

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

*Published under the
authority of
The Honourable Myrna Driedger
Speaker*

Vol. LXXII No. 8 - 1:30 p.m., Thursday, November 29, 2018

ISSN 0542-5492

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	Man.
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	Ind.
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
LAMONT, Dougald	St. Boniface	Lib.
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, Hon.	St. Vital	PC
MICHALESKI, Brad	Dauphin	PC
MICKLEFIELD, Andrew	Rossmere	PC
MORLEY-LECOMTE, Janice	Seine River	PC
NESBITT, Greg	Riding Mountain	PC
PALLISTER, Brian, Hon.	Fort Whyte	PC
PEDERSEN, Blaine, Hon.	Midland	PC
PIWNIUK, Doyle	Arthur-Virden	PC
REYES, Jon	St. Norbert	PC
SARAN, Mohinder	The Maples	Ind.
SCHULER, Ron, Hon.	St. Paul	PC
SMITH, Andrew	Southdale	PC
SMITH, Bernadette	Point Douglas	NDP
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, Hon.	Gimli	PC
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
WISHART, Ian	Portage la Prairie	PC
WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC
YAKIMOSKI, Blair	Transcona	PC

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, November 29, 2018

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. Good afternoon, everybody.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 7—The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Immediate Roadside Prohibitions)

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I move, seconded by the Minister of Crown Services (Mrs. Mayer), that Bill 7, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Immediate Roadside Prohibitions), be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Cullen: Madam Speaker, the main purpose of this bill is to make changes to The Highway Traffic Act to change the culture of drinking and driving in Manitoba.

This legislation is modelled after the very successful immediate roadside prohibition approach adopted by British Columbia in 2010.

Under Bill 7 police will have the ability to take immediate steps to combat drunk driving at roadside, including impounding vehicles, imposing stiff monetary penalties, and requiring ignition interlock use for a year in certain cases.

Bill 7 sends a clear message: If you drink and drive, you will lose your licence, you will lose your vehicle and you will lose a lot of money.

This legislation is strongly supported by Mothers Against Drunk Driving Canada and I'm very happy to have their CEO, Andrew Murie, along with representatives from Manitoba Public Insurance, the RCMP, the Winnipeg Police Service, the Brandon

Police Service and the Manitoba First Nations Police service here in the gallery today.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

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

Further introduction of bills?

Bill 207—The Manitoba Conservation Officers Recognition Day Act

Mr. Alan Lagimodiere (Selkirk): I move, seconded by the member from Swan River, that Bill 207, The Manitoba Conservation Officers Recognition Day Act, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Lagimodiere: Madam Speaker, Bill 207 will designate October 1st of each year as conservation officers recognition day.

This day will be a day to recognize the history of conservation officers in Manitoba, a day to recognize the training and responsibilities performed by conservation officers on a daily basis and a day to recognize those in the profession that paid the ultimate sacrifice in the performance of their duties.

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

Bill 201—The Health Services Insurance Amendment Act (Personal Care Home Staffing Guidelines)

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): I move, seconded by the member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe), that Bill 201, The Health Services Insurance Amendment Act (Personal Care Home Staffing Guidelines); Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'assurance-maladie (lignes directrices en matière de dotation applicables aux foyers de soins personnels), be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Swan: This bill is intended to ensure that our seniors receive the quality health care they deserve.

This bill will enshrine in law the existing requirement for residents of personal-care homes to be entitled to 3.6 paid hours of care per resident per day, care provided by nurses and health-care aides.

We know our seniors deserve the best care possible. This government's record has been to cancel personal-care-home projects, reduce the number of nurses and other health-care professionals and raise fees for residents.

This bill will protect our seniors against further cuts to the care they receive and deserve.

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

**Bill 202—The Public Schools Amendment Act
(Small Classes for K to 3)**

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): I move, seconded by the member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Kinew), that Bill 202, The Public Schools Amendment Act (Small Classes for K to 3), be now read for a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Wiebe: Madam Speaker, small class sizes make a big difference in the lives of young students. That's what research shows us, and it's just common sense.

Parents know that it's good for their children to have more one-on-one time with a well-trained and well-supported teacher.

This act will ensure that class sizes are kept small for kindergarten to grade 3 students and that each child can get the individual attention they deserve.

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

COMMITTEE REPORTS

**Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs
First Report**

Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Vice-Chairperson): Madam Speaker, I wish to present the First Report of the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs.

Deputy Clerk (Mr. Rick Yarish): Your Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs—

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs presents the following as its First Report.

Meetings

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

November 16, 2017 (2nd Session – 41st Legislature)

November 28, 2018 (4th Session – 41st Legislature)

Matters under Consideration

Annual Report of Elections Manitoba for the year ending December 31, 2016 including the conduct of the 41st Provincial General Election, April 19, 2016

Annual Report of Elections Manitoba, including the conduct of the Point Douglas by-election, and a proposal to modify the voting process, for the year ending December 31, 2017

Committee Membership

Committee membership for the November 16, 2017 meeting:

*Mr. ALLUM
Hon. Mrs. COX
Hon. Mr. CULLEN
Hon. Mr. FIELDING
Ms. FONTAINE
Hon. Mr. GERRARD
Mrs. GUILLEMARD (Chairperson)
Mr. JOHNSTON
Hon. Mrs. STEFANSON
Mr. SWAN
Mr. TEITSMA (Vice-Chairperson)*

Committee membership for the November 28, 2018 meeting:

*Mr. ALLUM
Hon. Mr. CULLEN
Ms. FONTAINE
Hon. Mr. GOERTZEN
Mrs. GUILLEMARD (Chairperson)
Mr. HELWER
Ms. LAMOUREUX
Mr. LINDSEY
Mr. MICHALESKI
Mr. NESBITT
Mr. WOWCHUK*

Your Committee elected Mr. NESBITT as the Vice-Chairperson

Officials speaking on the record at the November 16, 2017 meeting:

Ms. Shipra Verma, Chief Electoral Officer

Officials speaking on the record at the November 28, 2018 meeting:

Ms. Shipra Verma, Chief Electoral Officer

Reports Considered and Passed

Your Committee considered and passed the following report as presented:

Annual Report of Elections Manitoba for the year ending December 31, 2016 including the conduct of the 41st Provincial General Election, April 19, 2016

Annual Report of Elections Manitoba, including the conduct of the Point Douglas by-election, and a proposal to modify the voting process, for the year ending December 31, 2017

Mr. Nesbitt: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Swan River (Mr. Wowchuk), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

Madam Speaker: Tabling of reports? Ministerial statements?

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Gaurav Sharma

Hon. Colleen Mayer (Minister of Crown Services): Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Gaurav Sharma, who is the current executive director of the EDGE Career Program and a true inspiration.

Gaurav and his then-pregnant wife immigrated to Canada in 2005 and began a journey of hard work and success. His story is a true testament to what a dedicated individual who doesn't give up on their dreams can do.

* (13:40)

In 2006, Gaurav joined what was then known as the Victor Mager Job Re-entry Program. This program offered its clients the opportunity to access job re-entry training, academic upgrading, job placement and adult literacy classes.

These resources are oftentimes critical to the success of a newcomer, and it's fitting that, years later, Gaurav would return to this very program, now known as the EDGE Career Program, to assist individuals who find themselves in similar situations as he did.

Gaurav's academic pursuits lead him to the Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology to complete a course that would complement his master's degree in computer science. He would also receive an award from MITT for his excellence.

After working in the private sector as a network administrator, Gaurav returned to EDGE Skills Centre where he would stay until today. For nearly 10 years, Madam Speaker, Gaurav has lent his expertise as a computer instructor, a network administrator and a math instructor.

This past July, Gaurav accepted the role of executive director at the EDGE Career Program. This community-based program is a part of the EDGE Skills Centre, located in St. Vital, and gives newcomers, low-income earners a chance to thrive.

Each individual is able to identify their unique skills and employment goals. Clients can then focus on their personal and professional growth and move forward with the tools they need to go on and find long-term success.

I can think of no one better to help individuals facing the overwhelming task of rising above their personal challenges than someone who did just that.

Madam Speaker, I would ask that you and my colleagues in the Manitoba Legislature join me as I congratulate Gaurav Sharma on his many accomplishments and wish him well as he continues to provide an invaluable service to the residents of St. Vital.

Thank you, Gaurav.

Madam Speaker: The honourable Minister of Crown Services?

Mrs. Mayer: Madam Speaker, I ask for leave to include the names of the guests in attendance today with Gaurav into Hansard.

Madam Speaker: Are—is there leave to include the names of the guests in Hansard? *[Agreed]*

Guarav Sharma and guests: Joan Embleton, Trevor Gonsalves, Nicolle Richard, Chaitanya Sharma, Gaurav Sharma, Neetya Sharma, Shiwani Sharma, Vinayak Sharma.

Review of CancerCare Manitoba

Mr. Ted Marcelino (Tyndall Park): This government has called for a review of CancerCare, and we know what happens when they order a review: more cuts.

A cancer diagnosis is one of the most difficult things a person can go through, and it also takes a toll on the friends and family members who support and care for loved ones with cancer.

During their lifetime one in two Canadians will be diagnosed with cancer. That means most Manitobans have been affected by cancer in some way.

Manitoba CancerCare is the best in the country at providing cancer treatment. Managing cancer is a hard enough journey, and families should not have the added stress of wondering if they will be able to access the treatment they need when they need it. But that's what will happen if the government decides to make more cuts to CancerCare after the current two and a half million dollars in cuts have already stretched the organization thin.

Budget cuts also put a strain on the nurses and front-line workers who are at the bedsides of our loved ones, providing care and the life-saving drugs they need.

Manitobans with cancer need more supports, not less. This government needs to consider the human cost of their cuts and put patients first.

Eva Hawryshko

Mr. Alan Lagimodiere (Selkirk): Madam Speaker, everyone loves a parade, and Selkirk has its very own Santa Claus Parade of Lights every year in November.

Our Parade of Lights was the brainchild of our very own Eva Hawryshko. Eva has been a long-time volunteer in our community. She's been involved in the MTS Pioneers program, Job's Daughters and the Red Hat Society.

Today Eva is affectionately known in our community as Mrs. Claus. Sixteen years ago, at the young age of 71, Eva set out—set a goal to bring her community together with the spirit of Christmas. Through the eyes of children, we find the joy of Christmas; through their hearts, we find the meaning. This was the motivation behind the hard work and countless hours Eva dedicated to making our Santa parade a success every year.

The first parade floats were organized in family garages. Today the event sees floats from all around our region and Winnipeg. This year saw 40 floats in our parade.

In October Eva announced she is stepping down as the chair of the Santa Claus Parade of Lights. There's no better gift to community than volunteering, and Eva is leaving a legacy, a tradition to continue.

Eva has demonstrated she is a kind-hearted, warm, caring and understanding individual who is not afraid to take on any project big or small for the benefit of community.

Eva wanted to ensure that all people, kids and kids at heart, have the most wonderful and enjoyable experience possible during the holiday season.

Whether it's a family trip to see Santa, a trip down memory lane, the Christmas lights, the warmth of neighbours and strangers sharing—gathering around a bonfire sharing a cup of hot chocolate or the brightly coloured floats alive with the sound of holiday music passing down Eveline Street, Eva has accomplished the goal she set out to achieve 16 years ago.

Eva is here with us today, along with several family members and friends. Eva, from the constituents of Selkirk and all those Manitobans who look forward to your parade every year, thank you for your years of service, for putting a Christmas spirit sparkle in the eyes of both young and old.

Tyler Dueck

Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris): Madam Speaker, it may come off as a cliché, but there is truth in it regardless: entrepreneurs are the backbone of Manitoba's economy.

I rise today to recognize Tyler Dueck, an outstanding young entrepreneur from the community of Rosenort.

Tyler is a co-owner of RONA Valley Enterprises in Rosenort. I am pleased to share that earlier this month he was the recipient of the best Young Retailer Award at the Outstanding Retailer Awards Gala. The awards are a national program dedicated to celebrating the achievements of hardware and building-supply dealers in Canada, and the gala took place in Niagara Falls.

Tyler began his career at RONA in 2007. Early on in his time at RONA he identified and put into action opportunities to grow the business. Tyler made it a priority to increase the amount and variety of products available to customers.

By the time he was 24 years old Tyler had become the store's general manager, and in 2015 he purchased the branch. Tyler grew his business by a factor of seven in just a few years, which the judges in the Outstanding Retailer Awards found particularly impressive.

Tyler has elevated the business's profile on the continental stage and attracted customers from all over. His store has shipped up—supplies for entire buildings to locations all over North America, including Newfoundland, Mexico and Alaska.

In many instances we take for granted the life of an entrepreneur or make assumptions that it is a life of luxury. While we may see the well-deserved awards and success, we don't often acknowledge the many hours of sacrifice they and their families put into making their dreams a reality.

Tyler and his wife Cora are with us here today, and I'd ask all my colleagues in joining me to congratulate Tyler on his win at the Outstanding Retailer Awards Gala. We wish him continued success in his business and thank him for all he does to grow and support his community.

Thank you.

Festival du Voyageur 50th Anniversary

Mr. Dougald Lamont (Leader of the Second Opposition): Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the upcoming 50th year of the Festival du Voyageur.

It is the largest winter festival in western Canada, held in St. Boniface—not just Winnipeg's French quarter, but the francophone capital of western Canada.

The Festival du Voyageur celebrates French, Metis and First Nations culture, and it is also a truly joyous celebration of life in a winter city at the centre of a winter country.

The language of the fur trade was French, and we live in a province founded by a French indigenous leader, Louis Riel.

It is also a festival that brings the past and present together and welcomes people from across Manitoba, Canada and the world in a celebration of who we are: people who come together in the freezing depths of long nights of winter to drink, dance and eat at a great party.

I stood last February in the snow in—amidst a packed crowd with the Compagnie de La Vérendrye with their powder muskets. With everyone in their capote, lit by firelight next to the walls of Fort Gibraltar, it felt as if we were happily gathered in 1815.

In the early days, it was a struggle to get the Festival du Voyageur off the ground, but the legendary Georges Forest, the city and chamber of saint—commerce of St. Boniface helped make it happen.

And each year, there are official voyageurs, and the organization has assembled every official voyageur dating back to the first year.

Je veux féliciter et remercier tous ceux qui ont travaillé avec tant d'acharnement pour établir cet hommage vivant à notre patrimoine comme Manitobains. Félicitations pour les premiers cinquante ans, et je tiens à offrir tous mes vœux de succès à l'organisation du Festival pour les cinquante prochaines années.

Translation

I want to congratulate and thank all those who have worked so hard to build this living tribute to our heritage as Manitobans. Congratulations on the first 50 years, and best wishes for success to the Festival organization over the next 50 years.

* (13:50)

English

I want to congratulate everyone who has worked so hard over the years to build this living, thriving tribute to our heritage. Congratulations on 50 years, and best wishes for next 50.

I hope you will all join me in celebrating the Festival du Voyageur on its 50th edition from February 15th to February 24th, 2019. You can eat tourtière, drink Caribou, enjoy the maple taffy pull and bring your friends—family, friends and constituents to come celebrate what promises to be an exceptional year.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: Prior to oral questions, we have some guests in the gallery that I would like to introduce to you.

Seated in the public gallery from Crocus Plains Regional Secondary school we have 53 grade 9 students under the direction of Rob Dinsdale, Nick Martens and Brad Wall, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Brandon East (Mr. Isleifson).

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

ORAL QUESTIONS

Closure of HudBay Mining Operations Employment Concerns for Flin Flon

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Madam Speaker, we learned yesterday that the community of Flin Flon is facing the prospect of 900 jobs lost in the very near future, and what was the response of this government? The response was, quote, business as usual. End quote. That's the support this Premier and this government offer to northern Manitoba: absolutely nothing—no commitment to fight for jobs in Flin Flon, no commitment to fight for northern communities.

In fact, the only thing they're offering is more cuts to health care and the end of birthing services for the community of Flin Flon. The Premier merely washes his hands, walks away and meekly accepts job losses in one of our great northern communities.

Will this Premier do his job and fight for the Manitoba workers in Flin Flon?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): We've been in a—working very diligently as a government with the people of the North to develop a Look North strategy, Madam Speaker, that we are beginning to implement and beginning to see success as a consequence. Northern mineral and other resource potential is real.

The members opposite say leave it in the ground. We don't agree, and we believe that there is real development possible in the North. That's why we're working with First Nations partners to develop protocols for exploration and prospecting that were ignored by the previous government, where, in fact, we went from No. 1 in the world for potential to develop to somewhere behind Botswana, unfortunately, Madam Speaker, about 30th on the list under the NDP.

