we're certainly excited about joining our neighbours to the west in that partnership.

And just last week, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we signed the new Canadian Free Trade Agreement, which, hopefully, will provide a—and will provide a regulatory framework that encourages investment in Manitoba, and certainly will allow us and business people, and Manitobans, to move goods and services across our nation. And certainly the framework will also lead to a reduction in red tape and some of the regulatory burden that Manitobans are facing.

So we're very excited on that front and certainly on the trade front because this will create more jobs for Manitobans. And we're starting to hear of some of the positive results on that front already, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

In terms of red tape, we're also very excited about our red tape and regulatory reduction task force. Again, this is going to be an ongoing process within government and across government to reduce red tape that Manitobans are facing, and certainly the regulatory burden that Manitobans face, as well.

And we've brought into—introduced the—Bill 22, The Regulatory Accountability Act was certainly a comprehensive framework for managing those regulatory requirements and reducing the administrative burden faced by businesses, non-profits, local governments and certainly Manitobans, as well. So we're excited about that.

This particular budget, too, I will say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, continues our investment in tourism in Manitoba. Tourism is a \$1.6-billion industry. We want to grow that to the \$2-billion mark in the next couple of years. We firmly believe that our 96/4 plan, where 4 per cent of revenue generated from the tourism industry is put back into the tourism industry to promote Manitoba. And we firmly believe that Manitoba is worth promoting. We have tremendous assets in terms of tourism and we want to make sure the rest of the world knows about those particular assets.

And we do have some changes in mind for Travel Manitoba, as well. We think—optimistic that they can help create capacity in communities around Manitoba to develop the tourism industry. So we're certainly excited about that development and certainly this particular line in our budget item.

On the business side, Mr. Deputy Speaker, obviously there's—we're having a look at our various tax credits within government. We've made some changes there. The ones that are not being used obviously they're being—some of them are being

eliminated. The ones that are successful will certainly stay in place, and we're excited about those discussions with Manitobans as well.

Clearly, a new area of single-windy-single-window funding to some of the funding agencies that we do fund is new for Growth, Enterprise and Trade. And there's going to be \$4 million available for partnerships for economic growth. And we're looking forward to working through that process.

* (15:30)

Clearly, we think we've designed a process which will bring efficiencies, will be—bring effectiveness to that process and during that process, eliminate some of the duplication and overlap that we've seen in the past. And clearly we want to make sure that we're establishing outcomes for those various agencies that we fund, and it's really about providing value for money on the taxpayers' basis.

Certainly, we're—some of the Commercialization Support for Business Program will continue. Again, we're going to be looking seriously at how we underwrite, how we evaluate those businesses. And clearly the support that we provide will be based on measured outcomes. So we're really excited about moving forward and having those discussions with Manitobans.

This particular budget too, in terms of the mineral resources sector, we are going to be investing in Pitrinec software for the oil and gas industry. We're going to be catching up to what other provinces are doing on this front, and we're actually the last of the western provinces to sign on.

This is a relatively minor investment. Well, I say minor; it's about a \$2-million investment, but it will certainly clear up some of the issues we've had in the past in terms of tracking the oil business here in Manitoba. And in fact, what's happened in the past, when we came into office, we found a situation where there was a \$10-million liability that was not recorded on the books, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a \$10-million liability on the books that we encountered. Obviously, those are surprises that no new government wants to encounter, but we're hoping with this Pitrinec software those issues will be cleaned up. And clearly it's a sign of a previous mismanagement under a different government.

Obviously, we're excited about the potential of the mining industry in Manitoba. We don't necessarily believe that we are second in the world in terms of mining right now in terms of attractiveness.

We firmly believe we have a lot of work to do on that front. You know, we're only attracting about 3 per cent of the investment in exploration across Canada; that number should be a lot higher. We're aiming to have it three times higher, in fact, Mr. Acting—Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So, clearly—in this budget, it's left the mineral tax credit in place. We also signified in the budget that the duty to consult is of paramount importance and we're looking forward to having a consultation on how that framework might look into the future. Clearly, we want to make sure that our permitting and licensing areas are being dealt with as quickly as possible and accurately as possible. We think that's very important. And we also want to signify to First Nations community, the business community as well, and we want to make sure we have our land-use planning clear, and transparent, and open, so that all—everyone understands where we're headed in that regard.

Mr. Acting—Mr. Deputy Speaker, we're excited about the opportunities in Manitoba. And I think Manitobans are excited about the opportunities. We certainly sense that optimism, and we're looking forward to working with Manitobans as we move forward. I know—clearly the previous government liked to use taxpayers' money to promote themselves and their own party. Clearly, we as a government, have taken the approach that we will use taxpayers' money to invest in Manitoba because we believe in the future of Manitoba, and we will be investing money strategically in Manitoba with a view to outcomes and results.

I thank you very much for this opportunity to speak on this very important budget.

Mr. Wab Kinew (Fort Rouge): I want to put a few words on the record today about the budget that the government has brought forward. Essentially, my main message to you, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, is this: This budget makes it more expensive to get an education and then to get a job here and stay in Manitoba after you graduate. This budget also paves the way for higher utility rates to be paid by people here in Manitoba.

Now, before the last election, the Premier (Mr. Pallister) and his team were very careful to travel around the province and tell everyone that there was nothing to worry about. However, with this budget, we are now starting to see their true colours. They're trying to say that closing emergency rooms will help reduce wait times. They're trying to say that

raising taxes on recent graduates will help keep recent graduates here in Manitoba. They are trying to say that cutting funding for addictions will somehow help Manitoba families in a time of a fentanyl crisis.

And so now we know that there's a good reason that they tried to portray themselves as less austere in the last election than the course that they are charting in this budget and the budget papers. The reason that they tried to portray themselves as less austere is because no one would have voted to close three emergency rooms. No one would have voted to close an urgent care centre in the city. No one would have voted to lay off 900 Hydro workers. No one would have voted to raise taxes by \$2,000 this year on recent graduates, and then by \$2,500 next year on recent graduates. No one would have voted for higher tuition.

And so, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, there is an increasing gap between what this government and this Premier (Mr. Pallister) said they were going to do and what they are actually doing, and that's very concerning to the people of Manitoba. And this budget really highlights it across a number of areas, this gap between what they said they were going to do and what they're actually doing.