We're moving up now, Madam Speaker, and the people of the North know it. They have the hope, and they have the diligence and the will, and so does this government.

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

Mr. Kinew: What the people of Flin Flon want to hear clearly and unequivocally is that the Premier will stand up and fight for their jobs, because that's what we're going to do on this side of the House, Madam Speaker.

We will continue coming to work each and every day and right across the province, fighting for the jobs of Manitobans in Flin Flon, in Lac du Bonnet and everywhere right across this great province, Madam Speaker. And yet even when confronted with the prospect of some 900 jobs lost, what was the response of this government? Well, again, quote, business as usual. End quote.

Can you imagine, Madam Speaker, being told that—in a company town that the company may close up shop and all the jobs will be lost, and the leaders of your government say that that is merely business as usual? It is difficult to imagine why this government would take that position.

So what we're asking very clearly is: Will the Premier do his job? Will he stand up and fight to keep jobs in Flin Flon, Manitoba?

Mr. Pallister: Well, I appreciate any question from an NDP member on job creation, Madam Speaker, because it gives me the opportunity to remind the member that we lead the country in job creation and in capital investment and the people of the North are already benefiting from that.

But, Madam Speaker, what is the NDP plan for the North? Well, it's been on display for some time. We've known about this mine's imminent closing for years and years, but nothing happened under the previous administration to address it, and now the member opposite has taken the position publicly—and now his party's adopted it—that they don't want mines in this province. They said leave it in the ground. They've signed a Leap Manifesto declaration against mining.

So, Madam Speaker, the member stands in his place; he laments the loss of jobs in the North out of one side of his mouth and out of the other side says they shouldn't have been there in the first place.

We don't agree. We'll stand up for the people of the North in a real way not just today in question period, but always.

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

Mr. Kinew: He can keep attacking me all he wants, but when is he going to stand up and say he'll fight for jobs in Flin Flon, Madam Speaker?

You know that it's not business as usual in Flin Flon today, having heard that there may be 900 jobs lost as of 2021. We know that it's not business as usual for families who are pondering the future of

their community. We know that it's not even business as usual for pregnant mothers in Flin Flon, Madam Speaker. But, of course, it is business as usual for the Premier who refuses to help, refuses to even try.

It was shameful to see Doug Ford and Justin Trudeau just accept job losses in their province, but to see that a leader of our province wouldn't stand up and say that he would fight for jobs in Manitoba—well, that truly is disappointing.

So will this Premier come forward with a real plan to protect the jobs of the hard-working people of Flin Flon, Manitoba?

Mr. Pallister: What's disappointing the people in North is when the NDP take a plane up to The Pas and promise hard-working indigenous communities that we'll give them jobs if they vote for them. What's disappointing to the people of the North is when the NDP promised them they won't raise their taxes and then jack them up. What's disappointing the people in North is no plan under the NDP to address the issues of mining.

What we've been doing is working with Manitobans, and what the member opposite's just done in each of his preambles and questions is insult hundreds of people in the North who developed the Look North strategy that we're implementing with them as partners.

Indigenous engagement, strategic infrastructure investment, housing challenges being met, enterprise ecosystems of support, education, training, workshop development to make sure that we move forward to create jobs in the North with the North as our principal focus, Madam Speaker. Only at election time when the NDP flies up to the North and promises votes—promises jobs in exchange for votes is the only time they've evidenced that they care about the North—for their own political purposes.

We care about the North always and we will demonstrate it in every action we take.

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

Privatization of Water Bomber Services Request to Table Contracts

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): On a new question, Madam Speaker.

It should come as no surprise that the Pallister government has decided to privatize water bomber services here in Manitoba. Now, it might be a

surprise for the people who were listening to the Premier during the last election when he promises, I quote, to keep public services public. End quote. But we're seeing the extent to which the Premier is breaking that promise.

We know that water bombers in Manitoba fight the most difficult of fires, and we know that this service will only be more and more needed as climate change begins to become further and further impactful on this great province, Madam Speaker. These water bombers protect wildlife, forest infrastructure, but most importantly people all across the North.

Will the Premier table all contracts for water bomber services in Manitoba today?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Issues of providing service, Madam Speaker, aren't to us, at least, ideological issues; they're issues of practicality and results. To the member opposite it seems it's always an ideological battle. He doesn't seem to believe in the private sector—and, Madam Speaker, I guess if I shopped like the members opposite did when they were in government, I wouldn't trust the private sector either. Because they didn't tender; they gave untendered contracts out all the time, especially to donors, and then they covered it up and didn't disclose it because they were embarrassed about it, rightfully so.

Madam Speaker, they threw money away at electioneering politics, like rushing a stadium project; they threw it away so that they could buy at incredible extra expense a shiny red helicopter just days before an election. This is why the members opposite don't trust the private sector, because they use it for political purposes all the time.

We believe that the best results are what Manitoba wants, from fire suppression and everything else, and we're practical people on this side of the House so we'll keep pursuing better results for Manitobans.

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

Service Provision Guarantee

Mr. Kinew: Premier must not believe in his actions because he's not defending them. All he's doing is trying to attack others, Madam Speaker, and it's pretty sad that he's more than halfway through his mandate, still everything's always about the NDP. No vision, no plans for the future from this leader yet.

* (14:00)

We know that there's a reason that this Premier doesn't want to talk about the amount of these contracts that are being awarded to privatize water bombers, but we ought to consider for a second the backdrop, the backdrop of climate change and the fact that these water bombers will be more and more in demand in the future. The value of a public service being delivered by the public entity known as the government is the fact that you know that it'll be there when you need it.

So what guarantees did the Premier get under these contracts that these water bombers will fight forest fires even when it's not profitable to do so?

Mr. Pallister: Madam Speaker, the member opposite just makes my case for me every time he opens his mouth, because the NDP actually increasingly used private services to provide things like medical transportation. They just did it badly, just sloppily, okay? They didn't tender for the service. So when we needed, really needed air transport they just spun a dial, pointed to a company and said, hey, how about you, and paid them whatever they wanted.

They had no idea about the benefits of tendering. Manitobans do; Manitobans shop with their money. They value their money. The NDP never did, still is no evidence of any idea over there of how to shop intelligently.

Madam Speaker, what we've done is we've gone and we've got the best value for money to make sure that we have faster response times, that we have enhanced safety and that we have a superior aircraft maintenance program so the planes are there when they're needed by Manitobans. That's the kind of discipline and fiscal management that Manitobans deserve because it's the kind of discipline they demonstrate every single day when they manage their own money.

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

Mr. Kinew: But what guarantee did the Premier get that these water bombers will be there to fight forest fires even when it's not profitable for those planes to do so, Madam Speaker?

Again, the Premier can dodge, and he can try and skate by, but that is the question that will be left in the heads of people right—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: —across the province of Manitoba.

And I hear the members opposite raising their voices. Of course, they'd never raise their voices against the Premier, who refuses to stand up for Manitoba jobs, Madam Speaker, who continues to cut—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: —emergency rooms in each of their communities.

But they're asking about contracts, and, again, the Premier will not tell us how much money is being paid for these contracts.

But perhaps he can answer the question that I've already posed, Madam Speaker: What guarantee did this Premier get that these water bombers will be there to fire-fight forest fires even when it's not profitable do so?

Mr. Pallister: Request for proposal's been available and the member could have read it any time, Madam Speaker, but he didn't bother.

The fact is that we retain ownership of the planes. The companies that are bidding are bidding to utilize the service and provide the service. We retain ownership of the planes. The contract, well-worded as it is, Madam Speaker, will ensure Manitobans they get better fire suppression, faster response times, superior aircraft maintenance programs.

Madam Speaker, the member needs to go and have a look, have a read and maybe understand how a contract works and how a tendering system works, because Manitobans understand.

When they shop, Manitobans shop for value. When this government takes money from Manitobans, it shops for value too, Madam Speaker. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

B & L Foster Care Agency Number of Children in Care

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): Families of kids in care deserve to know that their children are safe.

It's been over a week since we learned about the disturbing allegations in the B & L agency, but the minister won't even provide basic information. Families are asking, what if it was your child?

Would you not want to know that your kids were safe?

So I'll ask this minister again today: Exactly how many kids are in the care today of B & L agency? *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Hon. Cathy Cox (Acting Minister of Families): I can tell the members opposite, the members in this entire Chamber, that our government will always stand on the side of Manitoba's most vulnerable children and youth when it comes to safety and protection.

We've ordered—our government has ordered a complete, comprehensive review to ensure that all children are safe in the hands of this service provider. This is a priority for our government and we will ensure that our—all children are safe in the care of Child and Family Services.

Madam Speaker: Order.

The honourable member for Point Douglas, on a supplementary question.

Awareness of Abuse Allegations

Mrs. Smith: Had it not been for the media bringing this out into the public, would we have even known that these allegations were present?

This allegation is not just one, but two, and how many kids are in this agency being abused?

We want to know when this minister knew about this, what she did about it and if she took immediate action to ensure kids are protected. She stands up here and says, our job—No. 1 job is to ensure kids are protected. Then tell the public. Tell the families—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mrs. Smith: Then tell the families when they exactly knew because families do not trust this government right now. They want to know when this minister knew.

So will she stand up today and tell us when she had knowledge of this so families can know that their kids are protected in these very agencies that they're in charge of?

Mrs. Cox: As I've indicated many times on this side of the House, families come first in terms of safety and protection and their well-being. We've instructed the agencies and the authorities to work together to ensure that each and every child in the care of this

provided—the provider is interviewed, has good discussion and is able to convey the care and treatment that they are receiving in terms of protection from this—in terms of care from the service provider.

We will ensure that there are no further placements made with this service provider and this is a priority for our government, Madam Speaker.

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

Foster Care Service Providers Use of Registered Social Workers

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): What about the kids that are still in this agency that this government is failing to protect? We want to know how many kids are in there. They're not answering the question.

Today, Madam Speaker, we have Barbara Temmerman from the Manitoba College of Social Workers in the gallery today. She has concerns. She wants to know that this government is going to be using registered social workers in this review and that they're going to be consulting the experts like the College of Social Workers.

So will this minister stand up today and tell us that they're going to be using registered social workers and that they will consult the College of Social Workers?

Miigwech, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Cathy Cox (Acting Minister of Families): Well, Madam Speaker, our government has done more to consult with Manitobans than the previous NDP government has ever done. The overall review of the child-welfare system includes consultations with over 1,500 community members this year: front-line workers, advocacy organizations, indigenous peoples.

We've expanded the scope and the power and the investigative authorities for the children's advocate and we will continue to do that. We will continue to have discussions. We will continue to talk to stakeholders. We'll continue to do this until we get it right, Madam Speaker.

Personal-Care Homes Staffing and Services Funding

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): This government has now forced Manitoba's personal-care homes to cut in-year spending not once but twice, resulting in cuts

to staffing and services. These cuts mean unfilled shifts, unfilled vacancies and care providers forced to use lower quality supplies or having no supplies at all.

These cuts also mean increased workloads and injuries for front-line workers, a greater risk of residents falling and overall reduction of care, support and social contact for our seniors.

Front-line workers and personal-care-home residents are worried this government is putting cuts ahead of protecting residents.

So I want to know whether the minister will reverse these cuts to personal-care-home residents.

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): The member for Minto has it all wrong. Actually, when it comes to health care he's aware that our government's investing \$700 million more than the NDP ever did in health care.

But, Madam Speaker, that's not good enough; it's results that count, and when it comes to personal-care homes there's something very interesting going on in Manitoba that even the Canadian Institute for Health Information is pointing to. It is a colossal drop in the wait times for seniors to have appropriate placement in personal-care homes—leading the nation, most improved.

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

Number of Care Hours Per Patient

Mr. Swan: Well, this minister needs to be speaking to front-line workers. He needs to be speaking to patients and he needs to be speaking to families to understand the true impact of what he's doing to health care in Manitoba.

*(14:10)

As it currently stands, there's no legislative requirement for minimum staffing guidelines in personal-care homes. Staffing levels have been enforced through a government directive known as the personal-care-home staffing guidelines since at least 2007. These staffing guidelines require all personal-care homes to have enough staff to provide—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Swan: -3.6 paid hours of care per resident per day, and at that time Manitoba was a leader in this country.

At the very least, will this Health Minister stand up today and commit to protecting and preserving the number of care hours per patient?

Mr. Friesen: Well, Madam Speaker, I want to be really clear about this, that is it is the results that matter to Manitobans.

We are undertaking changes to our health-care system because we recognize, like all provinces do, that our current health-care system is not supportable in its current state. But the aim of these changes is to align resources and to resource the great professionals who work in our system to get better patient care sooner for all Manitobans; when it comes to personal-care homes that is happening.

He says, have you talked to real people? We have, and what they're telling us is that they are impressed by the length of time that it is now taking—much sooner—to get their loved ones into an appropriate personal-care-home bed.

They didn't solve it. We're not there yet, but we are going in the right direction.

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

Support for Bill 201

Mr. Swan: You know, Madam Speaker, even their own supporters know that these changes are all about saving money and not about patient care.

This minister I hope would understand that residents in personal-care homes often have complex needs. More than three out of four residents have dementia or other neurological diseases. Many personal-care home residents need assistance in daily activities like dressing and bathing and eating.

Bill 201 is a step to ensure that Manitobans living in our personal-care homes receive the kind of care that I would think all of us would want our family members to have.

So I'll ask the Premier (Mr. Pallister), because I can't get an answer from the Minister of Health: Will he commit to supporting personal-care-home residents and will he support Bill 201?

Mr. Friesen: The member's argument is confusing. If he does acknowledge that it's really the patients that count, if it is really about getting the seniors to the more appropriate personal-care-home placement, then he must acknowledge that we are leading the nation, a colossal reduction in the time it takes.

He was advocating for those patients to remain at a full-scale hospital, not in the care they needed.

We are making progress where the former NDP government failed. We will continue to make that progress for all Manitobans, and we will not apologize.

Madam Speaker: The honourable Leader of the Second Opposition.

Privatization of Water Bomber Services Pilots and Maintenance Crews

Mr. Dougald Lamont (Leader of the Second Opposition): Thank you. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order. Order.

Mr. Lamont: Madam Speaker, I'm very eager today.

We hear today that the government has decided to outsource the running of its fleet of water bombers to a UK multinational, Babcock.

Now, we know the Premier's enthusiasm for outsourcing, whether its government contracts or vacation homes, but one reason we've heard this has to be done is because the water bombers weren't running all the time. That is, thankfully, because we don't have the forest fires all the time. We know Babcock is taking over the fleet but not ownership of the planes.

Are there going to be different pilots and maintenance crews? Are those jobs staying in Manitoba? Are they being outsourced, or are people just going to be fired and re-hired for less to save on costs?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): I appreciate the member raising the question.

There will be faster response times, enhanced safety and superior aircraft maintenance programs, Madam Speaker, but right now we have pilots who are out of the country and away and not available to use the water bombers for as much as half the year.

Instead, Madam Speaker, what we'll have now is the ability to help our neighbours. The fires wreak havoc on others, too, and we've seen this in other parts of our country. Using this model we'll be able to give assistance to others who need our help better than we ever could before, and I would hope the member would support and encourage that kind of behaviour.

It wasn't possible—it wasn't as possible as it needed to be under previous structures, under

previous administrations, but now it will be possible for us to be able to do a better job of helping our friends who need the help.

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

Government Rationale

Mr. Lamont: We have often heard from this government they have to privatize because other provinces have done it or are doing it. That's not leadership or innovation, and peer pressure is no basis for determining public policy.

This government keeps talking about value for money, but there is such a thing as being penny-wise and pound foolish, and there's also the question of who benefits from government investment.

So when it's local companies with local employees, local ownership in Manitoba, those benefits stay in the community and they multiply. Privatization means this government is exporting ownership and exporting wealth to Babcock's shareholders.

So what was—exactly what was wrong with the previous delivery of services that required this change?

Mr. Pallister: Well, I do very much appreciate a question from any Liberal member on the topic of penny-wise and pound foolish, Madam Speaker. What would be unwise, of course, would be to see the federal government promise to balance the books next year and run a \$20-billion deficit, but I'll let the member defend that.

What I would say, though, is that what Manitobans care about and, I believe, what our neighbours care about too, is that when there's a fire they get help, and so we'll make sure that help is there.

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

Mr. Lamont: Madam Speaker, the Premier often talks of the ideology of the NDP. However, it's just as ideological to believe that the private sector will always deliver a better result as it is to believe the public sector will always deliver a better result.

Public safety is different, as the Premier has said many times. He has said with—when it refers to cannabis, that government should focus on what it's good at, which is safety, and the private sector should focus on retail.

What—why does he have a different view when it comes to air ambulances and water bombers?

Mr. Pallister: Yes, okay. Well, Madam Speaker, I get the issue that the member's trying to discuss, which is the issue of why the federal government would buy away from the private sector a pipeline company at a cost of billions of dollars, and I'm not sure at the logic of that either, so I understand where he's coming from.

Madam Speaker, to me, as a practical person, my colleagues on this side of the House as practical people, we're Manitobans through and through. We believe that what you should do is look at your options, shop intelligently, try to get the best possible value for money—not necessarily the lowest price—the best value for money, and if you do that in your own finances you can probably move ahead. If you do that in your own small business, you can probably make progress, and if governments start to do that—and this government is doing that—then the whole province will win.

Review of Police Services Act Consultation with Community Experts

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): Previous amendments to The Police Services Act took place with extensive consultation and facilitated sessions by community experts.

In 2009, 46 stakeholder meetings were held with over 120 people, including elected officials, indigenous leaders, public safety advocates and policing institutions across the province, Madam Speaker.

Does the minister intend to follow this model and ensure that all voices are heard in a review of The Police Services Act?

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Clearly, our government identified in our Throne Speech that we would review The Police Services Act. I did say that would be a very comprehensive review and that we would be engaging Manitobans and Manitoba municipalities in that review.

We are just in the process of finalizing the terms of reference for that particular review and I can assure the member opposite that this will be a very comprehensive review.

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

Ms. Fontaine: Over the last two weeks we've heard troubling concerns raised regarding the Independent Investigation Unit, Madam Speaker. The minister's responses as to what actions he has taken are pretty vague and, at best, suggesting he would need to hear a public outcry before making changes. I remind the minister that it is law that The Police Services Act needs to be reviewed.

So, again, will the voices of those with community expertise be heard, including expert consultation with MKO, SCO, MMF, AMC, Inner City Safety Coalition and the Elizabeth Fry Society, just to name a few?

* (14:20)

Mr. Cullen: I think that we have to do—remind the opposition from time to time that this particular unit is an Independent Investigation Unit. Obviously, they have their own authority there to investigate situations that arise.

We as government have certainly legislative oversight. We've made the commitment to Manitobans that we would provide a review of that legislation and, certainly, it will review the Independent Investigation Unit as well as part of that review.

So we look forward to engaging with Manitobans, and all the people that the member referenced will have an opportunity to engage with government in terms of that review.

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

Ms. Fontaine: Amendments to The Police Services Act in 2009 included extensive consultation using community experts. Forty-six such communities were—community meetings were held, led by community experts from organizations like the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, the Inner City Safety Coalition, MKO and SCO, as well as law-enforcement agencies, with many, many community meetings, face to face, Madam Speaker.

In fact, under our NDP government, there was an indigenous negotiating table ensuring that our voices, experiences and recommendations were included in any changes to the police act.

So will the minister follow this example and ensure that all voices, including indigenous leadership, have a place in the review and at—and are at the table?

Mr. Cullen: Clearly, our government believes in consulting with Manitobans before we make change. That's something we've committed to in our Throne Speech.

We will certainly be laying a very comprehensive review going forward. It's—the terms of reference were being developed. Our goal is, unlike the previous NDP government, who didn't get this legislation correct, we will consult and get the legislation correct.

Emergency Room Services Wait Times Improvements

Mr. James Teitsma (Radisson): Year after year under the previous NDP government, our province consistently ranked at the bottom of every statistical emergency department wait time category. After 17 years of decline in our health-care system our PC government is delivering better health care sooner.

Today, the Canadian Institute for Health Information—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Teitsma: —released data pertaining to emergency wait times in Manitoba for 2017-2018.

Can the Minister of Health please update this House on what that data shows?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): I thank the member for the question.

New CIHI data clearly shows that our government's healing the health-care system plan is working. Madam Speaker, it shows that when it comes to emergency department wait times to get that initial assessment, Manitoban's time is down 14 per cent; every other province going up.

Also, when it comes to the whole length of stay Manitoba is showing a 25 per cent drop in time while other provinces are seeing increases to their time.

Madam Speaker, the evidence shows that while the rest of Canada is trending to higher wait times, Manitoba is bucking the trend. No matter—no wonder CIHI calls us most improved in Canada. We are getting better care sooner for all Manitobans.

Home Repair Programs Government Incentives

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): My question is based on recognizing the current state of our housing

stock where we have thousands of homes throughout our province that are in need of significant repair.

There was a time when the Province supported programs like the residential rehabilitation program and home fix-up grants that assisted Manitobans and in many ways encouraged people to fix up their homes.

Does this government have any plans to incentivize home repair programs for Manitobans?

Hon. Cathy Cox (Acting Minister of Families): I think we need to set the record straight that the members opposite, the NDP government, they left hundreds of millions of dollars of renovations on the table for us to clean up.

We're going to get it done, Madam Speaker. We're improving the way the system is working at the present time and we'll ensure that Manitobans are better off under this government.

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

Gilbert Park Residents—Eviction Notices Housing Department's Administrative Errors

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): Over a year ago several seniors in my constituency visited me at my weekly McDonald's in a panic. They explained how they were all given eviction notices and were being forced out of their homes where they had lived for decades.

I personally tried to meet with the property manager, but I was refused. I then reached out to the department of Housing, and within a couple hours the former minister of Housing personally called each of my constituents who received these eviction notices and claimed that they had been sent in error.

Madam Speaker, I table the story now, and I ask the new minister of Housing if she is going to stand up for the seniors living in Gilbert Park and ensure that they are not evicted without reason and work out these absurd issues in her department.

Hon. Cathy Cox (Acting Minister of Families): I appreciate receiving that information from the member opposite and we welcome the opportunity to have discussions with the individuals from Gilbert Park.

Just wanted to put on record, though, as well, that because of our new changes to our Rent Assist program, that we have over an additional

3,000 individuals that are benefiting from that program under our leadership.

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

Ms. Lamoureux: These eviction notices were not in error and we know that. The government got caught and they knew that they were in the wrong, so they quickly retracted their demand.

Madam Speaker, those who were affected by these eviction letters requested that the former minister provide them, in writing, a letter that they would not be later unfairly evicted, and no such letter was written.

Now I have another constituent also living in Gilbert Park who just received an eviction notice and a renewal notice all within two weeks.

Does the new minister responsible for Housing feel that this, too, was an error, and will she do what the last minister wouldn't and put her commitment on paper to ease the minds of the seniors in the North End?

Mrs. Cox: You know, talking about individuals that received those notices, our door is always open to listen to them and I'd be willing to receive that information from that member.

I know that under our housing strategy we consulted with over 1,500 individuals, Manitobans, something that the former government never did, Madam Speaker.

We're open to listening, to consulting, and I look forward to hearing from that member about these concerns.

Northern Manitoba Communities Job Losses and Obstetric Services

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): Yesterday we heard disturbing news about job losses in Flin Flon. We asked the Premier questions. His response was to make fun of people who push a broom for a living, which he should be ashamed of, which every member over there should be ashamed of. Then we hear the Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade say, hey, it's just business as usual.

Will somebody on that side please tell us what the plan is for Flin Flon, what the plan is for northern Manitoba?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Madam Speaker, let me clarify the record for the member and make it

absolutely clear that yesterday I was not in any way, shape or form making fun of people who push a broom. I have tremendous respect for everyone who labours in that manner.

However, for someone like the member opposite to claim he didn't know the mine in Flin Flon, his home community, was going to close until this week is what I was making fun of.

While he was pushing that broom he should've been paying attention to real miners that were working around him who knew that mine was closing years ago, and he should've been encouraging, years ago, the NDP to take action, which they did not. Instead, now he stands belatedly, a half a decade later and tries to blame someone else for the problem the NDP created in the first place.

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

Mr. Lindsey: Once again, this Premier stands up and clearly shows that he has no respect for people that work in a mine, in a warehouse or anywhere else. He just discounts anything they have to say and that's the Premier that we have. That's the one that we need to—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Lindsey: —be ashamed of.

Meanwhile, his Minister of Health is cutting health services in Flin Flon as well. They're trying to drive people out of Flin Flon.

Will the Minister of Health stand up and commit to getting obstetric services back in Flin Flon, even while his other ministers do absolutely nothing to help Flin Flon? *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

* (14:30)

Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade): Madam Speaker, it truly is disappointing that the member is so out of touch with his own community, the very community he claims to live in. They've known for years that the 777 mine was going to close. In fact, it's got a couple of years extension from when it was originally scheduled to close.

There's two mines right now in Snow Lake—HudBay is spending over \$18 million in active exploration this year in the greenstone belt; and now we hear—and this week I met with the city council of

Flin Flon. They expressed optimism of the future for Flin Flon.

It's too bad their own member doesn't share that enthusiasm, that optimism that the Flin Flon people have themselves. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

The honourable member for Flin Flon, on a final supplementary.

Mr. Lindsey: It's somewhat disheartening for the optimistic people of Flin Flon to see the Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade refuse to stand up and support workers.

Yes, we were well aware that the 777 mine was going to wind down; however, the news we got yesterday was that the zinc refinery would also come to a close—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order. Order.

Mr. Lindsey: This minister and this Premier should be ashamed of the response that they give to people in Flin Flon that have legitimate concerns.

They've talked about having a Look North plan, and that's all it is, is a plan to have a plan. We know that obstetric services have been cut in Flin Flon.

Did the government know something beforehand that they failed to share with people? What are they doing to protect people in Flin Flon? What are they doing to protect communities in the North?

Mr. Pallister: Well, a \$25-million brand new emergency for Flin Flon is a pretty good answer. I think the member should maybe—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Pallister: It's no wonder the council members—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: It's no member—it's no wonder, Madam Speaker, that the member is grumpy. He's got to go to the doors of his community and tell them that he's running for a party that doesn't want mines. He's got to go to the doors and say that he's running for a party—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: —that wants higher taxes, and he's also got to go to the doors and tell the people of his riding they should turn the heat down because they want a

carbon tax that's going to make it harder for people in the North.

Madam Speaker, we're going to work to make life better for the people in the North.

The member shouldn't insult the hundreds of Manitobans from the North like the people from the Manitoba Chamber of Commerce who are here with us today, who have worked diligently to develop and implement a plan to help the North find the future it deserves.

The member doesn't—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: —want to be a part of that, it's obvious, Madam Speaker. But this government does and the people of the North do too.

Madam Speaker: The time for oral questions has expired.

PETITIONS

Flin Flon General Hospital Obstetric Services

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:

(1) Access to quality health care is a fundamental right of all Manitobans no matter where they live.

(2) The Premier has slashed budgets and cancelled projects for northern communities, making it harder for families to get the primary care they need.

(3) The budget—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Lindsey: —of the northern health authority has been slashed by over \$6 million which has negatively affected doctor-retention programs and the Northern Patient Transportation Program.

(4) With limited service in the North, the Premier is forcing families and seniors to travel further for the health care they need.

(5) On November 6, 2018, the northern regional health authority announced that obstetric delivery services at the Flin Flon General Hospital would be suspended, with no discussion regarding when they will be reinstated.

(6) The result of this decision is that mothers in Flin Flon and surrounding area will have to travel at least an hour and a half to The Pas, creating unnecessary risk for mothers and their babies.

(7) The people of Flin Flon are concerned for the health and safety of mothers-to-be and their babies, including the extra physical and financial stress that will be placed upon them by this decision of the provincial government.

(8) There has been no commitment from this provincial government that mothers and their escorts who have to travel to The Pas will be covered by the northern transportation program.

(9) Flin Flon General Hospital is a regional hub that serves several communities on both sides of the Manitoba-Saskatchewan border.

(10) Because this provincial government has refused to invest in much-needed health services in The Pas, the hospital in The Pas may not be able to handle the extra workload created by this decision.

We the Legislative Assembly of—excuse me—petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to reinstate obstetric delivery services at Flin Flon General Hospital and work with the government of Saskatchewan and the federal government to ensure obstetric services continue to be available on a regional basis.

And this petition has been signed by Russel Reeves, Denise Gudbranson, Leah Richardson and many other Manitobans.

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

And prior to recognizing the next person to read a petition, I would ask for everybody's co-operation. There's a lot of conversations going on here and I'm having some difficulty hearing.

Concordia Hospital Emergency Room

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) The provincial government has announced the closures of three emergency rooms and an urgent-care centre in the city of Winnipeg, including

closing down the emergency room at Concordia Hospital.

(2) The closures come on the heels of the closing of a nearby QuickCare clinic, as well as cancelled plans for ACCESS centres and personal-care homes, such as Park Manor, that would have provided important services for families and seniors in the area.

(3) The closures have left families and seniors in northeast Winnipeg without any point of contact with front-line health-care services and will result in them having to travel 20 minutes or more to St. Boniface Hospital's emergency room for emergency care.

(4) These cuts will place a heavy burden on the many seniors who live in northeast Winnipeg and visit the emergency room frequently, especially for those who are unable to drive or who are low-income.

(5) The provincial government failed to consult with families and seniors in northeast Winnipeg regarding the closing of their emergency room or to consult with health officials and health-care workers at Concordia to discuss how this closure would impact patient care in advance of the announcement.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to reverse the decision to close Concordia Hospital's emergency room so that families and seniors in northeast Winnipeg and the surrounding areas have timely access to quality health-care services.

And his petition was signed by many Manitobans.

Vimy Arena

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background of this petition is as follows:

(1) The residents of St. James and other areas of Manitoba are concerned with the intention expressed by the provincial government to use the Vimy Arena site as a Manitoba Housing project.

(2) The Vimy Arena site is in the middle of a residential area near many schools, churches, community clubs and senior homes, and neither the provincial government nor the City of Winnipeg considered a better suited location in rural,

semi-rural or industrial site such as the St. Boniface industrial park, the 20,000 acres at CentrePort or existing properties such as the Shriners Hospital or the old Children's Hospital on Wellington Crescent.

* (14:40)

(3) The provincial government is exempt from any zoning requirements that would have existed if the land was owned by the city. This exemption bypasses the community input and due diligence, and ignores better uses of land which would be consistent with residential areas.

(4) There are no standards that one would expect for a treatment centre. The Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living has stated that the Department of Health had no role to play in the acquisition of the Manitoba Housing project for the use of a drug addiction facility.

(5) The Manitoba Housing project initiated by provincial government changes fundamental nature of the community, including parks, recreational uses. Concerns of the residents of St. James and others regarding public safety, property values and the way of life are not being properly addressed.

(6) The concerns of the residents of St. James are being ignored while obvious other locations in wealthier neighbourhoods, such as Tuxedo, River Heights, have not been considered for this Manitoba Housing project, even though there are hundreds of acres of land available for development at Kapyong Barracks or parks like Heubach Park that share the same zoning as the Vimy Arena site.

(7) The Manitoba Housing project and operation of a drug treatment centre fall outside the statutory mandate of a Manitoba of the Manitoba Housing renewal corporation.

(8) The government has not done or, does not have a co-ordinated plan for addiction treatment in Manitoba, as it currently underfunds treatment centres which are running under capacity and potential.

(9) The community has been misled regarding the intention of Manitoba Housing as it has been transferred for a 50-bed facility even though the project is clearly outside Manitoba Housing responsibility.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to take necessary steps to ensure that the Vimy Arena site is not used for an addiction facility.

(2) To urge the provincial government to take the necessary steps to ensure preservation of public land along Sturgeon Creek for the purpose of parkland and recreational activities for public use, including being an important component of the Sturgeon Creek Greenway Trail and the Sturgeon Creek ecosystem under the current designation PR2 at 255 Hamilton Ave. located at the Vimy Arena site, and to maintain the land to be continued to designated for parks and recreation activity, neighbourhoods and communities.

This has been signed by many Manitobans.

Addictions Services— Brandon and Western Manitoba

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Addictions are a health and social problem that require co-ordinated responses from the health-care, social services, education and justice systems.

(2) It is well known that the number of people addicted to alcohol, drugs and other substances is on the rise in Manitoba, with a notable increase in use of methamphetamine and opiates, two highly addictive and very destructive drugs.

(3) Between April 2015 and April 2018, drug abuse and alcohol abuse were two of the top three risk factors identified by the Community Mobilization Westman HUB when dealing with persons with acutely elevated risk.

(4) Recent Brandon Police Service annual reports show a steady increase in calls for service for crimes against property and person.

(5) In Brandon and western Manitoba, individuals seeking addictions treatment and the families trying to help them do not have local access to the services or supports they need.

(6) There is no publicly available, centralized list of addictions facilities in Manitoba.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To request that the provincial government consider establishing a cross-departmental team to provide leadership on a culturally appropriate,

co-ordinated response to the growing addictions crisis in our province that includes an aggressive, widespread education campaign on the dangers of using methamphetamine and opiates, along with addictions education for front-line medical staff in health-care facilities.