You know, top of mind to many Manitobans is the quality of health care here in our province, and we are seeing that there are, you know, cuts being made that are going to hurt Manitoba families. The biggest headline out of this budget to me is likely the closure of three emergency rooms and the closure of an urgent care centre here in the city. You know, I'd have to think back several years to think of anything that jumps out of a budget as big as that, but closing three emergency rooms and an urgent care centre is very concerning.

I was pleased to attend, with my colleague from Concordia yesterday, a rally to help save the Concordia emergency room, and there were a couple hundred people there voicing their concern and it was good to see the community rallying, albeit under not the best of circumstances.

But I was talking to people there and I spoke to one nurse who seemed puzzled that closing an emergency room is somehow expected to reduce wait times. She pointed out, also, that when someone presents in a critical situation that they are tended to immediately, they're cared for immediately. And so I took that very seriously, this conversation with a front-line worker in our health-care system and, you know, also took seriously the concerns that she

raised, knowing that the emergency room in which she currently works is set to close and the uncertainty that that gave her about her future employment.

And so that is the face of this budget; it is the nurse that I spoke to yesterday who was concerned about her job.

We also know that this government is cherry-picking from the Peachey report. There were many recommendations in that report left unpursued. There were recommendations in that report about enhancing community health. The basic argument in the section of the report which recommends revisiting the provision of emergency care in Winnipeg made the argument that if you are to reduce the amount of emergency care options, then there should be a corresponding investment in community health services—community health services. And yet we have yet to see those sorts of investments and, in fact, we are beginning to learn about cuts to community health services. So this budget seems to combine the worst of both worlds with respect to that particular recommendation.

* (15:40)

We also know that the Peachey report recommended additional supports for people who present as a result of victims of violence or have been victimized in other ways. And now we hear that workers at the Health Sciences Centre who help people transition out of the emergency room after they're—they've been treated, as victims of violence, are on the bubble. And many of their colleagues have already been laid off.

And so that's a concern because, you know, one, there's the issue of public safety. But these are workers who help make sure that the person who's just received treatment has a ride home, has a safe place to go, is not returning to an abusive situation.

And, in addition to the public safety issue, that sort of transition and assistance for care helps to ensure that care in the emergency centre can be delivered efficiently, and so that's a concern for us as well.

And then, if we are to consider the health system as a whole, and recognizing that the Peachey report only provides one part of what we need to do to keep Manitobans healthy, and preferably to keep Manitobans healthy at home, I was disappointed to read through the budget and to see that there are not investments made in primary prevention.

If we want to find ways to make our health system more nimble and to better serve the needs of Manitobans both now and into the future, we should place a heavy emphasis on prevention. That is how we are going to reduce the demand for systems like emergency centres, emergency rooms, urgent care centres.

If we can keep Manitobans healthy at home before they need to go to the emergency room, before they need to take up a hospital bed, then not only will we have a higher quality of life and a healthier Manitoba, but we will be reducing demand on the most expensive forms of medical care that we provide in our health-care system in this province.

So we would like to see increased emphasis on primary prevention. So how can we encourage Manitobans to eat a healthier diet? You know, we are very lucky in this province to have a—you know, an excellent agricultural industry, value-added ag industry, but how can we ensure that Manitobans are taking full advantage of healthy options? How can we ensure that Manitobans are getting the, you know, right amounts of exercise to stay healthy? How can we ensure that we're making the right public policy decisions that will help ensure that people of all ages in our province stay safe and are not injured on the job, or at school, or while crossing the street?

All these are forms of primary prevention that will help make our health system sustainable in the long run, and yet we haven't seen significant investments in this area in this budget.

We also read in the budget papers that there is a caregiver tax credit which is being scaled back. And I can tell you from personal experience, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, that caring for somebody who is sick, who is ailing at the end of their life, is one of the most rewarding and fulfilling activities that a human being can undertake.

And it seems to me that, given that it is such a great societal good to, you know, be a caregiver, that it would be not just appropriate, but also the right thing for the government to do to ensure that there is the maximal amount of, you know, financial assistance for people who are caring for their relatives at the end of life or who are ailing.

And so I was disappointed to see, you know, in the budget papers on page C5, that they're making adjustments to this tax credit.

I also read with interest—I believe it's page D4 in the budget papers—an extensive diatribe almost, on the part of this government, regarding the Canada Health transfers, which only, to me, serve to underscore the failures of this government to get a good deal for Manitobans with respect to the federal health transfers.

Now, I do not approve of the approach that some of our Liberal colleagues have taken, where they are seemingly taking orders from the federal government; no, it's important to have independence and to get the right deal for Manitobans. However, I don't believe that the Premier's (Mr. Pallister) approach of being unnecessarily combative and, you know, trying to usher in linkages across all these different federal-provincial areas of priority has shown itself to be a wise strategy either. In fact, we see that that strategy continues to miss the mark. And so on health, there is a lot missing and a lot that is very concerning with this budget.

On education, well, most of the news coverage I saw pointed out that those hardest hit by this budget are students in this province, though I think that coverage misses the mark because it unnecessarily gives this government a pass on the three ER closures. And just because that was announced on Friday, we should not separate the fact that that is part and parcel of this budget, and that the three ER closures are, in fact, one of the main headlines coming out of this budget.

But, notwithstanding that, again, education is, you know, seeing significant changes, and the biggest impact is on affordability, so the money that students in our province have to pay to get a good education. So this government has already cancelled the small class sizes initiative, which is a concern, because ask any parent in this province—ask any parent in this province—do you want your kid to have more one-on-one time with their teacher? We know what the answer will be. And the government knows that they will not win that argument. So ask that question as many times possible as you like, and they will not win that argument.

We also were disappointed to see that there were no new schools. We are disappointed to see that there were no new schools announced in this budget. In particular, Brandon on the south side could use a new school. It's a fast-growing area, many new homes and the location has already been scouted, I believe, adjacent to Crocus Plains. So we would have

hoped to see a new budget—or a new school, rather, in this budget, or perhaps another one for northwest Winnipeg. And yet we haven't seen an announcement of new schools.

But, moving to the post-secondary side, this is where we really start to see an impact on the affordability of education. So we know that there's higher tuition coming for students in our province. We know that it's going to increase most likely by about 7 per cent per year, which in the first year is about three times the amount of money at the University of Manitoba that this government will put towards bursaries. But in years two, and three, and four, the tuition increases are likely to rise by five times, nine times, and then 12 times the amount of money that this government is prepared to put into scholarships and bursaries there at University of Manitoba.

And so we're talking about likely a few thousand dollars more in additional tuition that students in Manitoba are going to have to pay to get a post-secondary education under this government's plan. And if you're a parent preparing to send two children to post-secondary here in this province, well, then you can double that.

Yesterday we saw that confirmation was given in this budget to cancelling the tuition rebate tax credit. And so, essentially, what that means is that this government is forcing recent graduates to pay another \$2,000 a year in taxes in this upcoming fiscal year, and then they will raise that and force recent graduates to pay another \$2,500 in additional taxes here in this province. And that, you know, at the same time that they're raising tuition, this government and this Premier (Mr. Pallister) are raising taxes on recent graduates. And so post-secondary education is becoming much more expensive.

*(15:50)

We did not see significant—or—well, at least, suitable operating grant increases to the post-secondaries, and so that may force some of the institutions to change the programs on offer. And that's certainly concerning and something that we'll have to keep an eye on going forward. We'd want to make sure that the post-secondary system is keeping pace with our society and is delivering education of the highest quality. And so if institutions are being forced to scale back or make cutbacks in certain

areas, that certainly is concerning, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker.

The other thing which stood out to me was, you know, what was missing from this budget. You know, there's a lack of a real jobs plan for the next 30 years, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker. We know that the workforce is changing. There's an increased reliance on contract work. There's an increased reliance on freelance work. At the same time, technological change like artificial intelligence, automation and then social forces like globalization, are putting many jobs in Manitoba in some of our biggest industries, like value-added agriculture, value-added manufacturing, transportation—are putting jobs in this province at risk.

And so where are the proactive measures being undertaken to ensure that people in Manitoba can still work? Again, a job is important because it puts food on the table and money into people's pockets. But having a job is also a value proposition. It also provides meaning. It also provides purpose to people. So jobs are very important. And at the same time, this government scaled back incentives for manufacturing and for research.

And so that causes us concern, particularly on the research side, because the agricultural industry is so important to Manitoba and yet future growth in that industry is going to be tied to who can develop the best intellectual property to bring additional value to the agricultural products which are produced here in our province. So where research is curtailed, this government is closing a window on future wealth generation, future wealth creation, in our province. And that is a cause for concern.

And then, finally, we see, tucked away, near the end of the budget, on page C9, a short little line which states that, The Affordable Utility Rate Accountability Act is repealed for fiscal years after 2016-2017. Now, this was not announced by the Finance Minister or the Premier in any of their media availabilities, but what this means, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, as—is that the legislation which guaranteed that Manitobans would pay the lowest bundle for hydro and Autopac rates in the country is being repealed. And now this paves the way for higher Autopac premiums and for higher hydro rates. And I know from talking to people here in Winnipeg, and talking to people in Brandon, from talking to people in Swan River, that that is a major concern for people all over the province.

And so what we see with this budget is that this budget makes it more expensive for students in our province to get a good post-secondary education. This budget makes it more expensive for those students, once they graduate, to stay here in our province and get a job, and that it paves the way for higher utility rates.

And so, if we're to step back and consider all the additional expenses that are being asked of students, that are being asked of the families that help those students—and then we also notice that this budget does not ask the wealthiest among us to contribute more. You really have to wonder what are the motivations of this government, and why is there such an increasing gap between what they would say they would do and what they, in fact, actually are doing here today.

So, with those words on the record and that case laid out against this budget, I would state unequivocally, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, that I will be voting against this budget.

Hon. Cathy Cox (Minister of Sustainable Development): I want to begin by thanking this government and my colleague, Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen).

Manitobans—not only with this budget for the next fiscal year but with a real sustainable vision for the future of our great province into the future.

We were handed an extremely difficult fiscal situation by the previous government, which we took over as a responsible government. And we will listen to Manitobans and have based this budget on what Manitobans have told us are important. We're following a decade of debt, decline and decay. We will ensure that we are able to fix the finances for Manitobans moving forward.

Under the previous government, spending had continuously increased at rates higher than revenues. For a first time this year we will see that change, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Had spending continued at the rate pursued by the previous administration, Manitoba's deficit would have reached \$1.7 billion in budget year 2019-20 and next year's budget would have seen an increase in deficit of \$1.2 billion.

To the members in the opposition, they may—this may not sound like a big deal, however really prevented our province from investing in infrastructure, health care and education, due to all of the growing interest payments that we were forced to pay on our debt.

Paying nearly a billion dollars on debt servicing each year—each year was money that we could have actually taken and put into infrastructure, hospitals, personal-care homes, areas like that, instead of giving money to moneylenders in eastern Canada. The budgets had continued with the great deficits that we've seen recently, we had—we would eventually have reached the point where our debt would have prevented us from doing any kind of meaningful investments in our economy for our children, our seniors or for those who need it.

The previous government had a strange understanding of investment. For them, investments meant handing out cheques and leaving the rest to be sorted out by others. There were no requirements for financial statements or sustainability, and I saw this over and over again when organizations and groups presented to us and asked us for financing for certain projects that were very important. However, quite often they failed to actually have a financial statement that they could provide to us to show us that they would be sustainable well into the future.

We're not taking such a reckless and irresponsible approach. When we invest, we expect results, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That's why our investments are result-oriented, based on value for money and trying to find efficiencies and flexibilities with other levels of government and the private sector, where possible.

And what kind of vision is a vision where, instead of making necessary adjustments to the management of our province, we just say yes to everything and everyone without accountability?

We are different. It's not a vision at all. It's irresponsible, weak and backwards. This decade of debt, decline and decay is now finally over, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The people of Manitoba wanted change. They went to the polls April 19th, 2016, and they told us very clearly that they want a change, that they want a government that's going to be responsible. They wanted us to move beyond the status quo offered by the former government.

We are on the road to recovery, thanks to my colleagues in the House and, of course, in particular, to the Minister of Finance. Revenues and expenditures have been assessed and treated responsibly for the first time in many years, thanks to our government.

Our 2016-17 deficit is projected to be \$39 million lower than what was foreseen in Budget

2016. We've worked hard, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Budget 2017 provides many, many positives; first of all, no new taxes and no new tax increases. We haven't reached into the pockets of Manitobans. Under the previous government, we had the lowest basic personal exemption west of Quebec.