(2) To request that the provincial government consider providing additional addictions services in Brandon and western Manitoba across the continuum of care, including acute response, detoxification, long-term rehabilitation, transitional housing and support for managing co-occurring disorders.

(3) To request that the Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living consider establishing a publicly available inventory of all addictions facilities in Manitoba.

(4) To request that the Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living consider providing supports for the families of people struggling with addiction, including counselling, patient navigation and advocacy, and direct access to free naloxone.

This petition is signed by Louise Woods, Nicole Woods, Darcy Woods and many other Manitobans, Madam Speaker.

Medical Laboratory Services

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Manitoba Legislature.

The background to this petition is as follows:

The provision of laboratory services to medical clinics and physicians' offices has been historically and continues to be a private sector service.

It is vitally important that there be competition in laboratory services to allow medical clinics to seek solutions from more than one provider to control costs and to improve service for health professionals and patients.

Under the present provincial government, Dynacare, an Ontario-based subsidiary of a US company, has acquired Unicity labs, resulting in a monopoly situation for the provision of laboratory services in medical clinics and physicians' offices.

The creation of this monopoly has resulted in the closure of many laboratories by Dynacare in and around the city of Winnipeg. Since the acquisition of Unicity labs, Dynacare has engaged in anti-competitive activities where it has changed the

collection schedules of patients' specimens and charged some medical offices for collection services.

These closures have created a situation where a great number of patients are less well served, having to travel significant distances in some cases, waiting considerable periods of time and sometimes being denied or having to leave without obtaining lab services.

This situation is particularly critical for patients requiring fasting blood draws as they may experience complications that could be life-threatening based on their individual health situations.

Furthermore, Dynacare has instructed that all STATs patients, patients with suspicious internal infections, be directed to its King Edward location. This creates unnecessary obstacles for the patients who are required to travel to that lab rather than simply completing the test in their doctor's office.

This new directive by Dynacare presents a direct risk to patients' health in the interest of higher profits. This has further resulted in patients opting to visit emergency rooms rather than travelling twice, which increases cost to the health-care system.

Medical clinics and physicians' offices service thousands of patients in their communities and have structured their offices to provide a one-stop service, acting as a health-care front line that takes off some of the load from emergency rooms.

The creation of this monopoly has been problematic to many medical clinics and physicians, hampering their ability to provide high quality and complete service to their patients due to closures of so many laboratories.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to request Dynacare to reopen the closed laboratories or allow Diagnostic Services of Manitoba to freely open labs in clinics which formerly housed labs that have been shut down by Dynacare.

To urge the provincial government to ensure high-quality lab services for patients and a level playing field and competition in the provision of laboratory services to medical offices.

To urge the provincial government to address this matter immediately in the interest of better patient-focused care and improved support for health professionals.

Signed by Darlene Heinrich, Rhonda Gislason, Glenn Jones and many others.

Thank you.

ORDERS OF THE DAY
GOVERNMENT BUSINESS
THRONE SPEECH
(Sixth Day of Debate)

Madam Speaker: Resuming debate on the motion of the honourable member for Southdale (Mr. Smith) and the amendment and subamendment thereto, standing in the name of the honourable member for Elmwood, who has three minutes remaining.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): You know, I spent yesterday talking about the amendment to the Throne Speech and dealing with all this uncertainty at the Concordia Hospital in northeast Winnipeg and why the government members are so inactive and are going along with this idea of the Premier (Mr. Pallister).

* (14:50)

They—the fact of the matter is, Madam Speaker, that Concordia Hospital is being slowly strangled by this government, and we saw a lot of evidence of that. For example, the general surgery program is being ended, I think, on January 1st. Like, only another month from now will be the end of general surgeries, and the only surgeries being done in the hospital after that will be the hip and knee surgeries.

And the questions that, you know, people have about that is—for example, the scopes are something that are done by general surgeons at the hospital, and now they're going to be ending the general surgeries in another month. Then what is going to happen to the people involved in the scopes?

So these are—there's a lot of uncertainty—needless uncertainty—about all of these issues, and not to mention the fact that the government has been rationing procedures. And, you know, I know that governments do that. But, for example, in the area of the TAVI valves, the artificial heart valves, you know, I think they were allocated, like, 50 of these things until March the 1st, but they've already used 49.

So if there's a need for a TAVI valve, an artificial heart valve anytime between today and next, you know, April 1, then, you know, there's only one more person that's going to be able to take advantage of that situation.

So there are many problems there and so much uncertainty that, in fact, they—the government, the hospital, have—board—or the hospital site has put up a nice yellow and red and black sign on their website, you know, assuring everybody that, contrary to some media report which I haven't been able to find, the place is fully open for surgeries. But, you know, the people in the hospital know better. They know that general surgeries are going to be done in the next little while.

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

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): Madam Speaker, I like to ask if you could canvass the House.

Mr. Doyle Pivniuk, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

I've spoken to the House leaders; I wonder if the spiral portion of my reply to the Speech from the Throne can be included in Hansard simply because there's no way I could get through it. And I've canvassed the House already, so I ask for unanimous consent to have the speech included in Hansard. Agreed?

Madam Speaker—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for Assiniboia. Sorry about that. *[interjection]*

Mr. Fletcher: Okay.

I'd like to canvass the House—and I think you'll find unanimous consent—to allow me to request that the speech from the throne that's in the binders that—or in the ringer be allowed to be tabled or—and be a part of Hansard. I wonder if the—if you can ask for unanimous consent for this.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I just want to clarify to the member of Assiniboia—I just want to know how long—how—what's the length of the document that he wants put in Hansard?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): Authority, maybe. I understand the member has prepared remarks for the Throne Speech, and those prepared remarks are within a spiral binder. But he may not be able to get through them all, and so I think he's asking leave for his prepared remarks to be able to be included, in their entirety, in Hansard.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is it the will of the House to include the document in Hansard, all of the documents that are included that he doesn't get through? Is it will of the House? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Fletcher: I'd like to thank the Government House Leader (Mr. Goertzen) and the opposition parties for allowing me—for allowing what just happened. It's unusual—there's four copies there—and it's unusual, but it's helpful. There are constructive comments, which I offer to anyone who wants to take them.

Now, there is some critique of the past year, and after the government's been so generous with the time and allowing—I kind of feel awkward critiquing. Maybe I'll take a couple notches down from the original plan, but I will be critiquing no less.

Let's go over the last year. We have—we heard in the Throne Speech last year, a number of commitments; none have been followed.

We have heard—we have seen the entire Manitoba Hydro board resign en masse. These are prominent Winnipeggers, Manitobans. We've saw the—that board replaced with a board that had to publicly tell the government that they didn't have the skill sets to run a corporation like Manitoba Hydro.

Then we have the old energy efficiency, or inefficiency Manitoba, the red tape, its cost. The creation of a creepy Crown corporation is not good for Manitobans and not good for Manitoba Hydro. How does it help to reduce domestic consumption of electric power in Manitoba when we have too much power and it's all green? The government needs to answer that.

Madam Speaker, the government has failed in a number of areas. I—in Health, there is some good news on Victoria hospital. So let's give credit where credit's due. I understand the wait times at Victoria hospital have decreased; that's good.

I—but let's—there are sort of five areas I'd like to focus on. One is the—well, the mining industry is topical; the drug addiction crisis in Manitoba and conflict of interest guidelines.

The government promised last year that they would have a standing committee on organ donation. And after a motion that I brought forward and some legislation, and that morphed into a task force, which is less substantial than a standing committee. And that morphed into—I don't know; I don't think anyone knows. But that is an important issue, and I will be pursuing that in the upcoming year.

The—we can't not talk about the elephant in the room, and my friends across the way will understand

little bit of my interest in the flip-flop the Premier (Mr. Pallister) made on the carbon tax.

Everything that I have—I said at the time and from now until—and especially after they recessed me from caucus—*[interjection]* Yes, actually, I—'forcivly' evicted. Yes, it's like a—but that's okay. It was the right thing for the Premier to do because their cultures are completely different between Ottawa and Manitoba, and I just wouldn't be able to go along with a lot of the activities, and that is fine. You take it and you represent your constituents.

* (15:00)

But to get kicked out—and Efficiency Manitoba is the other reason, at least the reasons I saw in media—and yes—and so the Premier takes a position on carbon tax, which was just ridiculous in the first place, but then he tries to—like, I don't know what he was trying to do. What was he trying to do? Have a tax grab for revenue to do what?

We all agree now that a carbon tax in Manitoba does not have the effect it would have in, say, Toronto. Premier spent 14 months saying, yes, in fact, anyone who disagrees with me is out, out, out, out. And in a spectacular and historic flip—well, there was several flip-flops.

First was the flip-flop to promise no increased taxes. And then—in the election. And then the first thing proposed is a new carbon tax, without a referendum. That's flip-flop 1.

So we did what we said we wouldn't do. We—when I—you know, as a caucus and party. And that was going—the logic was presented as such. There was no logic, but that was the Premier's position. And then he reversed it. Like, one-eighty. And he didn't tell anyone. He didn't tell anyone about the first one; he didn't tell anyone about the second change. It's like nothing had happened.

But the problem is with this flip-flop. First of all, it's completely—*[interjection]*

You know, and, Mr. Chair, I wish the members would focus on listening on the very profound critique that is occurring.

The—so, the Premier, by endorsing the carbon tax, he bought into the principle the—of the Prime Minister. The only thing they couldn't agree on was price. The Premier wanted to pay more, faster, than even the Liberals. And, in doing so, he made the legal case for the carbon tax and undermined any plausible legal argument any province, including

Saskatchewan, Alberta, Ontario, could have against the carbon tax.

Like, if Ottawa wants to do it, Ottawa could do it. And that's what I said two years ago. Like, let Ottawa 'implose' the tax if they have to or want to, and let them explain it, but don't tax yourselves; that's ridiculous, especially when you're a Conservative government. Conservative governments, when they raise taxes, they lose.

Madam Speaker, the issue of mining needs a moment. I have been long involved in my industry—geological engineer, and in fact, I was going to work at a mine that I hit the moose with my car that ended me up in this place somehow. And I have been to all the mine sites that you hear people talk about: Snow Lake, Bissett, Flin Flon, Thompson. These are beautiful communities.

Mining's a way of life. But it is also disappearing. And I've let people know this for years, including the government, and the government did nothing.

And one example is when the federal government announced a national park on top of the extension of the Thompson Nickel Belt without consultation with anyone—not the Province, not the First Nations, not the residents. They made that announcement. And what do we hear from the Province? Nothing. Nothing.

So if you're Vale or HudBay, you're looking around Manitoba; you know that there's huge potential ore under the Paleozoic limestone in around Grand Rapids, and then you find out that it's going to be a national park. Well, you're not going to be investing in Manitoba. Even the risk of a national park on top of the rich nickel belt will detract investment.

And we've seen Birchtree close and Vale not re-investing, the HudBay announcement. Bissett has really collapsed, and a mining strategy from this government that seems to be a mysterious framework, cookie-cutter framework—not recognizing differences between First Nations and so it's a cookie-cutter approach.

And the mining strategy of this government is, the minister gets up and rattles off a couple elements of the periodic table. That's their mining strategy for Manitoba. The minister knows how to say copper and gold and nickel. It's probably a revelation that nickel comes from a mine, not his pocket change.

But the biggest issue of our time in Manitoba, I think, is drug addiction. I have become quite aware of this issue in the last year because of a proposed drug facility in the middle of my riding. Proposed by this government, proposed by the member from—MLA—the MLA, Kirkfield Park, and the issue—again, I—Mr.—I wish my friends on my left would really, maybe start taking notes rather than talking.

The—so—and we talk about the Vimy Arena site. We find not only did the government initiate it, they did not look across the province to see what other facilities were available, like the Shriners hospital on Wellington Crescent, which would meet all the criteria and is already zoned and already owned by the Province and is empty.

They didn't look at Kelsey House in Pinawa, or the old hospital on Pelican Lake—sanitorium, I—the—which is a great facility. I've stayed there myself, after it was a sanitorium. And it is—there are lots of great places.

And, in fact, business owners have even offered to provide land for a facility for a buck near—some beautiful land north of Gimli, but instead, the government has insisted that they would not look anywhere, that they're going to build this facility in a residential area in the heart of St. James.

We learn—and the—we're told, oh, well, there's a place in Calgary that we're modelling, and it's in a residential area. So I went to the place in Calgary. It's not in a residential area. It's in the middle of one of Calgary's largest industrial parks. The—and I have the video. I was there. I have the zoning. It is a, you know, it is really a disgrace in the site selection.

Now we get into some really messy stuff: conflict of interest. I have brought forward legislation to deal with conflict of interest, identified many years ago that the legislation in Manitoba is terrible, but instead of dealing with it, the government had just pretended they didn't exist.

When I forced the issue with legislation, they—in June, or May, they said, oh, okay, we'll introduce some legislation in fall. Nope, they haven't done that.

* (15:10)

When their Conflict of Interest Commissioner made his 83 recommendations and blasted—no, they didn't follow through on that. In fact, they said they would be introducing—no, no legislation. In fact, they did their darndest best to cut or get rid of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner, a independent officer of

the Legislature, at a meeting of the long knives in July, on a beautiful evening.

Anyway, that didn't work out for the government. Government has backed down from that, which is good. The—but conflict of interest—so—and this is why people need to do due diligence. Trust and then verify.

Madam Speaker, let's take a look at the Bruce Oake Foundation for a second. Why is there a for-profit realty holding company under the same name? Nobody's answered that. Are they going to flip the property? Nobody answers that question. We're told that it's an opioid-only facility. Then we're told by proponents that it's—well, it's opioid and crystal meth and some other things. Oh, really? Crystal meth? Well, that's a different order of magnitude. And then we're told that they're—that Manitoba Health is not involved. Really? Well, it seems like a health issue. There's no regulations. There's no standards. There's no anything for this facility if it goes forward.

And we have been sold a bill of goods. It's not in a—the comparison to Calgary is wrong, and the proponent needs to admit that, that it's not in a residential area, and he should have been clear right from the very beginning.

So this brings us to another awkward situation. So, the proponent for that land got the Province to force the City, through a loophole, to sell the land for a buck, \$1; it's worth millions of dollars. The proponent is a well-known TV personality. We look at how the party raises money, the governing party. And guess who helps them raise money in a huge—and it's very transparent, because he's on huge TV screens for a PC fundraiser—thousands of people have seen it—and from his work in Nashville during a Jets game. It's not like he was in town, like, the year before. No, he was doing it from Nashville. I wonder who paid for that broadcast. The—and helping raise money for the PC government.

Now, you see, well, wait a second. That person is getting a sweetheart deal of \$1 for this property. That is unethical and should not be allowed to happen, in my view. You can't be raising money for the political—and in such a blatant way, and then get what would appear to be a political favour.

Then you look at who the chair of the fund is, who the lawyers for the Bruce Oake Foundation are. Last time I raised a conflict of interest, the Delta 9 was mentioned, and the common denominator in all

these are—is MTL Aikins. They are—do the legal work; the chair is the PC fund person.

Therefore, Madam Chair, I would like to table these documents that are here. There's thousands of pages, four copies of each, with a table of contents, that I encourage everyone to look at.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member's time has expired.

Madam Speaker and members of the Manitoba Legislature,

I wish to thank the people of Assiniboia, Manitoba and Canada for their support during the twists and turns of my life's journey.

As leader of the Manitoba Party, our team of dedicated individuals, will improve our democratic systems and processes in Manitoba.

There is no way I can repay society for the opportunities that I have had in my life. However, public service allows me the opportunity to pay down some of my debt to all.

I wish to share with Manitobans and the legislative assembly, the public policy goals I will pursue in the upcoming year.

As leader of the Manitoba Party and as many have suggested, "The Last Tory", I look forward to working with everyone on an issue-by-issue basis.

A large group of dedicated and passionate Manitobans have grouped together to create a better vision for Manitoba. This group of individuals cannot be placed on a political spectrum. They are individuals. They believe in individuals, they believe in themselves. They believe in Manitoba and the people of Manitoba. These individuals have voted for all parties, but have become disenchanted with all powerful political parties that ignore the people.

Our Mission

Our mission is to strengthen democracy in Manitoba by engaging the people we serve and recognizing their value as individuals. We exist to serve, not to dictate to those who work tirelessly to care for themselves, their families, communities and our Province.

Our Vision

Our vision is for a prosperous, thriving Manitoba, limited only by the efforts of Manitobans with the freedom to maximize their opportunities and contribute to our society. Neighbourhoods and

communities are the core of our economic and social progress. We will work with the people to achieve a peaceful, prosperous, safe, secure and stable society.