Budget 2017 indexes tax brackets to inflation and again increases the basic personal exemption. This removes more than 2,000 taxpayers from the tax rolls entirely and provides tax relief for all Manitobans, not only one certain sector of Manitobans. It provides tax relief to all Manitobans across the board who pay taxes in Manitoba or do—who did previously. It also saves Manitobans \$23 million in this fiscal year and \$34 million by the 2020 fiscal year. This is money that you and I, your neighbours, friends, people in the Chamber here, get to spend in a manner that they see fit for their family. They can spend it on what's important to them, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

* (16:00)

Budget 2017 aligns tax credits with other provinces and eliminates boutique tax credits that have little uptake or failed to meet objectives.

Budget 2017 maintains the Seniors' School Tax Rebate, the Education Property Tax Credit and the farm school tax rebate program. It also maintains the Children's Arts and Cultural Activity Tax Credit, the fitness tax credit, the adoption tax credit, the fertility tax credit and the Manitoba education amount.

Budget 2017 is maintaining the primary caregiver credit with a \$1,400 cap. It continues to provide incentives to family members, friends, neighbours, individuals who can help in—their friends, their family, stay in their home. It's a very important tax credit, and I am so happy that our government realizes the importance of it.

This, Madam Speaker, is results-oriented. Nevertheless, work remains to be done. Deficits of the magnitude we have seen this year are not sustainable, and the challenge our ability to deliver the ongoing quality services that Manitobans expect and deserve. That's why we continue to spend smartly, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We must continue to focus government on what it really meant to do: provide quality health care, education, community protection, and ensuring what we do will protect our most vulnerable people.

Spending smarter is already saving Manitobans money, and we will continue to assess all spending

based on value for money, better and more streamlined systems, increased flexibility and choice for our municipal partners.

Madam Speaker, the government will continue to work on protecting and preserving our environment. Members opposite had 17 years and failed to even meet a target with regard to climate change. They failed to meet emission targets. They didn't have a plan on climate change. They failed to enforce the law on unsafe hunting. They reduced funding for conservation officers, and they failed to implement surface-water-management legislation, all things that we're working towards achieving and accomplishing, and items that are on my mandate letter from the Premier (Mr. Pallister) of this wonderful province.

Our government works to restore the confidence of Manitobans by producing results. We will, and are developing a made-in-Manitoba climate plan. Our government is committed to developing a climate and green plan founded on the principle of sustainable development. It will offer approaches to water and land use, sustainable agriculture, protecting wetlands, forests and natural areas, investing in green infrastructure, promoting clean technology and innovation and numerous other innovations and initiatives.

We will increase enforcement against unsafe hunting practices. We've already stepped up our efforts through night patrols and air surveillance, and we've seen great success in just this last fall—this last fall with regard to the initiatives that we've taken to address unsafe hunting practices in this province.

I would really like to thank our conservation officers for the great work that they do. Since becoming minister, I've had the opportunity to go out and visit conservation officers across the entire province and thank them personally for all the work they do, not only with unsafe hunting practices, but what they do with regard to fishers, ensuring that fishers maintain a sustainable fishing practice, that quotas are managed responsibly, so that our future generations can actually go out and enjoy the same privileges that we do out in our beautiful Manitoba parks and wilderness.

We will also continue to expand and grow recycling. Strip malls and apartment buildings, and even legislative events are areas where we can and we will do more. I know that in my own community we've reached out to high-density populated areas and apartment blocks and actually been innovative in

encouraging those individuals who live in those apartment blocks to recycle more. We know that when it's more accessible and convenient for individuals, they will do more recycling. And this is something that we're promoting, and this is something that we're generating a lot of interest from Manitobans all across the province, up North, east, west Manitoba. All across the province, individuals are getting on board, and they know the importance of ensuring that we reduce waste in our landfill.

Green Manitoba is being dissolved as a special operating agency, and its staff and the responsibilities are integrated into our department. We're modernizing the program and we're making it more efficient. It will ensure that centralized co-ordination of waste, recycling, and green initiatives clarify roles and streamline program delivery. The new model will allow the department to develop relationships to stewardship organizations to further the goal of increased recycling and waste diversion.

Stakeholders support this move, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Ken Friesen, the 'executree'—executive director from CBCRA states: We understand and support the move to eliminate Green Manitoba, as it makes it simpler and more streamlined for stewardship organizations like CBCRA, Recycle Everywhere to deal with one entity, eliminating any confusion of roles. We accept this may require more responsibility by stewardship organizations—and, again, that's Ken Friesen from CBCRA.

Joe Zenobio, recycle—or the president of Call2Recycle: Our stewardship program views this as a proactive and positive move. Our experience, based on our 20 years of operating across North America, has been that it is always best to deal directly with the regulator rather than through an intermediate. This leads to a more efficient process, provides clarity on issues, and ultimately allows us to focus on what matters most—diverting batteries from landfills in Manitoba.

Finally, we were—are moving on securing the sustainability of our fish and wildlife population. We are increasing our funding for fish and wildlife initiatives. Budget 2017 provides more opportunities for surveys of wildlife, for wildlife co-management with First Nations, and for eco-certification strategy of our fisheries.

Madam Speaker, I want to close by reading the comments of some stakeholders into the budget.

Brandon Friendship Centre: Please do not think of this year in the budget—only this year in the budget. You have the opportunity to create positive change, which will be felt for generations. Please think of how this budget can help your grandchildren's grandchildren.

And we have taken that into consideration. We have ensured that we know that by increasing resources into fish and wildlife that future generations will have the same opportunity as what my children do to enjoy the wildlife, enjoy the angling in Manitoba's freshwater and enjoy fishing also on—ice fishing out on our lakes and our rivers, and also have the opportunity just to enjoy the environment, whether it's northern Manitoba in the Ducks or down in the Whiteshell.

Dr. Annette Trimbee, President and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Winnipeg, says in order to protect front-line services in Manitoba, the Province needs to grow the economy and reduce costs. Again, supportive of what we are doing in this Budget 2017, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce says Manitobans expect better value for money while balancing demands for improved social outcomes and service delivery, in addition to the identification of internal efficiencies, cost pressures, present novel opportunities to innovate service delivery models, including social enterprise and social investment strategies.

In conclusion, our government's budget provides a vision and real sustainability for the future of our great province, Manitoba. It is my greatest wish that our province continue to flourish and prosper and that many, many more future generations are able to enjoy our wonderful parks, our 100,000 lakes and our amazing wildlife.

But, for that to happen, we must act responsibly and sustainably in the management of our finances, otherwise we risk being unable to keep a single one of our parks open to the public, we risk being unable to manage our wildlife and we risk losing out to climate change. That's why we are keeping our spending focused, targeted, and in check. And that's why we finally are on the road to recovery.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook): I rise today in the House to speak to the 2017 budget.

The majority of Manitobans have been gripped with fear for the past few months awaiting this government's budget. Thousands of people across all sectors have been holding their breath, wondering if they still will have jobs this morning and wondering what the cuts to the front-line services might mean to their families.

* (16:10)

While we agree that the state of finances of the Province were in complete disarray due to the NDP, and we knew that changes needed to be made, but, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the message that this budget sends to Manitobans are that our most vulnerable will be left behind yet again.

Mr. Speaker, I have been travelling all across this province in—and especially in our North, and I have been talking to many Manitobans and listening as they share their concerns with me. Believe me, they are concerned. We are concerned as well. There are many issues our caucus is concerned about that remain unaddressed by this government. The first issue I'll bring up is the need for improved relationships with stakeholders in indigenous health. This House unanimously voted for resolutions such as Jordan's Principle, yet the budget calls for a 33 per cent cut to Intergovernmental Strategic Relations, almost \$1 million from the department that collaborates on indigenous and northern health.

This government campaigned on meaningful consultation with First Nation communities. They went so far as to commit to developing a duty-to-consult framework, which we still have not seen nor heard of since the promise, nor have the—in this budget, we see that they will also cut the indigenous relations. In this budget, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen) spoke about investments in mental health, which, if we look at the numbers, aren't there in a truly meaningful way. This government put countless non-for-profit communities—agencies on hold for months by pausing funding to Neighbourhoods Alive! Those agencies were forced to lay off staff and cancel programming in the case that the funding wasn't reinstated.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the so-called responsible recovery by this government is anything but. We are seeing many cuts to vital services that many Manitobans rely on. The road to fiscal responsibility should not be on the backs of our health care or on our students. Despite promises of growing Manitoba, this government is cutting funding for our research in the province. For Manitoba to move forward, our

province needed further development in the areas of science, innovation and technology. Our North, my home, is an important resource and represents boundless opportunity for much-needed growth that'll aid Manitoba's northerners. This government promised to invest in the North. We are seeing cuts to services that support community health and well-being. To support our North, we need roads. This government is cutting their spending on roads that could reduce the—that would've reduced the cost of living in the North. Much is needed—much-needed winter roads are the lifeblood for our northern communities. Not once did this government mention our suffering winter road systems in their budget speech.

Despite a recent influx of refugees and newcomers to our province, this government failed to mention immigrants, refugees or newcomers. These people play an important role in the future of our province, as everyone in this House today are daughters, sons of immigrants to my country. They deserve support from our government.

Madam Speaker, Manitobans want to know that this is a province that they can live in, thrive in and grow old in and be taken care of, a province—will take care of their aging parents and that it'll give the children the best opportunities for education and success.

Thank you very much.

I move, seconded by the MLA for River Heights,

THAT the amendment be amended by adding after clauses—after clause, the following clauses: t—*[interjection]*—clause s?*—[interjection]*—after clause (s), the following clauses:

- (t) failing to address the most vulnerable by not increasing employment income assistance amounts to 75 per cent of the Market Basket Measure; and
- (u) failing to support advancements in mental health care by freezing the overall mental health funding; and
- (v) failing to support community development and home repairs in Manitoba by freezing funding to Neighbourhoods Alive!; and
- (w) failing to support science and innovation by not updating technology systems; and

- (x) failing to develop a duty to consult framework—on a framework for indigenous communities; and
- (y) failing to support Justice diversion programs like drug courts, mental health courts and youth justice committees; and
- (z) failing to protect the environment by cutting funding to the Clean Environment Commission, water science and watershed management; and
- (aa) failing to invest in the promotion of practical homeownership opportunities for indigenous families; and
- (bb) failing to support public education by cutting funding to school divisions; and
- (cc) failing to provide multi-year agreements to community development organizations; and
- (dd) failing to support the vulnerable by cutting the funding for Victim Services; and
- (ee) failing to support community safety by cutting funding for crime prevention; and
- (ff) failing to support people with disabilities; and
- (gg) failing to support children in care by continuing to claw back the children's special allowances, while cutting funding to CFS organizations who have demonstrated positive results; and
- (hh) failing to provide funding for a suicide-prevention plan; and
- (ii) failing to provide an economic plan for First Nation communities; and
- (jj) failing to invest in northern and rural health care by not increasing budgets to inflation; and
- (kk) failing to uphold the Jordan's Principle resolution, as unanimously voted by this House, by cutting the funding to indigenous health, Intergovernmental Strategic Relations, by almost \$1 million or 33 per cent of the total budget; and
- (ll) failing to commit funding for the Kelvin High School gym and the Dakota Alumni Field.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Before we continue, there's just a—wanted to make an amend—correction to the amendment that the member from Kewatinook had suggested.

On (gg), it actually said allowance, but the member said allowances, so we'll change it to allowance.

And on (jj), it's or, not and, so we're going to change it to or. Okay?

Is that agreed of the House? [*Agreed*]

Okay. It was moved by the member from Kewatinook, seconded by the member from River Heights,

THAT the amendment be amended by adding after clause (s) the following clauses:

- (t) failing to address the most vulnerable but no increasing employment income assistance amounts to 75 per cent of the Market Basket Measure; and
- (u) failing to support advancements to mental health care by freezing the overall mental health funding; and
- (v) failing to support community development and home repairs in Manitoba by freezing funding to Neighbourhoods Alive!; and
- (w) failing to support science and innovations by not updating technology systems; and
- (x) failing to develop a duty to consult on framework for indigenous communities; and
- (y) failing to support justice diversions programs by drug courts, mental health courts and youth justice committees; and
- z) failing to protect the environment by cutting funding to the clean environment—

* (16:20)

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: —commissions, water science and water management.

Do I hear dispense?

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The amendment is in order—so the amendment's in order.

We'll continue with the debate.