Our Values

We value government as an agent of the people of Manitoba, duty bound to act in best interest of Manitobans at all times.

We value the ties between government and the people; it is the people's government, not their overlord.

We value a government that is open, honest and communicates effectively and in plain language.

We value compassionate, ethical and honest dealing by government, all crown corporations, agencies, departments, elected representatives and workers at all times.

We value elected representatives who represent their constituents and are free to challenge policies publicly and debate issues regardless of our caucus stand on a particular subject.

We value the role of the opposition in our legislature in providing constructive and reasonable alternatives to government; we reject obstruction and opposition without just cause.

We value our freedom and we recognize that freedom is not given to people by their government, but that people delegate some of their freedom to government, and may revoke that delegation.

We value an educated workforce.

We value government, acting as an agent for Manitobans, that cares for those who cannot care for themselves.

We value a fiscally responsible government that cares for taxpayer dollars as an agent of the people, exercising common sense and employing efficiency and prudence in all budgetary decisions.

We value self-reliance, and one way that we will measure our progress toward our vision of a prosperous, thriving Manitoba is for Manitoba to become a net contributor to federal Equalization payments.

These values are integral to implementing our vision for Manitoba.

Current Leadership

Many of these principles and policies have collapsed under the current provincial leadership.

It seems that in order for the Premier to listen to MLAs, they must be removed from caucus. Manitobans see the flip-flops, the fudging, the fiddling and fondling of public funds leading to financial fiasco.

More will be said on this topic later in this speech and document.

Interestingly, last month the Premier finally took my advice and dropped the carbon tax. The government also copied my private members bill to bring back the Queens Council I designation to Manitoba to be awarded to those who have distinguished themselves in the legal profession.

This Past Year

I will address the issues not raised in the throne speech or issues the government has misinterpreted or ignored.

But first, let's examine the situation since the last throne speech. Unfortunately for Manitobans, the situation is far more dire than the government tried to suggest through the Throne Speech just a few days ago.

The fact that the government has refused to listen to Manitobans, has led to abysmal cross departmental mismanagement and gross government failures.

Manitobans touched by the economy, the public sector, crown corporations, the environment and priority social programs have all been let down by this government.

Manitoba Hydro

The en masse resignation of the entire Manitoba Hydro board. The main reason for this given by the very well respected Manitoban, Sandy Riley, is that the government just would not listen to the Board. In fact, the government would not even meet with the Board. Unprecedented in Manitoba, and perhaps Canadian history, the entire Board of respected Manitobans resigned because of the neglect of the government.

The government unaware and caught flat footed, appointed an incomplete board. The replacement board had to publicly plea to the government to take action and appoint individuals with the skill sets necessary such as accounting and engineering, that

are essential for a Board such as Manitoba Hydro to operate.

It is a terrible state of affairs when the government loses an entire Board and replaces it with a Board missing the essential knowledge and experience.

Therefore, we have learned beyond a doubt that the Hydro Board is only for optics. Manitoba Hydro is run by the Premier's office.

This Premier has made Manitoba Hydro an extension of his office and demonstrates the politicalization of everything the government touches.

Since it is the Premier who is running Manitoba Hydro, it is the Premier that must be held to account.

Every opportunity since the 2016 election to set Manitoba Hydro on the right path, or mitigate the mistakes of the past have been missed, or the mistakes of the past have been expanded on and made worse.

Some examples include attacking the Metis Federation, a matter that is now in the courts. The continuation of the Minnesota Line, failure to address Bipole III, land expropriations or Manitoba Hydro restructuring.

Since the government's first Throne Speech, Aboriginal and Metis people of Manitoba have been acknowledged and recognized as the first inhabitants of the land we call Manitoba. However, not this year. The government in it's petty and personal approach to politics excluded the mention of the Metis. This is likely due to the court action the government brought on to itself by provoking the Metis federation.

The Hydro related failures continue. The list continues.

Creation of Creepy Crown corporation of Efficiency Manitoba

The creation of a useless new creepy crown corporation called Efficiency Manitoba.

This new crown corporation is mandated to reduce the consumption of green hydroelectric power, in spite of the fact that Manitoba Hydro has too much power generation and nowhere to sell its clean power. According to the Public Utilities Board and Manitoba Hydro's own numbers, this policy alone will cost Manitoba Hydro billions of dollars in lost revenue, while actually increasing the cost of hydro power to Manitobans.

Efficiency Manitoba is an extraordinary example of government not understanding its responsibilities. In addition, this new crown corporation will bring in additional costs to people who heat their homes using natural gas. It will bring red tape and additional costs to the transportation industry, which it will somehow regulate. And drinkable water will be regulated through this crown corporation. All of which will be paid for by Manitoba Hydro.

This inefficient crown corporation will also regulate potable water. The government has failed to explain why such a provision exists. Is it the government's intention to put a price on water? Is it the government's intention to monitor the water people use in their private lives? In Manitoba homes? In Manitoba kitchens? In Manitoba bathrooms?

A creepy crown corporation indeed.

Efficiency Manitoba will fail with its current mandate, but will be a case study for future political science students and MLAs in mission creep, mismanagement; missed opportunities and general government mess-ups.

Time does not permit a complete summary of the Hydro fiasco.

Citizens Inquiry

This is why in the last reply to the Throne Speech in 2017, I am committed to conducting a citizen inquiry into Manitoba Hydro. This task has been undertaken with considerable success and will continue in the upcoming year.

The citizens' inquiry has heard from many Manitobans, it has broadcast its hearings live over the Internet and will present a written report.

The government, embarrassed by a single MLA conducting a successful inquiry into Manitoba Hydro, has decided to bring a well-respected Canadian to review a little portion of the hydro fiasco.

However, the scope and nature of this project falls far below the expectations of Manitobans. Given the mandate and scope of work, the government risks the charge that is not serious about fixing the many problems that exist with Manitoba Hydro, while politicizing any critiques.

Fiscal Fiasco

Fiscal policy in the past year has been a "Made-in-Manitoba fiasco".

The budget implementation bill was introduced in the middle of August.

The government refused to admit what everyone can see; the government does not have its act together when it comes to the budget or financial planning.

Perhaps the most obvious example of a government that does not know where it is, nor does it know where it is going, is the "Made-in-Manitoba" carbon tax fiscal flip-flop fiasco.

In my reply to the Throne Speech last year, I made it clear that I was opposed to the government's plan to introduce a carbon tax.

In fact, I was the only MLA to take this position.

The government MLAs howled and mocked me and my position on the carbon tax. The Premier even had me removed from the Conservative caucus for asking questions about this policy.

Today the Premier has embraced my common sense position on this issue, but the result is a major fiscal hole in the budget and a green plan that is in tatters and decomposing.

This is a classic example of the self-inflicted trouble the Premier creates when he ignores everyone. The Premier's style of being too political rather than principled or practical or both, has demonstrated who-is-who.

The former board of Manitoba Hydro, Metis federation, PC Manitoba membership, public servants and many in his own caucus, have realized the Premier is wrong far more often than he is right.

I am pleased with my principled position on the carbon tax, Efficiency Manitoba, Manitoba Hydro, Democratic reform and conflict-of-interest legislation, to name a few.

Forcing the government to flip-flop on the carbon tax has been a great personal vindication. I wish to thank the people of Assiniboia and all Manitobans for their support on this issue over the last 2 years.

Undermining everyone who is opposed to the Carbon Tax in Canada

The Premier has provided Prime Minister and the Federal Liberal Party a huge gift by taking the position he did on the carbon tax.

The damage done to those who oppose the carbon tax across the country, including the Premiers of Alberta, Ontario and Saskatchewan and federal MPs and parties opposed to the carbon tax, is profound.

Any conceivable jurisdictional legal argument that these Premiers may have had, have all been undermined by our Premier.

Poor public policy can create huge problems for the common person and provinces.

Manitoba's position on the carbon tax will be the legacy of this Premier.

He established the principle in agreement with the Federal Liberal Party, but could not agree on how fast to pay the price. The Premier wanted to charge 250% more on Manitobans than even Ottawa was asking.

He lost the principle and the public will pay the price for this Premier's checker game.

Conflict-of-Interest

Manitoba's conflict-of-interest legislation is woefully inadequate and must be modernized. This issue should have been one of the first items for the new government when it was elected.

The principles of "trust and verify" should be cornerstones of our conflict-of-interest Legislative framework.

The government still refuses to introduce comprehensive conflict-of-interest legislation.

There is no mention of this issue in the speech from the throne. In the last year I have introduced legislation which the government has ignored.

I have introduced resolutions on conflict-of-interest which the government has ignored.

The government promised on May 18, 2018 that it would introduce legislation in the fall. We now know the government has no intention of introducing any kind of conflict-of-interest legislation. The government should introduce legislation immediately. Implement it immediately. Manitobans will not be ignored, nor do they tolerate a government that talks about integrity but has none.

The conflict-of-interest Commissioner has agreed with my statement from several years ago that the conflict-of-interest legislation in Manitoba is the worst in the country.

The Commissioner brought forth a report with 83 recommendations on how to improve the legislation.

The government announced the day after they defeated my bill that they were going to introduce conflict-of-interest legislation this fall- they have not

nor do they intend to introduce the promise legislation.

Another promise made, another promise broken.

Beware of government standing committees in the middle of summer

In typical style, July 29, 2018 on a beautiful summer evening, the government tried to pass a motion at a standing committee that could be the instrument the government would use to dismiss the conflict-of-interest Commissioner in some sort of retribution for his thorough report with its 83 recommendations on conflict-of-interest.

The conflict-of-interest Commissioner raised some uncomfortable truths for some MLAs. But rather than listen to the recommendations, the government refused to receive the report. This left the only option for the conflict-of-interest Commissioner which was to provide the report directly to MLAs.

Thank goodness, he made MLAs aware.

This is a case study of why independent officers of the Legislature, need to be independent.

This is also a lesson to all MLAs, especially opposition parties, if the government is calling committee meetings in the middle of summer, out-of-the-blue, the government is likely up to no good.

Looking forward

As we move forward, in this session, I will also focus on policy areas where the government has remained silent.

As a general philosophy, I will be approaching issues with compassion, fiscal responsibility and on environmental issues, as a right-of-centre naturalist.

Empathy will be used for good decision making rather than temporary "feel-good" initiatives but ultimately poor decisions for individuals and Manitobans.

Democracy

On the issue of democracy, I will follow the long-held traditions of Toryism.

The most important Tory principle is representing the people who do the voting.

As Edmund Burke suggested, Queen and country first, the people who elect you directly second and somewhere after that is the party.

I will enhance government performance by providing constructive comments on policy.

The government has ultimately taken my advice over the past year on major issues such as the carbon tax.

Although the government still fails to follow through on the entire scope of various suggestions. Again, on the carbon tax, the government has left a huge fiscal hole and refuse to take other MLA suggestions on the environment.

I get my advice from the people of Manitoba. If the government wishes not to take my advice, they should simply listen to Manitobans in the first place.

Hopefully, we will help guide the government to a more inclusive and transparent method of government.

Low standard for success

The government states its goal to be "the most improved province in Canada".

This is a dismal statement.

Perhaps the government is happy with a "participation badge" at the end of its term.

To say that we want to be the most improved province is just fluff, blue skies and puffy clouds, with unicorns hopping in the fields.

Improve?

Sure, but to compare to other provinces is an easy test to pass.

Manitoba can be the best and if it is not, Manitoba can become the best.

A standard of success that can be measured, a standard that is meaningful, a standard worth being proud of in the Canadian federation is let's make Manitoba a "have" province and a net contributor to equalization payments rather than the current situation where forty cents of every dollar spent by the provincial government is every dollar spent in Ottawa.

Analysis

However, first we need to understand why the Manitoba economy is not reaching its full potential.

We need to understand how Manitoba Hydro has found itself in a fiscal disaster zone in the order of billions of dollars.

With an understanding of the causes of mistakes of the past, we can better ensure that those mistakes made do not happen again.

Simultaneously, new good decisions need to be made in public policy.

In the past, Manitoba could afford costly mistakes, but those days are gone.

The government must get it right the first time.

As member of this grand assembly, we must endeavour to create a society to allow each individual to reach their full potential as human beings.

Things will work out with effort, as Manitobans we must embrace personal responsibility with a collective sense of purpose.

Taxes

Last year I said the following in my reply to the Throne

"I will oppose the carbon tax"

I continue to state the following "Manitoba should not impose a tax onto ourselves. If Ottawa wants to impose a tax, they have that power, but Manitobans and their MLAs must not be complicit in Ottawa's poor public policy.

Bringing a so called Made-in-Manitoba climate change plan, one that introduces a federal driven tax at two and a half times of what Ottawa suggests for 2018, will lead to one certain outcome. The outcome is Manitobans will pay more tax forever.

If the federal policy changes after the next federal election, Manitobans will still be paying far more than most provinces.

Moreover, and best to remember, the Progressive Conservative party of Manitoba, pledged before being elected, less than two years ago, not to increase taxes. Instead, within 24 months of assuming Government, it is increasing taxes just as its largest crown corporation seeks massive rate hikes.

This is ironic. The new tax will raise approximately as much money per year as the 1% Provincial sales tax increase the government correctly railed against when they were in opposition.

The argument that Ottawa made Manitoba do it does not hold water. If Ottawa decides to tax Manitobans

for our green economy, they have the power. Let Ottawa make their case and incur the corresponding public reaction.

Ottawa says that any money raised by carbon pricing will be returned to Manitoba. This makes the Manitoba government position on this issue smoggy at best and pollutes its public policy decisions.

These are the facts on taxes under this government. Their pledge on a referendum on tax increases is non-sense. Manitobans cannot take the Premiers comments on taxes seriously. The government is simply being silly and simple.

Crown corporations

There have been calls from all sides for there to be an inquiry into Manitoba Hydro. Manitobans demand answers about not only Bipole III, but also the decision-making that led to the over-building of generating capacity without identifying customers willing to pay for the cost of that power, resulting in Manitobans facing massive increases in utility bills. Yet, the government has chosen not to conduct an inquiry, why?

I will conduct a citizens' inquiry which will have all the hallmarks of a regular inquiry.

The meetings are public, transcripts will be published, and a report produced.

Much of the evidence placed before the Public Utilities Board will be available in the citizens inquiry.

The Public Utility Board (PUB) has made numerous observations that make the government approach to Hydro impossible.

In addition, the public hearings will also bring to light the truth surrounding the new crown corporation created under the Efficiency Manitoba Act.

This unnecessary act is a notable example of government mission creep and is creepy as previously mentioned.

The new crown corporation is expected to be constituted in the coming months.

Through public hearings I will initiate along with willing MLAs and other Manitobans will be able to discuss the bill in a manner that is far more respectful to Manitobans than the disgraceful process that occurred when the bill went in front of the legislative committee last April-May 2017.

The Environment

My policy on the environment will be aggressive, informed by science, with solutions seen through the lens of a right-of-center naturalist.

I will be clear about the distinction between greenhouse gases and pollution.

Greenhouse gases such as methane and carbon dioxide are invisible and occur naturally. Pollution comes in many forms, but for the purposes of the current debate, the most obvious form of pollution in the atmosphere is seen in the form of smog.

Smog consists of particulates, nitric oxides, and sulfur oxides. (Sometimes referred to colloquially as SOx and NOx.)

Smog is often created by the use of fossil fuels to generate electricity and power our vehicles. I agree that methane and carbon dioxide are gases that can affect global climate and other gases such as nitrates can also contribute.

If Manitobans and Canadians are serious about reducing greenhouse gases, all sides need to be serious about the solutions.

For too long this debate has been us against them; do-or-die; empty platitudes from all sides; all giving the appearance of dealing with this important issue while in reality doing nothing. This is not a binary, yes-no issue.

Putting a price on carbon does not reduce greenhouse gases. The provincial governments plan to introduce a carbon tax will cost Manitobans a quarter of a billion, not counting a quarter of a billion for Hydro bills over the next two years. While not one single molecule of GHG's will be reduced.

Last December at the invitation of the federal government of Germany, I attended a week long energy study and education program. The knowledge gained was very useful and can be found on my website.

I will continue my decade long campaign to use clean, Manitoba electric power to displace the fossil fuels used in Saskatchewan, Alberta, and in the US, while improving our utilities outlook.

Investments in interconnecting Manitobans electricity grid to be compatible with the grids of Saskatchewan, Alberta, and our neighbours to the south will be an investment worth making for Canada and the world. The Canada West foundation

has recently released a report that echoes my sentiments on this issue last month.

The government has picked up some of the jargon but continues to fail.

As I said last year "The Manitoba government should cancel the carbon tax and the "Made-in-Manitoba-climate plan" and replace it with an active policy of insisting the federal government, through its powers through the national energy board, convince, if not force other provinces to accept relatively cheap and certainly clean Manitoba power."

As a Federal Cabinet minister, I shared the responsibility with my colleague, Honourable Dennis Lebel, in creating the Building Canada Fund. As we both represented federal ridings in Hydro rich provinces, we understood the important role clean Hydro power generation can have on the environment and economy.

This is why we made sure that at least 6 billion dollars, through the Building Canada Fund, could be accessible for the use of transmission interconnection between provinces. (4 billion dollars can be found in "projects of regional significance" and another 2 billion set aside for "green initiatives" for the economy and environment).

These funds are booked and as far as I am aware, are still available, but have not been accessed.

I will encourage the federal government, this provincial government, Manitoba Hydro and other stakeholders to pursue all options for the huge surplus of clean power that Manitoba will be generating for decades to come.

What we do need for sure, are creative and innovated ideas that achieve results and do not increase taxes unnecessarily.

Manitoba mining industry and natural resources

The provincial government has failed the mining industry.

There has been nothing substantive suggested in Throne speech.

We were promised a clear plan and Manitobans have received nothing. I have begun a "mindful mining Manitoba initiative". The elements of this will be unveiled over the next period of time.

At www.mindfulmining.com people can catch up on my latest policy proposals and commentary. This effort is far more than the government has offered.

The Manitoba mining industry is near collapse.

In the Throne Speech, the government could only name one project in Manitoba in the mining sector. There should be scores of mining projects, each worth millions if not billions of dollars.

Vale is shutting its smelter, refinery and current nickel belt is depleting fast. Hudbay has already shut down its smelter. Exploration is slowing. Mining has been the third largest industry in the province. Billion future dollars of royalties and tens of thousands of jobs are at stake.

The government must do the following immediately or risk all major mining companies moving their capital investments of billions of dollars and thousands of jobs to other countries.

The government must publicly condemn clearly and without equivocation to stakeholders that the federal announcement of creating a national park right on top of the extension of the Thompson nickel belt will not happen.

Only after the province and the federal government both agree to place future national parks away from the Thompson nickel belt or other mining opportunities will there be confidence by investors, mining companies, prospectors, and others to make the massive investments necessary to keep mining alive in Manitoba.

It was a mistake to announce such a park in such an economically vital area.

To further the mining industry in Manitoba the government must also do the following:

Ensure that duty to consult First Nations is done in a meaningful and proactive manner.

Create a framework that protects greenstone belts and other potential resource rich areas for the express purpose of mining. These mining "parks" will provide opportunities for those who live in our north and bring needed assurances to those who invest in the mining industry that their efforts will be protected from uninformed public policy - such as the lowlands park announcement by the federal liberal government in their 2017 budget.

Create a user pay fund to be set aside for the future rehabilitation or remediation of mining sites.

Bring about a reintroduction of the Geological Engineering program to the Faculty of Engineering at the University of Manitoba.

Creating capacity in geoscience at the university and college level.

Demonstrate support for the mining industry, the cancellation of the annual Manitoba mining conference by the government sends very negative vibes to the industry.

Parks

Manitoba has many opportunities to create unique parks, and on a large scale. I will advocate for parks, ones that do not interfere with resource development and are also important.

On November 9th, 2017, I raised a matter of urgent public importance. Since my statement, I have written in well-known publications related to mining about the need to ensure that viable mining opportunities remain in Manitoba.

This year, the federal government announced a United Nations World Heritage park on the east-side of Lake Winnipeg with corresponding buffer zones.

Almost sixty thousand kilometers have been set aside in Manitoba for parks. If Manitoba is being required to preserve land areas larger than many European countries, Manitoba should be compensated by the federal government and/or the world community.

In the November 9 statement, I explained that Manitoba has the unique opportunity to preserve one of the last untouched watersheds in the world. The Seal river watershed offers the unique opportunity to protect 50,000 square kilometers of virgin wilderness.

At present, there are no mining claims in the watershed.

There is no prospect that there will be any mining development there for centuries. Working with the First Nations there is an opportunity that comes once in a civilization, that is to create a "canoe park:" where people will be able to drink the water from the side of their canoe, knowing that neither motors nor human activity will ruin the original authenticity of this natural area.

I will encourage the province and the federal government to work together with First Nations and Manitobans to explore how this watershed can be preserved forever.

Given the parkland areas announced by the federal government this year in Manitoba, it may be appropriate to insist that Manitoba is compensated

financially for the lost economic opportunity, including mining and forestry.

Another approach may be to create "mining parks" as previously mentioned.

These approaches are "out-of-the-box" suggestions that can meet the needs and desires of everyone.

Let us take up the goodwill of those wanting to have protected areas and focus everyone involved in protecting what can be protected without sacrificing unnecessarily either the environment or economic development.

Given the huge tracks of land that have already set-aside in Manitoba, any future parks including the Seal River watershed should be a showcase of where the environment and mining can co-exist in the 21st century. One not affecting the other.

Pledge to Reduce Red Tape

In the throne speech, the government stated that it had 50 suggestions from the public to reduce red tape. Wow, 50! The average Manitoban can provide 500 suggestions off of the top of their head. When did the Manitoba government lose its head? April 2016?

I will continue efforts to reduce red tape.

Unnecessary regulatory barriers cause inefficiency and undue costs to Manitobans and businesses, and can literally prevent success. The government has made some strides to reduce red tape in some areas of government. I will support these efforts.

However, the government has created red tape in other areas. The creation of a new crown corporation called Efficiency Manitoba will be exactly the opposite of what the name suggests. This crown corporation will create a larger bureaucracy, and create regulations where there had been none before and none are needed.

Autonomous vehicles

It is good that the government has autonomous vehicles on its radar and is mentioned in the Throne Speech. A major issue on autonomous vehicles is insurance. Manitoba may have a solution for the rest of the world with its unique no-fault insurance frame-work.

There are many problems with Manitoba's no-fault insurance Personal Injury Protection Plan. But, with the appropriate adjustments, the principles of the no-fault insurance can be very helpful in society's transition to autonomous vehicles.

I have introduced legislation to improve Manitoba Public Insurance legislation and it pertains to young people and/or the catastrophically injured.

This is a Made-in-Manitoba approach that could be the model for other jurisdictions in North America while avoiding the very litigious culture of our friends south of the border.

Organ Donation

The government promised a task force, a report and an action plan, they have failed.

I had submitted a comprehensive submission to the supposed task force and like every other Manitoban that did as well, we have heard nothing back from the government.

Until recently, the government has been silent on the issue of Organ Donation. I am pleased to say, and in reaction to a private members bill that I introduced in the last session, the government announced a special Legislative committee to examine the issue of Organ Donation.

The government then downgraded the standing committee to a task-force and we hear nothing on this issue in the Throne Speech.

Unfortunately, on the day of the announcement the government spokesperson seemed to limit the scope of the committees mandate by eliminating one of the most progressive suggestions around Organ Donation.

Sadly, the outcome of the committee seems to be pre-determined, I will continue to advocate for a debate that includes presumed consent for Organ Donation.

To this end I have already introduced the appropriate Legislation which I hope will widen the scope of the committee.

Democratic reform

This past year, the forces of legal action, expert opinion and public opinion forced the government to remove section 53.2.1 from the Manitoba Legislative Assembly Act.

Demonstrate, through the courts if necessary, the unconstitutionality of Section 53.2.1 of the Manitoba Legislative Assembly Act

Introduce legislation to reduce the number of MLAs by 18 in Manitoba. Obviously, the job of even the busiest and most important MLA can be done from thousands of kilometers away on a regular basis.

Manitobans are over governed. There are school boards which together have hundreds of trustees, 137 municipalities, First Nation governments, city councilors, Members of Parliament and Senators. Reducing the number of MLAs is a far more effective way to save tax payers money than the 1.5% "pay freeze" suggested by the government caucus. It is also a much more transparent suggestion and more difficult to make disappear as the government has done with it's policy on salaries.

The election boundaries for the next provincial election will be announced in the next month. I was pleased to present to the Commission on the electoral boundaries.

I will make effort to, in consultation with Manitobans, to remove party names from the ballots. This will strengthen the role of MLAs and weaken the all-powerful political party institution. Our system of government is based on voting for the person. The party and the leader are secondary. I hope this modest and easily implemented suggestion is used in the next election. It may not be good for political parties, but it sure is good for the people who vote.

The manner in which the legislature conducts itself during normal sitting times and the legislative committees must improve. I look forward to working with MLAs who share this point of view to make the legislature more conducive to more input and debate. For example, the manner in which Bill 19 The Efficiency Manitoba Act was dealt with by the MLAs at committee was an embarrassment to any self-respecting elected official or member of the public.

I will be introducing legislation designed to increase voter participation. This legislation should be complete and ready for introduction in April 2019.

Transparency and Public Input

In principle, Manitobans need to be involved in change. The government is correct when they say, "change is difficult", but it is ultimately made more difficult if the public perceives the process to be hidden or underhanded.

In the case of the Vimy Arena site, the allegation that the province and city conspired to avoid proper community input in the rezoning of the land has caused great concern amongst the people of Assiniboia and St. James. I hope that the Vimy site controversy will be a "learning moment" for both the City of Winnipeg and the province.

Since last year, the issue of the Vimy Arena site, the process to which the government is acquiring the land and the complete breakdown of an addictions strategy have become very evident.

In the past year we have learned that the entire addiction strategy of the government is a failure. The VIRGO report on addiction was the political equivalent of an indictment of the provincial government.

We learned that the government is using the Manitoba Housing Renewal Corporation as a vehicle to by-pass the people of St. James and all Manitobans.

Manitoba Housing Renewal Corporation does not have the legislative mandate to regulate, monitor, fund, or the skill set to approve architectural necessities required by best practices with addiction recovery facilities.

Manitobans have also learned this year that Manitoba Health is in no way involved with the Vimy Arena site. We have learned that Manitoba Health is not regulating the facility, we have learned that the treatment program is controversial based on empirical evidence.

We have learned that the government did not do a site analysis on the appropriateness of placing a drug recovery center in the middle of a residential neighbourhood.

We have learned that this provincial government is forcing the city of Winnipeg to sell land worth millions for one dollar.

The people of St. James are enraged everyday this house sits (bar 2 days). I have introduced petition after petition signed by thousands of residents. Since the beginning of this session, petitions have been tabled. Each one ignored by the government. It is particularly disappointing that the member from Kirkfield Park has initiated the provincial purchase of the Vimy Arena land. The MLA for Kirkfield Park who was minister responsible for housing failed to conduct due diligence on other property that is available and empty such as the old Children's Hospital on Wellington Crescent which remains empty and owned by the province and zoned appropriately.

People must not be ignored and when they are, the people will, in the end, return the favour. Rather than creating harmony, deceit leads to societal

breakdown. The ends do not justify the means in a democratic society.

Legislative Agenda

My specific Legislative agenda will be as follows with some additions to come.

The Manitoba Public Insurance Amendment Act 2

The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act 3

The Insurance Amendment Act 4

The Electoral Divisions Amendment Act 5

The Brookside Cemetery Recognition Act 6

The Manitoba Electoral Finance Amendment Act 7

The Conflict-of-Interest Act 8

The Gift-of-Life Act (Human Tissue Gift Act Amended) 9

Initiatives Beyond the Legislature

Citizens Inquiry into Hydro

Efficiency Manitoba

A Better Made-in-Manitoba Climate Plan-including expanded East-West Transmission Grid with Manitoba as the Centre for Clean Power

Transparency Accountability and Democracy

Legislature Reform

Regular Town Halls with the People of Assiniboia and Manitoba

Real Consultation vs Make Believe Consultation

Conclusion

In my new space in this great and storied Legislative chamber, I will give credit to the government on jobs well done, provide helpful proactive suggestions to improve public policy and, when and where, the government is off course, I will point to our North Star and give the opportunity for the government to find their way back on course.

It is my aim to create an environment in this place, the Legislature, that fosters thorough debate and good public policy. I will listen to the people of Manitoba and reflect on their commentary.

I am quite happy to have my own course corrected when the people, the science, our knowledge, our collective empathy and compassion suggest better solutions to the challenges that we face as Manitobans and as Canadians.

We all have a shared responsibility for our fellow human beings and for the future generations to come.

Every person should have the opportunity to reach their full potential as human beings.

Madam Speaker, we live in the best country in the world, at the best time in human history to be alive. Indeed, we have each won the lottery of life.

May we work together and as our Provincial motto says may Manitoba always be "glorious and free".

Thank you to the people of Assiniboia and indeed Manitoba for the opportunity to serve in this place. Only in Canada is it possible for anyone from anywhere to reach the highest offices in the land under circumstances, which in any other land, would destroy the human soul.

May God keep our land glorious and free, God Save the Queen.

Explanatory Notes

1. Queen's Counsel (Q.C.) is an honorary title bestowed on a lawyer to recognize exceptional merit in their profession.

A Queen's Counsel is appointed by Cabinet on the advice of the Minister of Justice and Attorney General. Before giving that advice, the minister must consult with an advisory council.

A new Act is established and consequential amendments are made to The Legal Profession Act.

2. This Bill amends The Manitoba Public Insurance Act.

To enhance its ability to gather information relevant to insurance claims, MPI is granted authority to obtain information from certain public bodies, persons who claim benefits and persons claiming payment for goods or services.

It will be an offence to knowingly provide false or misleading evidence in support of a claim for benefits or other payments relating to a claim. MPI's investigators may, in appropriate circumstances, obtain a search warrant or production order to assist in the investigation of an offence.

A number of changes are made to the no-fault accident benefit scheme under Part 2 of the Act.

Minor victims who are unable to continue their studies or hold employment are entitled to income replacement benefits based on the jobs they would

have held while in school and to a lump sum indemnity benefit for each lost school year. Those benefits currently continue until the age of 16, after which the income replacement benefit is calculated on the basis of the average industrial wage. The age at which that transition occurs is raised to 18.

It is clarified that injuries arising from golf cart accidents and accidents on closed tracks (such as a race track) are not covered.

Catastrophically injured claimants who become employed are entitled to return to full income replacement indemnity in the event of the loss of their employment, whatever the reason for the loss of employment.

Death payments are increased to \$13,154.

A temporary worker's entitlement to income replacement indemnity is clarified.

The caregiver weekly indemnity is made available to all claimants whose main occupation at the time of their accident was caring for another individual without pay for that care.

The process by which MPI may recover amounts from other insurers is specified.

An amendment to clause 6(2)(h) of the Act extends MPI's ability to support programs relating to health, rehabilitation, safety and the reduction of risk in respect of insurance MPI provides.

3. After each general election, a commissioner appointed under *The Legislative Assembly Act* decides on the pay and benefits for Members of the Assembly and then makes regulations to implement those decisions.

This Bill gives the commissioner the power to decide on an additional allowance for Members who have a disability, and to determine the circumstances in which it will be paid.

The commissioner's term of office is extended until dissolution of the Assembly. The commissioner will be allowed to amend the regulations that set MLA pay and benefits if the Assembly's management commission asks the commissioner to consider a circumstance that was not previously addressed.

4. This Bill makes significant amendments to *The Insurance Act* and modernizes the wording of approximately one-third of the Act's provisions.

Some of the significant amendments are:

Many of the Act's provisions, including virtually all of Parts V and VI (life insurance and accident and sickness insurance), are harmonized with the *Insurance Act of Alberta*.

Part IV (fire insurance) is consolidated with Part III (insurance contracts generally) and harmonized statutory conditions are made applicable to most property and casualty insurance contracts. Parts VIII (livestock insurance) and IX (weather insurance) are repealed. The risks governed by these parts will be governed by the consolidated Part III.

Consumer protection enhancements include

better access for claimants to documents and information about life insurance and accident and sickness insurance contracts;

enhancements to dispute resolution;

protection for innocent persons from loss of coverage for intentional acts of co-insureds and other persons;

requiring the approval of the Superintendent of Insurance for fire exclusions;

authority to licence incidental sellers of insurance.

As in other provinces, insurers, brokers and agents will be permitted to offer reasonable customer inducements, such as loyalty reward programs.

A broker or agent is no longer prohibited from charging a fee on a commercial insurance transaction in connection with which a commission is also earned.

To promote greater risk-based self-evaluation, insurers who conduct their own compliance audits have a limited privilege in relation to the audit documentation.

Amendments are made to facilitate and regulate electronic transactions under the Act.

Regulations may be made about how insurers may use information about the credit status of policy holders and applicants for property insurance relating to a residence.