Mr. James Teitsma (Radisson): It really is a pleasure for me to rise in the House today to speak, and I'm reminded once again of a year ago when many of us here were gathered for our first time. I believe a majority of the members of this House, it was our first time and we were all asked to speak for a terrifying 20 minutes about a throne speech—or about a budget, and it was a really big deal. For us at least, for me certainly, it was a huge deal. But now a year later it somehow doesn't seem quite as daunting. I think a little bit of practice lends itself.

Now, before I get into the body of my presentation this afternoon, I did want to address some of the words that were put on the record by the member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Kinew).

The member for Fort Rouge talked about how the Progressive Conservatives, and perhaps even himself and his colleagues, travelled around the province telling Manitobans that there was nothing to worry about. And that's what he seemed to think that we were saying at least on this side of the House to voters, and perhaps that's what he was thinking voters were saying.

But I can assure that member and this House that that was not the message that we heard from Manitobans. And it was certainly not the message we delivered to Manitobans. When we travelled around the province, let me tell you, there was plenty to worry about.

There was plenty to worry about.

There was the longest ER times, including the one in the member for Concordia's (Mr. Wiebe) riding. I believe that was the longest in the country at the time. Longest ER time—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Teitsma: —in the country despite having one—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Teitsma: —of the highest—highest—contributions—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Teitsma: —for health care—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Teitsma: Despite having the highest contributions for health care—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I just want to remind the member for Concordia that it was based on the employment that is here—when it comes to Hansard, that it's a hazard when persons knock on the desk of the—

An Honourable Member: But they're doing it every day. They do it every day.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Okay.

Okay, sorry? But you—*[interjection]*

Oh, on the record.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I correct what I said—was that—it can bang on the desk, but providing that—I just—I asked to be in order so that—many times.

So I just want to have a respect that we listen to the speakers in a respectful way. And so that's what I've been asking. So, yes, so banging on the desk. Okay?

So continue with the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Maloway: Thank you Mr. Deputy Speaker, and—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is this a point of order?

Mr. Maloway: I gather that there is a point of order on the floor.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Maloway: Well, I would—could start a new point of order here.

On a new port of order, I just want to—

Point of Order

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Opposition House Leader, on a point of order.

Mr. Maloway: We have seen, almost on a daily basis, the entire—during question period during—the entire Conservative caucus all 40—well, 39 of them, banging on their desks, and—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Yes, I was just clarifying that you're allowed to bang on the desk, but I've—again, I've got—at this point I said—I asked we be respectful of the speaker.

Mr. Teitsma: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe what I was talking about was that Manitobans had plenty to worry about a year ago.

And not only did we have the longest year at times and one of the most expensive health-care systems in the province, but we also had the worst outcomes in education. We had crumbling infrastructure. We had some of the highest taxes in the country among provinces. So, when the member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Kinew) says that there was nothing to worry about, I can understand why the outcome was the way it was for—in that election because Manitobans were concerned. Manitobans were deeply concerned, and I'll tell you what they were worried about; they were worried about making the decade of debt and decay and decline that existed under the NDP last any longer, and they had had enough.

So, getting to the budget at hand here, I believe this budget is about balance. It's about balancing the need to control expenses while still delivering the services that Manitobans expect. It's about balancing the interests of all Manitobans by staking a path that takes into account the needs of all Manitobans.

Now, some of you may not know, but on Sundays I—when I'm at church, I'm actually often behind the organ bench and I get to play the organ. And for those of you who might attend such a facility, you might know that organists actually do—we do tend to get a fair bit of feedback on what we do behind the keyboard there. And some people say we play too loud, and some people say, ah, it wasn't loud enough; I couldn't hear you.

And I know when I first started playing the organ, it was a challenge to know, you know, what—did I get it right this week or not? And finally I decided that I when I had just as many people telling me I played too loud as telling me I played too soft in a particular service, I probably got it just right, right in the middle.

And I think that's what we're seeing with this budget as well. We've heard—certainly there's been commentary in the press from union leaders and others that are critical of this budget for, you know, not spending more and not providing more and being, perhaps, too austere in their minds. And then at the—on the other side, we have criticism from the CFIB, who, supposedly, were—you know, we were all cozy-cozy with on this side of the House, according to members opposite. Apparently not, since they were critical of this budget as well.

And so, just like when I knew that I was playing the organ just about the right volume, I think Manitobans have sent us a pretty clear signal that this

budget is just about right because it's right up the middle, and that's what balance looks like. Apparently, that's what balance looks like in Manitoba.

You know, Manitobans, when they work with their own finances, when they get around the kitchen table and they have to make decisions about what they can afford this month and what they might desire to do in the coming years and if they can save for these things, or whether or not, you know, to buy their son a bicycle, as I described to this House not too long ago, they understand that they're limited, that they—when they look at their budget, they know that if they take on too much debt, especially credit card debt, even worse payday lenders and things like that at too-high interest rates, it's not sustainable. It's not something that's going to be able to allow that family to lift itself up and it's not going to be able to provide for the future. They're—in a sense, when they do those kind of things, they can jeopardize their future by taking on too much debt.

At the same time, Manitobans know that some needs just simply have to be fulfilled. They have to eat. They have to pay their hydro bill and they know these things, too. And that's—they expect their government to take the same approach. They expect their government to be responsible.

I believe our Finance Minister has made clear that, in his opinion and mine as well, and I think in the opinion of our entire caucus and, indeed, most Manitobans, they don't think Manitoba has a revenue problem.

Manitoba—Manitobans pay a lot of tax, more tax than many provinces in this country, certainly to the west of us, and so when we're trying to decide how best to move forward, it's clear that we can't simply raise taxes like the previous NDP government did year after year when they were in government. Manitobans know that and that's why Manitobans wanted us to work towards balance, but they also wanted us to do it in a way that was not going to jeopardize the services that Manitobans receive year after year.

* (16:30)

Now, Manitobans know about hard work. Manitobans themselves are hard workers. They grow our economy. And, as a result, as you can see reflected in our budget, there is an increase in tax revenues, and that's something that we can be grateful for. We're not increasing tax rates, but we

are getting an increase in tax revenues, and that's because of the growth of the economy. And we want to see that economy continue to grow.