The procedure for appeals to *The Insurance Agents' and Adjusters' Licensing Appeal Board* is modified and additional guidance is provided for how the appeal board deals with issues that may arise in connection with an appeal.

The Bill also contains a consequential amendment to The Insurance Corporations Tax Act relating to the name of the class of accident and sickness insurance.

5. This Bill amends The Electoral Divisions Act to reduce the number of electoral divisions in Manitoba from 57 to 49 for the first general election that takes place after 2018. A consequential amendment is made to The Legislative Assembly Act.

6. This Bill recognizes Brookside Cemetery as Manitoba's provincial cemetery.

7. This Bill makes several amendments to The Election Financing Act.

Significant amendments to the rules governing contributions include the following:

The annual contribution limit for individuals is increased from \$3,000 to \$5,000, and is indexed for inflation.

All fees paid to attend a political party conference or convention, including a leadership convention, are now considered to be contributions.

A self-employed person is no longer considered to be making a contribution if they volunteer services for which they normally charge.

Cash contributions are limited to \$25 or less.

Significant amendments to the rules governing advertising by candidates and political parties and communications made by third parties include the following:

Advertising expense limits that previously applied to candidates and political parties during the year of a fixed date election (outside the election period) now apply to the 90-day period before the election period of a fixed date election.

The definition "election communication" that applies to third parties is expanded to include communications about issues associated with a political party or a candidate.

Promotional materials such as signs and banners are no longer treated as election communication expenses for third parties or as advertising expenses for political parties.

The limits on third party spending for election communications is \$25,000 during the election period for a general election, \$100,000 during the 90-day period before the election period of a fixed-date election, and \$5,000 for a by-election. These limits are indexed for inflation.

In addition, the number of names on the preliminary voters list (not the voter list from the previous general election) is to be used to determine the minimum election expense limits for candidates and parties. Constituency associations are now required to file unaudited financial statements with the Chief Electoral Officer.

8. This Bill amends The Human Tissue Gift Act. Currently, a direction needs to be made by or on behalf of a person that authorizes the removal of a person's organs after death for transplant and other therapeutic purposes. The Bill creates a presumed consent to the removal of organs after death for transplant and other therapeutic purposes. The Bill provides several methods for people to object to the removal and use of their organs after death.

A consequential amendment is made to The Anatomy Act.

Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas): It's an absolute honour to, once again, put a few words on record as I participate in this debate as the MLA for The Pas.

This speech, once again, makes a false claim that this government is committed to improving Manitoba and the lives of all Manitobans. Let me put further—let me further put on record on more reasons why I do not feel included, along with many, many Manitobans.

In regards to health care, there was no mention of plans to improve health care in northern Manitoba. It says that this government is committed to delivering better health-care services sooner.

Well, that statement does not embrace the needs of northern Manitobans when it comes to accessing health-care services sooner. The word sooner applies to the people living in the south but, hey, wait—wait a minute—maybe it doesn't, especially with some of the closures of the ERs.

How does the word sooner describe accessing health-care services when we have to leave our homes, families, jobs, take leave from jobs, to travel six hours to see a doctor or a specialist? For others, the travel time is much, much longer.

The other day the Minister of Health told me that yet—that I do not understand the effects of lacking health services in northern Manitoba. However, I beg to differ with that as well.

With the cancellation of The Pas clinic, I have witnessed first hand trying to get an appointment with the clinic and walking past the ER room—

waiting room, filled–filled–with families, mothers, or elderly and babies. The cancellation of the clinic would have been a major important investment for northern Manitobans where it could have lessened the stress when we have to leave our communities in order to go see a doctor or a specialist.

Also, too, cuts to the Northern Patient Transportation Program, I have had many coffee meetings with constituents telling me the stresses that were added onto their families while they had to see a doctor. For example, we had an 80-year-old woman who was denied to have an escort paid for while she goes–takes a bus to Winnipeg. And let's not forget about what happened to the late Abraham Donkey as well.

And we also had complaints about–this is a true story, Deputy Speaker–true story. In the North, a baby, a mom and baby were medivacked out to Winnipeg, and guess what? The baby travelled alone while–without mom, with the nurse, back to Thompson. Mom had to find her own way back.

That is unacceptable. We deserve more respect and more dignity when it comes to accessing health care and with the Northern Patient Transportation Program it needs to be reassessed to understand that we need these services while we're away from home.

And also, too, with the Flin Flon situation as well, it is concerning that the–a program that was designated to recruit northern and rural doctors to come to our communities, recruit and retain our doctors, was also cut, which is also a major reason as to why we are understaffed in The Pas and Flin Flon with doctors.

Also, too, Cross Lake health complex, I was on my feet many times and also had our folks from Cross Lake wanting the province to come to the table and participate and make an investment into this health complex, which is truly needed, especially the fact, again, with the chiefs saying that the children of Cross Lake have to–the parents have to leave the community in order to give birth to their children, so Thompson, Winnipeg, and what really stayed on me is when the chief said one day we will frame our first birth certificate when we have a child born where it says–birth certificate where it will say Cross Lake.

* (15:20)

Also, too, with the cancellation of The Pas clinic as well, I just want to share with you where I walked in there and every month there's a notice of when the

clinic hours are open. And it's quite disheartening that the month of October, due to understaffing, the clinic was closed for two weeks. Half the month it was only open. And our poor people had to wait for eight hours, maybe more, in the ER in order to access health care.

Now I want to speak about the CFS portion of the speech. Bear with me. This government claims that–okay. This government claims that it will reduce the number of children in care, reducing the number of days in care, improving outcomes for those children. This government has claimed to have developed a reform proposal. This proposal says that it will include community involvement in preventing children from coming into care–excuse me. I'm okay–and intervention services that will help children and families together.

What are these changes? When will this review be released, and how soon will these amendments be implemented? As your fellow colleague, I'm living this nightmare along with many, many other Manitoban families.

As a colleague, you must understand that these amendments are affecting me and many, many other families as well. And I want to know when will it be released and how soon it will be implemented. Does this review–does these amendments include support systems for parents? It's very 'beliliting' trying to talk to the system about your family, trying to get answers back.

Is there mandatory counselling for children who are apprehended? Is–are our children getting counselling while they're in school? Do you know why you were apprehended? Do you know why you're living with a stranger? Do you know why you're not with Mom and Dad anymore? That has to be included.

Also, too, most important, did this review include our children's voices who are in the system? Because I know for sure nobody's talking to my nieces while they're away. Have they been asked, what are their needs, and what do they want for themselves before that self-worth of our children disappears during their time in the system?

I was honoured to second bill 223 that states that poverty should no longer be grounds for apprehension of kids by CFS in Manitoba. And I just wanted to share with you, a couple years ago, my–I was questioned by a teacher, why does my niece wear the same sweater over and over and over? A

hooded, peach-coloured sweater, very worn out. And I simply replied, well, that's my niece's favourite sweater. And I was asked, is her clothes washed? Yes, it is. She just has her favourite sweater over.

So that gave me a flashback of a long time ago when I was 10 years old, why this bill 223 still affects us to this day. When I was 10 years old, I didn't have a full lunch, so during the afternoon, I asked—there were snacks available, and I asked if I can have one. And the teacher became concerned that I wasn't being fed. And I also had a red pair of shoes with white shoelaces that were really worn out, but they were my favourite. I couldn't throw them out.

Once again, my mother was blamed that she couldn't buy me shoes. Guess what happened? A social worker came to my house, and I felt so bad because I felt it was my fault simply because I wanted a snack, simply because I didn't want to throw away my favourite shoes.

But that's what bill 223 addresses, is that teacher thought we were living in poverty and a social worker came into my home. So with that, I always felt so bad for my mom that I did that.

But, regardless, the original intent for First Nations CFS was to keep families together, but again, where are the support systems for the parents? No one listens to the parents. It gets to the point where one wants to light their hair on fire in order to be listened to.

More supports are needed before apprehension and this current system that we're living in is backwards. Families are separated and are asked to heal while they are separated. That does not make sense. This new—these amendments should include that a support system should be in place while the family are together. Don't ask us to heal while we're separated and broken.

Now, we'll get into the Manitoba 150 celebration. I've been asked by constituents as to when the plans will be coming into place so we can participate in my constituency in celebrating that.

Why were—the speech made no mention of honouring indigenous, Metis and Inuit nations as participants and to recognize our people as founding nations. This government had the opportunity to help us encourage the federal government to recognize the indigenous peoples as one of the founding nations of Canada. However, it was very disheartening and not

surprising at all that this government did not support the private member's bill brought forth for support in 2017.

Instead, this Throne Speech mentioned the Hudson's Bay Company which, to me, equals colonization. Let's ensure that our indigenous, Metis and Inuit are included in the celebration committee.

And duty to consult, Deputy Speaker—since we're on this subject of the government not recognizing treaty relationship between the Crown and indigenous people, let's talk about it.

The government's consultation is described as inadequate consultation. The speech mentions that this government wants to renew their consultation framework—renew.

I want this government to explain what their framework consists of. I know—but—this is what I know what it consists of, by statements by our leaders. Grand Chief Arlen Dumas was quoted saying yesterday about another missed opportunity to consult. He was quoted, saying, just because you force somebody to talk to doesn't mean you've been consulted. End quote.

To me, as an indigenous treaty woman, I will call this a phantom consultation framework. Where was it implemented and honoured? Is there only a select few special individuals consulted? Fair question to ask, Deputy Speaker. The consultation framework needs to be respectful and productive. This means full, meaningful conversations with indigenous nations at the table in every process and for every project that affects our traditional lands.

The lack of an—of understanding of the nation-to-nation relationship has been demonstrated once again with the situation in Hollow Water First Nation, Lake St. Martin and let's not forget the MMF.

In a Look North strategy, it is described as a long-term strategy. As a northerner, I'm afraid that means that the strategy will be long term to get it going—a plan for a plan. A participant in this process told me that there is concern that they will not—that this strategy will not see the light of day or the completion of the goals.

It is quite rich coming from this government that they say they want to support economic growth and development in northern Manitoba. It also included that it will support strategic infrastructure investment in northern Manitoba.

Well, Madam Speaker, speaking of infrastructure investment, not once did this government come to the table and participate and work towards finding solutions to save Churchill.

* (15:30)

I attended a Hudson Bay association meeting in OCN a few months ago and I talked about—I was in the basement of the Legislative Building and I happened to come across those Winnipeg Free Press front page headlines that are posted on the wall there.

And right away, the first one I seen was The Winnipeg Evening Tribune, dated Saturday, March 30th, 1929. The headline was, quote: "Rails connect Churchill with 'outside'". End quote. Now, it started to say that the work started in 1911 to connect Churchill with The Pas. And it also started to say that—about how Port Nelson was supposed to be the original location, but they changed it to Fort Churchill.

Now, he was really—when I was talking to—at that meeting, Mayor Mike Spence, mayor of Churchill, was in the audience there. And I looked at him, and I said, imagine that, that rail—that headline with the newspaper dated March 30th, 1929. Now, let's hope, I was telling him, that we'll have another 2018 headline that will say: rails connect Churchill with outside once again—which is, like, 89 years later after this first fact.

So he had a smile, and I'm pretty sure that we're all proud as to what the current situation is now for our folks in Churchill. And again, once—thank you to One North, thank you to the company that has taken over and to ensure that freight and passenger services will continue for Churchill.

And so, in closing, Madam Speaker, while I was at home for the weekend, a constituent gave me a badge that was one of those campaign badges, if you will. And it read: Manitoba goes beyond the Perimeter. And I remember my dad used to say that a lot while he was here—MLA for The Pas. 'Perimeritis', I think it was called.

So in closing, that pretty much is spot-on when dealing with this government. We need to remind them that Manitoba does go beyond the Perimeter.

Thank you, Deputy Speaker.

Hon. Eileen Clarke (Minister of Indigenous and Northern Relations): It's an honour and a privilege

to stand before the House today and put a few words on the record in regards to our Throne Speech.

This is the third Throne Speech that I've had the honour to be involved in and to be proud of our government for the accomplishments that have happened in, I would say, every department of this government since April 2016. It's somewhat overwhelming to see and look back over the past months of where we were then when I was appointed to the office of Indigenous and Northern Relations and how far we've come.

And I would just at this point like to acknowledge a few people that have been very much a part of getting this government moving forward. And certainly, it's a group effort on this part.

And first and foremost, I want to acknowledge Premier Pallister for strong leadership. It—we have a very long—*[interjection]*

Pardon me—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Just to remind the—First Minister or the Premier (Mr. Pallister), okay?

An Honourable Member: Shame.

Ms. Clarke: No shame. Proud to acknowledge our Premier for solid leadership. It takes a very strong individual to take a stand not only within his caucus, but within the province to do what's right, to do what the people of Manitoba were asking for and what they were expecting.

And it's because of that leadership—I've known the Premier for quite the long time. And it was because I knew he had strong leadership qualities that I chose to be a part of this government, to run the election and to do what's right for the people of Manitoba.

I've always been engaged with the people in my community, the people in my region, whether in business or municipal politics. And I've had a very close connection with people, especially in rural Manitoba, but in my position—was vice-president with the Association of Manitoba Municipalities. I got to travel all of Manitoba. I got to know and understand the issues with all 197 municipalities.

That was a significant experience and one that I value to this day, and one that's given me a very clear understanding of the needs throughout the province, not just within our larger urban areas, but I have a good understanding of the rural issues.

I'm proud, in Agassiz, to represent 18 Hutterite colonies. We have seven municipalities that we meet with on a regular basis. I have Sandy Bay First Nation, which I've always had a close working relationship with. And, in coming into the provincial government, that has really broadened now. And to be appointed the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Relations is an honour for me.

I've tried really hard to have a good working relationship with our indigenous leaders, indigenous communities, and there's a new level of respect and a new level of trust that has been initiated from that. We've got a long ways to go. There's no doubt about it, but we look forward to fostering those relationships.

And we also have had a lot of discussion as to where we want to go. We listen to what they see the vision of their future for their communities as being part of the province. And, you know, one of the things that they 'reiterate' to me often is that they are also Manitobans. They want to be involved and they want to be a part of what the vision of this province is. And that's really exciting as we move forward.

But I'd also like to acknowledge the colleagues that I work with. We are a very diverse group, and I've had the opportunity to know all of these individuals and see the dedication that they also share that I have for the province of Manitoba and the people that we serve.

And, behind us and with us, there's a great number of staff that work diligently on behalf of all Manitobans as well. They are not at the forefront; they do not get seen the same way we do at social events or within this government, but there is a staff that's truly dedicated to the future of this province.

And, within my Agassiz constituency, I'd like to acknowledge the staff there because they do a lot of work on my behalf, and they keep my constituency well-informed of what's going on in the province of Manitoba as they arrange for all our regional meetings, et cetera.

And I think that's what creates a good government, is that good dialogue, transparency and a lot of conversation. And I know that's going on in all the constituencies across the province.

I would also like to acknowledge that I'm really encouraged by the way this government works together. I never feel like I'm on my own, that I have

to solve issues or whatever, and if I want to have a discussion with any of my colleagues, they're always there. We discuss and we make sure that we're all aware of what's going on so that we are all on the same page and listen to ideas that will strengthen the decisions that we make, and that's really important.

I've already mentioned that the relationship we have with our indigenous people in Manitoba—and when I say our indigenous people, these are the people that I'm honoured to serve. They are the people that within my government I am appointed to work on their behalf and to bring their issues forward to the government of Manitoba, and to ensure that they are not only respected for their—but they are included in decisions, and that is happening.

So I'm very proud of that. So, with that, I would like to just outline—as I've indicated, the Throne Speech spoke to what we've accomplished. It also speaks to our vision for the future, and we have a very bright, bright future ahead of us for all people in Manitoba.

And we just heard the member from The Pas talking about the duty to consult. Within my department, this is a very high priority, and it was mentioned in the Throne Speech. And I think we all have to understand that within a few short minutes, that a Throne Speech can't contain all the information for every department in this government, but there truly are some good initiatives going forward.

And I'm extremely proud of the work that has been done within the Department of Indigenous and Northern Relations, but we also are very excited about what 2019-2020's going to bring forward, and we look forward to that.

* (15:40)

So within—you know, we have had meaningful consultations that furthers reconciliation and it assists government in becoming more familiar with the practices, the history and the traditions of affected communities, and the impact that proposed actions could have.

And, I mean, we've heard many tragic stories from the past, and with this duty-to-consult framework coming forward, we certainly—that we can alleviate those kinds of problems and issues in the future.