Madam Speaker in the Chair

We respect also the hard work of Manitoba businesses as they go about their work to create jobs. And this budget respects that as well, and it wants to see more of that. And that's why we're working to reduce the amount of red tape and unnecessary regulations that are facing our businesses, both large and small, so that they have increased opportunity to hire staff, so that they have increased opportunity to grow their business. And, in fact, the other kinds of things that you see worked on by our government is to increase their opportunities for trade, trade within Canada, trade within the New West Partnership, trade within the Canadian Free Trade Agreement and also international trade, as we continue to be one of the best provinces when it comes to the percentage of our manufactured goods and the like that we export outside of the country. Manitoba is a leader and will continue to be a leader.

Now, the hard work that Manitobans do day in and day out is the hard work that our government has to do too. And that's why I was so pleased when the Finance 'minner' presented his budget. I know most of the members opposite did get to see that and I'm grateful for that—unusually, it wasn't quite all of them. But, in any case, the members who were here got to observe that the Finance Minister from time to time would turn and acknowledge the contributions of one of his ministerial colleagues. And, if anybody was keeping score, I'm pretty sure every single minister got a nod, a nod of gratitude for the work that that minister had done in their department to ensure that the services that Manitobans depend on were being delivered and that the costs of delivering those services were managed properly.

And it was very encouraging to me to find that this wasn't a budget about huge, you know, massive cuts or massive tax increases, because, frankly, when it comes right down to it, those things are, quote unquote, easy. And I say that—I don't say that facetiously with regards to, you know, some of the changes that we're having in health care and the like. I wish I could speak about those as well, and perhaps I will if the House will indulge.

But instead—

An Honourable Member: Do tell.

Mr. Teitsma: Do tell, yes.

But, instead, this is reflective of a lot of work to find out the detail of what happens in departments, and that detailed work takes time. And our budget itself was an example of hard work. Thousands—thousands and thousands of Manitobans contributed to our budget with their responses at prebudget consultation meetings, their responses to our online budget form. This was truly a collaborative budget that involved every Manitoban in its creation. *[interjection]* Absolutely.

And I do want to reflect briefly for a moment on, you know, some of the programs that are continued—Neighbourhoods Alive!, Community Places—contrary to some of the comments of the members opposite in this House, and, in fact, I believe one of the members opposite in print to his entire constituency, where he declared that Community Places is cancelled. Why would he say that? Certainly, it is not in line with what we find in the budget. In the budget it makes it clear that those programs are being continued. I believe they're still being reviewed, as they should be. But, in order to do that, he's spreading fear.

Now, what possible purpose would that member have, and the other members, indeed? And I believe the member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe) has been rightfully identified as someone who is currently spreading fear. And why would they do that? And I thought to myself, as I considered that, I thought, it's only naked self-interest that would make them do that. This is not concern for Manitobans. This is—Manitobans know that change is needed. Manitobans understand that changes were necessary in our system, in our health-care system, in the way that our taxation system is constructed. Manitobans know that changes were needed.

Even the nurses that I've spoken to—I know the member for Concordia mentioned he's spoken to nurses and other health professionals. I've also spoken to nurses and other health professionals in the last week. They understand that change is needed. And it is hard. I understand that it's hard and it's a difficult thing. I myself have been on both the giving and receiving ends of corporate layoffs, and, let me tell you, it is no picnic for either side.

But, when you're talking about making a system better, when you're talking about achieving results that are going to improve services for Manitobans, that are going to reduce their wait times, that are going to provide better services for Manitobans—that's what we're about—then that's something I think

we can all get behind, and even the nurses that I spoke to agreed with that.

So, wrapping up, I do want to say that Manitoba has tremendous potential. It has tremendous potential and I'm happy to see that under this government and under this budget, we are going to start to see that potential be realized in the weeks, in the months, in the years to come. And I hope in the decades to come that we can see increased tourism, increased industry, continued respect for our environment, better care for families, all these things that are included in our budget, we want more and more and more.

And that's what we're going to get with this government.

Mr. Ted Marcelino (Tyndall Park): Let me start off by congratulating Malala Yousafzai. I would think that everybody would know by now who she is. She's the teenaged girl who received the Nobel Peace Prize. And she was made a Canadian—an honorary Canadian citizen today. Her wit and humour was on full display and her courage was on full display in Ottawa. And I pay a little bit of tribute to those people who can show compassion, and understanding, and courage as we proceed with the journey we call our lives.

Now let's start off with this budget, because I don't want to be called to order again by the honourable House leader of the government for being out of topic. This budget of 2017 is the largest strategic blunder of the Finance Minister and the Premier (Mr. Pallister). They thought that we will not see through the tactics that were used to roll out an otherwise hurtful budget.

The rollout started as soon as the Premier brooded about or announced his intentions of attacking labour. That was about two months ago. And when there were announcements at the job losses at Manitoba Hydro, that was about six weeks ago. And then the emergency rooms that were closed, those were not really announced, but there were some trial balloons that were being flown across the province, seeking reaction and feedback from the public.

And, when the Lac du Bonnet personal-care home was removed from any list of infrastructure that will be built, or the CancerCare Manitoba extension that was junked and the plans for the same building was, well, trashed, the budget became a non-news item.

* (16:40)

And the major hit that the budget had was targeting the students and how they are treated by this government. It is a shameful way of encouraging the young ones to have hope. The inspiration that was supposed to be provided by government to the general population of this province was not there in the budget. It does not say anything that will resemble any incentive to hope, to at least have a moment of hope and inspiration from the Premier or the Finance Minister.

I would say that education is the greatest tool with which we level the playing field. The example that I have is very personal. The only reason why I graduated after my training as a lawyer, coming from a very poor family, was because my dad believes that education is the only tool that we will ever have in making a success out of ourselves. Education, when I was 20, was first-year college of law, after a four-year course, and education was something that my dad paid for, besides the veteran's benefits that I was able to use from the United States Veterans Administration. They call that the GI Bill of Rights—my dad fought during the war.

And the education background that I have is the same education that I use today in order to understand better that in all our journeys together towards a destination—I'm using words from the Finance Minister—the destination that he has seen as our common goal in this journey we call the legislative process, he has failed in giving us real honest-to-goodness signs. He said that there's a huge deficit that we should be fearful of, that we should be concerned about how unable we might be in the future to pay down the deficit.

But then there's that so-called fetish for charities. He mentioned that charities should be used to help the less vulnerable. It is a shift. I thought that government should be at the forefront of helping out those who are vulnerable. And I think that's where the difference between the ideology of this side of the House and that side of the House is really huge. There's a huge gap. There's a huge gap in the attitude that the members of this side of the House have regarding the role of government. The role of government has always been to help out those who are least able to stand on their own—[interjection]

And, as the member from Emerson is saying, it is shameful, really, and I agree with him, the stand of the Finance Minister is shameful, according to the member from Emerson—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

I wonder if I could ask the member to please direct his comments through the Chair. I think we need to get more in the habit of doing that, so if the member could direct his comments through the Speaker, please. Thank you.

Mr. Marcelino: I'll try, Madam Speaker.

The usual way of the Conservative ideology is to shrink government, and when they shrink government—when they shrink government, it only means that they deregulate everything. They leave everything to the marketplace. They call that the market-based economy, and they would rather have no rules because they said, well, we don't need rules. We'll just rule ourselves. And, when there is an attempt on the part of a Conservative government to transfer public assets to private hands, it's part of their ideology.

And I believe that there are reasons why it should be done. Madam Speaker, No. 1: If it makes sense, but it does not make sense at all. The attempt on the part of a Conservative government to transfer public assets, as in what happened with MTS, and when the whole thing about the MTS was brought to the House and it was sold out, and there was nothing that the public could do about it.

Now, the shift in everything that the members opposite are trying to do, I would say, would be well meaning from their point of view. I think, and I believe governments have to do that. We are Conservatives; therefore, we have to do it our way. And I always try to understand a little bit more about where they're coming from, where that ideology's coming from. And it boils down to one thing: profit—profit—p-r-o-f-i-t—profit. That's all there is to it. Nothing more, nothing less.

And the attempt now is to impose so-called austerity measures. How do they do that? Madam Speaker, No. 1: They chopped off some of the programs and they reduced funding for others and they defunded some of the programs that are working for the most vulnerable in our society, and I believe that I would be less than accurate if I don't speak about it. The difficulty I have is that there are some portions of the budget that look good. Neighbourhoods Alive!—it's been funded again—same level as before. For Community Places—same thing.

* (16:50)

And, when people try to review them, and then being forced later to reinstate funding, well, we feel that we have done our job as opposition members. And I feel that we have done our job to make government accountable to our people, even in those little things that happen just because of the pressure that comes from our talking about it, questioning them about it and raising hell about it.

Now, my approach to economics—I'm not an economist, but—has always been to adopt that which benefits the most. And there are some that I have to quote from. I quote the opinion of Ha-Joon Chang of *The Guardian*. He said, and I am paraphrasing: There are remedies to the crisis in our economy. No. 1 is reduce budget deficits by cutting spending, especially unproductive social welfare spending that reduces growth by making poor people less willing to work. And No. 2 is cut taxes at the top and deregulate businesses, euphemistically called cutting red tape—I think we are very familiar with these tactics—so that that the wealth creators, quote, unquote, have greater incentives to invest and generate growth and make hiring and firing easier.

And he says: Those policies that I quoted have been increasingly accepted as having never worked—never worked—did not work. And historical evidence that all the crisis-stricken countries of the world, having been forced to austerity by the International Monetary Fund, were amazed and surprised by the results that after austerity measures and after following the directives from the IMF, their economies sunk deeper into recession.

And we're lucky in this province that we have an economy that's still working, that's still healthy compared to others.

Now, the biggest mistake that the Finance Minister and the Premier (Mr. Pallister) and whoever is advising them, is that if the incentives that needed to be given for those who are working, for those who are in construction, for those who are into investing, for those who are into manufacturing, if they discontinue them—and I'm happy that some of those features are still in the budget. And that's the reason why I said, well, this budget is something that has some good in it. But I will still vote against it, because of the prior statements that I made: that it is a budget that goes against the most vulnerable in our society, the poor, the students who need it.

And I don't like it.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Brad Michaleski (Dauphin): Thank you, Madam Speaker, for giving me this opportunity to speak to this budget. It's an important budget. It's kind of a game changer. I know it's a little bit a different way of thinking for some of the members opposite. But it is on—a great document in terms of changing the course for Manitoba, and restoring some of the confidence and trust in government that's been lost by the previous government. And really it will be a foundation for growth for many, many years to come.

I'd like to commend the Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen) for preparing this very bold but very, very responsible budget, and it's long, long overdue.

The budget represents a significant turn from the previous path, as I've mentioned, away from the reckless, irresponsible, and risky decision making in the leadership of the previous government, which has a very negative effect on all Manitobans, all Manitoba kids, all Manitoba families. That kind of irresponsible leadership is just bad for everyone. In social development or economic development, irresponsible leadership, reckless leadership is just bad for all Manitoba.

I know in my constituency, over the last number of years, I know there was a number of comments where there—where they did lose the trust and they did lose the confidence of the previous government. And really, you know, they lost hope. They did lose hope. And, most recently, they're just getting more and more disappointed with the members opposite and seeing more clearly now all the problems that the previous government created, and a lot of the promises that they ran around and made, and there's no possible way that they could ever afford the promises that they were doing.

I know we were talking—I think, the projected debt for 2019, if we maintained the level of spending of the previous government, was \$1.7 billion of debt. That was an unrealistic number for Manitobans, for everyone. And this budget does lay a new, solid foundation under Manitoba, and it was created by a

responsible government and a minister with a new approach.

So in the beginning—a few months ago I know the minister conducted public consultation meetings across the province. I know they came up to Dauphin. I attended one up in Swan River, as well. And they were very, very well received by the Manitobans that attended. I know there was numerous stakeholders that were at the meetings. They were open to the public where everybody could comment. And I know there was a lot of information that—we had held one ourselves in Roblin—and a lot of that information was forwarded on to the Department of Finance. And I know that information was very, very valuable to the people that were making decisions and giving advice.

And, if we look at the report on Advisory Panel on Fiscal Performance, being responsible and inclusive, we have a budget that reflects the priorities of Manitoba, and goes a long way to restoring the growth in Manitoba.

So today, though, we face a number of challenges and this budget really goes a long way to addressing a number of the challenges we have in Manitoba. And we do—this budget does it not in a harsh way. It's realistic, it's meaningful, and moderate in its approach, and goes a long way towards a balanced approach towards growth in Manitoba.

We have uncertain economic growth challenges, and I know our government is working for solutions to grow trade. We heard the minister of trade over the last number of months, all the attempts that he's doing with the different trade deals throughout Manitoba and—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member will have 16 minutes remaining.

The hour being 5 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, April 12, 2017

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