As part of our mandate, our government's been engaging with indigenous communities on the

continued development and streamlining of the duty-to-consult process. And I heard from the member of The Pas that she felt there were not adequate consultations. I've been at full-day meetings not only talking to chiefs individually, but they were held within areas where the—it was accessible and—so that all chiefs could attend, and they were there in large numbers. They were all there. They all had a voice. And that continues. It's not a one-day meeting and it's over. But those meetings were held, and we ensured that all chiefs had the opportunity to be heard, and we did that as well with the mineral protocol. This is not something that we do as just a token meeting or, as we heard yesterday, a meet and greet. I think that's totally disrespectful. We have much more respect for the chiefs and the councils of this province than just a simple meet and greet.

I heard that the past minister actually went to a wake at one of the communities and walked out the door and said to the chief there, you've had your consultation. This government would never do that type of disrespectful act.

This is to bring more efficiency and effectiveness to the framework and ensure that Aboriginal and treaty rights are actually protected. This will also ensure greater inclusion of indigenous communities in development projects not after they've happened; before they happen. The engagement phase for the framework is near completion. Feedback from external and internal engagement is being analyzed and used to update and finalize recommendations for the consultation policy and guidelines and proponent guide. The revised documents will be circulated to the interdepartmental working group on Crown or— and Aboriginal consultation for final review.

This fall, I hosted an event to honour murdered and missing indigenous women and girls in which we were visited by the Premier (Mr. Pallister) as well as Michèle Audette, commissioner for the national inquiry for murdered and missing indigenous women and girls. Alongside were her three grandmothers.

Michèle and the Premier spoke of the importance of continuing to work together to address the violence against indigenous women and girls and the incidences of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls in Manitoba as well as all across Canada. Addressing these issues remains a priority for our government, and we will continue to be involved in community-based intergovernmental and

interdepartmental work to address issues related to murdered and missing indigenous women and girls.

On June 15th, our government released the co-chairs' report on the Manitoba-First Nations Mineral Development Protocol, which includes key findings and recommendations on ways to create certainty in order to advance mineral development projects in a timely way. A new protocol will create certainty for all parties, including First Nations, industry as well as government and help, once again, to ensure that First Nations can and will be actively involved in all phases of mineral development to create and share in the benefits of growth within this sector.

The report includes a proposed Crown Aboriginal consultation process, guide and a matrix for mineral development and sets out clear time frames. It also identifies opportunities to strengthen partnerships and better prepare First Nations to be active partners through the mineral development cycle.

Look North Report and Action Plan for Manitoba's Northern Economy highlights mining as a long-time net contributor to the economic prosperity of this province. Conversations with northern communities as part of that Look North initiative have confirmed that mineral development continues and it will again be a top priority in the region.

Our government is committed to addressing food issues—of food security in northern Manitoba through programs such as the Northern Healthy Foods Initiative. NHFI supports local and regional projects throughout northern Manitoba that contribute to increasing healthy—access to healthy foods and creating community economic development.

Through learning initiatives, community-based approaches reflect cultural values, strengthen community relationships and create opportunities to improve health and decrease financial burden on our health-care system.

Our government provides funding through Northern Healthy Foods Initiative, which leveraged through partners and donations, reaching up to \$400,000 a year. These funds help communities like 'Peguis' First Nations to continue to promote healthy eating and increase economic development through economic development like the Peguis agriculture project. And we had a really interesting meeting with Mr. McCallister [*phonetic*] from Peguis and talking

about the growing of potatoes, tobacco and all the initiatives that they're working for.

And the really interesting part of that, it's not always just about the food; it was about the relationships that were being fostered within the community, because they had everybody from young children, youth and seniors. And the seniors were so enjoying these new gardening initiatives.

And I had that same opportunity up in Norway House. And we got to go and visit the school and look at their food initiatives and what they were doing. And we actually funded a small garden tractor through that department for them to work. And, again, it was a senior that was working with them and teaching them how to garden. And they were so proud of the food that they were providing and the healthy part of it.

Another really great example is in the home community of the member from The Pas. OCN has a terrific opportunity there. And they are growing fresh vegetables.

This just goes to show that our First Nations want to be involved. They want to provide for themselves. And, you know, if we can just partner in small ways, they know what to do. They've been cultivating the land forever, since day one. They know how to do these things. But there's a little bit of not-modern technology that can make a difference, and good partnerships with all levels of government, as well as other organizations.

Clearly, we see here where there's multiple dollars in private donations that are going to these food initiatives. So these are the types of projects that are working within our province, and this is a lot to be excited about.

We continue to work in partnership with Canada and the entitlement-First Nations to complete the transfer of TLE Crown and land selections. And, as of October this month, a total of 14,002 acres have been transferred by the 'provinginal' order-in-council to Canada. And the total number of acres transferred since May in 2016 is actually 67,642. Previous to that, for three or four years, absolutely nothing with the previous government.

As part of our mandate, too, we're also committed to developing partnerships needed to attract new companies, assist entrepreneurs and facilitate expansion of existing businesses to provide quality jobs and a stronger economy in the North.

We keep hearing this week, you know, that up north, that our government doesn't care. That could not be farther from the truth. We are engaged with northern Manitoba. We are looking forward to great opportunities in the North, but we're doing it with their consultation, with their engagement and their inclusion. And it will remain that way.

Look North's engagement with indigenous communities has been unprecedented. They have worked incredibly hard to embrace the indigenous perspective like no other in identifying pathways which lead to renewed economic growth in Manitoba's northern communities. We know that there's a lot to be achieved in northern Manitoba.

Look North is committed to three visits a year for at least two years to various communities in northern Manitoba, with 20 to 25 business owners which will engage with northern communities to create opportunities for education, entrepreneurship, partnership and tourism. And one of these groups was up there within the last couple of weeks.

And from what I understand from the Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade (Mr. Pedersen), it was absolutely a huge success, and they were overwhelmed—these business partners were overwhelmed with the opportunities that they could see in northern Manitoba. And they do want to be involved.

Indigenous and Northern Relations is involved and—with the Look North strategy and the ongoing support of the 'stratedy's' initiative. We contributed \$20,000 in funding to the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce towards the Made in Manitoba Trade Missions project to provide interested business owners with introductions to and a better understanding of the local communities where they choose to develop their businesses. INR is committed to additional \$20,000 towards look-creating the Look North vision, brand and northern story in partnership with my colleague from Growth, Enterprise and Trade.

* (15:50)

And to further our government's commitment to engagement and consultation with First Nations, a Canada-Manitoba First Nation highway signage project—it's under way in partnership with Manitoba Infrastructure. First Nation road signage declaring boundaries and directions will begin this year, and that was such a simple request that came from one of the councillors in Waywayseecappo: Why can't we

be acknowledged where our community is with a highway sign? Why can't we have that?

Well, that was a good question. You know, 17 years, the members opposite could have seen to it that our First Nations were acknowledged with a simple sign. It's not an expensive project, but I'm very, very proud to say it is moving forward and these communities will be acknowledged. We will be posting signage using traditional names in 38 First Nations over the next three years and that announcement took place on November the 9th.

With that I will draw to a conclusion, but I would just like to acknowledge there's so much more work being done I can't get it into a brief 20 minutes here, but the growth and work within the Department of Indigenous and Northern Relations is going forward in such a positive manner, I'm already very, very excited about what's going to take place in 2019 and going forward from there.

It's so clear and sometimes so frustrating to see what has not been done in past years that could have been done, and it's not always about big dollars. It's about caring about the people that you're serving, and I am very proud, once again, to say if I get up in this House or anywhere else and say our indigenous people, I do that with the greatest of pride because I am very, very proud to represent the indigenous people of Manitoba, not just in our province, but across Canada when I get to meet with my colleagues in other jurisdictions.

But I take that message, also, out to the communities and to the people of Manitoba. They often ask about my position within this government, working with indigenous peoples, and I am very proud to tell them of the experiences that I've had—very, very positive experiences; and therefore, going forward, I will continue, to the best of my ability, to serve them honestly, openly and we will further their trust in this government, and the respect that we show them, they are giving that right back to us.

This is a proud day in Manitoba. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Scott Johnston (St. James): And I would like to just indicate what an honour it is to speak to the government's address to the Manitoba people.

Being here in the Legislature and standing up in this place of honour is always a humbling experience for me. I, first and foremost, would like to recognize the people of St. James for giving me the honour and the privilege of representing them in this forum.

The people of St. James certainly have a great deal of pride in their area, Mr. Deputy Speaker. My constituency really has a great deal of legacy to it. It's one of the older suburbs of the city of Winnipeg and people always invest in their communities. They really take an ownership for it based on the fact that there's a lot of legacy there.

There's a lot of generations that live in St. James. As a matter of fact, we had a meeting with the real estate board the other day, our caucus, and we had some discussion in regard to demographics and changes in communities, et cetera, and a couple of the members had indicated that the areas in west Winnipeg do have a very significant demographic of seniors because most of the people who live in St. James, they don't move out; they become empty nesters and they stay, and their children usually come back to that community. So it's a very proud community and I'm very proud to represent that community.

My community is very proud of, certainly, some of the features within that community. Polo Park is certainly one of the landmarks of Winnipeg, and that's always been somewhat of an anchor to my constituency. And Bruce Park is one of the most underestimated parks in Winnipeg, from my perspective, and that's where we have our Remembrance Day services and our cenotaph.

And certainly it takes a great deal of pride in their school division, the St. James-Assiniboia School Division, which I was a proud member of for 25 years—certainly a great deal of pride and a great deal of support for their entities.

And I have—I represent a variety of community clubs who I'm very pleased to be—pleased to participate in in numerous events, as I think all members do. I think all members try to participate in their community. But I just want to put it on the record that Sturgeon Heights—which is an amalgamation of Sturgeon Creek and Silver Heights community clubs—they are always—their executive is always so inviting for me to participate in their different functions—and I'm always appreciative of that—as well as Deer Lodge Community Club, which I grew up in and played all of my sport in and actually won a couple of city championships out of that community club. So, obviously, it's an honour to go back there—*[interjection]*

Yes, my colleague said they were wondering if we were playing anybody, and, yes, yes, we did.

Bourkevale community club, which is on the Assiniboine River in the eastern part of my constituency, is a very vibrant community and has a—represents sort of a unique community within my area. And Bord-Aire Community Club, which is in the north—the northeastern part, is certainly a community that has older housing and is a very vibrant community too and supplies a lot of support to that particular community. And as well, I go on the other side of Polo Park, all the way to Valour Road, and I take in some of my friend from Minto's area, and we share the Valour Road community club, and my component is the Clifton Site and—right by the old city hill, Westview Hill. And there's a lot of activity there, and, certainly, I've participated there, as well as the community.

So it's—very proud to represent this community, and every time we have an opportunity to speak to the budget or speak to the Throne Speech, I always like to indicate to the House that pride and also, too, Mr. Deputy Speaker, indicate—echo what the minister of 'indigit' affairs had just indicated. How proud I am to share this experience with a group of people who I see first-hand are always working as hard as they can and looking after the best interests of the people of Manitoba and their constituents. It really is a sense of pride, and we do indicate that we are a team, and, quite frankly, we walk the walk. We are.

The other individual that I would like to mention is my constituency assistant, who works out of my constituency office. And again, this is something else I think we can all relate to, is that we do—we spend, certainly, a lot of time in the House, and we're—may not necessarily be in our constituencies as much as we would like to be. And those people that work and man our—or man or woman our constituency offices certainly do the job. They deal with the public, and they try to ensure that the constituents are certainly taken care of. And so, certainly, I would like to recognize my assistant, Sheila Stacey, who does an excellent job for me.

And also, too, I—the member from St. Norbert, who—the military envoy I'm with a great deal of time through military affairs representing on proximity of 17 Wing. We go there regularly, and I certainly enjoy that—as well as my support from seatmate here from Riding Mountain, who's always—always—encouraging—or encouraging me, Mr. Speaker, as well as the member from Radisson. I—you know, I'm just so fortunate to be here.

* (16:00)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, our government continues to strive to address the challenges of the province of Manitoba, and our Throne Speech certainly does indicate that and is certainly a message to the people of Manitoba that we are going to continue to stay focused.

Having inherited a financial challenge from the previous government, we continue to do what needs to be done to create a sustainability within this province. Millions of dollars of interest is just not acceptable, Madam Chairman, and that's one of the reasons that we have strived so hard to come to terms with the financial challenges of this province.

Can talk about everything else, but bringing home and establishing financial stability within this province has to be job one because everything else flows from being able to be a financially responsible government and be able to spend the money on the things that Manitobans look and expect.

And we understand that we have to be efficient, and we understand that wasting money is not acceptable. And the people of Manitoba agreed with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The people of Manitoba agreed with that when they elected our government with such a majority.

And more and more, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we're entering debate and—we hear the opposition continue to indicate that the financial component of the government is to take a back seat. We need to come to terms with the financial components of this government to be able to have Manitobans prosper, and that's what we keep on working on.

And, while we're doing that, we don't lose sight of the fact that this government also, too, ensures that services of the—for the—of the people of Manitoba, for the people of Manitoba are maintained.

Madam Speaker in the Chair

Also, too, our efforts are being recognized through the financial bodies that we deal with. The DBRS understand that Manitoba is on the road to 'recovery', and they have indicated that they have a great deal of confidence in what the Province of Manitoba's doing in regards to ensuring our credit rating.

And you have to give credit to our financial managers, the minister of—the previous minister of Finance, who helped guide this province, and also to the current Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding), who actually is a neighbour of mine from the constituency

of Kirkfield Park. And I always look forward to our discussions and certainly his support in my area.

The long-term recovery for the Province is not an option. It's essential for future generations, and this Throne Speech, I believe, Mr. Deputy Speaker, or Madam Speaker, certainly reflects that. We have a responsibility to our children and our grandchildren, and our government won't spend irresponsibly and saddle those generations with debt and have them have to pick up the pieces for irresponsible management.

Madam Speaker, one of the reasons that I sought to run for election to the provincial government was because I had an interest in education. And our Throne Speech indicates that we are putting together a commission to review K-to-12 education in Manitoba. And this is certainly something that is needed, and our government recognizes it.

Our commitment to ensuring positive outcomes is certainly reflective of that initiative, and preparing our children for the future is clearly a mandate of this government.

Madam Speaker, the results that Canada gets globally, as I—my honourable friend from Portage la Prairie had indicated in his comments—the educational positioning of Canada globally is actually pretty good. I believe. I stand—could stand to be corrected, but I believe we're in about 13th place globally, and that's a very, very positive position to be in.

The problem that we have in the province is that, within Canada, within that ranking, Manitoba ranks the lowest.

And, Madam Chairman, in numeracy and literacy, you have to step back, and you have to take a look and say, well, you know, what are we doing wrong? What are we doing wrong? And that type of study and that type of review has to be done, and has to be done by stakeholders and, Madam Speaker, bringing together stakeholders—this commission—bringing together stakeholders such as parents.

And parents are—you know, a lot of people dismiss parents as not being educational professionals. I find it quite the opposite to credit—in my experience in education.

I've found that parent councils really had a pulse of what is going on in a school and certainly how their children are reacting to some educational methods and—et cetera. And so they really have an

understanding. And it's very interesting to talk to parent councils. So I was very pleased that parent councils will be a part of the study.

As well, school boards and school trustees will be invited to be able to participate. And I think that as long as the authority that is looking at these types of studies are prepared to listen to all perspectives, which we're prepared to do too—I think will certainly contribute a great deal not only from the educational point of view, but from the governance point of view, which is very important.

Our administrations within our school divisions can contribute a great deal too to studying. You know, we certainly have professionals within those areas and professionals that have been there for a long time who have seen trends go up and down and have opinions and understand what—maybe the course is going in the wrong direction, such as, I think, somewhat—the previous government were not a results-oriented government. And I think that, probably, administrations would be able to indicate that, and we can correct that course.

As well as—let's not forget, education costs money. Education is the second-largest department of expenditure within our government. And we need to be—we need to look at value for dollars being spent.

And the financial people within school divisions, I think, can be very helpful in regards to making proposals in regard to how we can spend our money better. So, listening, Madam Speaker.

And certainly, teachers—front-line teachers are our best tools. I mean, they see the results. They see the response from students. They're the front-line workers, and they're the people that we, frankly, have got to listen to. And I think even their unions—MTS would certainly have a place at the table to create and offer suggestions.

So the commission itself—and last but not least—and not least—is the students. I think that the opportunity for students to present their points of view—you know, sometimes out of the mouths of babes. It's not necessarily a bad thing to have, you know, very innocent commentary on how we're doing.

It reminds me of a story. There was a truck that was lodged under a bridge. The truck hadn't realized that the bridge was low-hanging, so when it tried to go under, it got stuck. And all of these professionals were trying to figure out, well, how do we get this

truck unstuck? How do we get it unstuck? And they were looking to use machinery to pull it and everything else, and it wasn't working. And then a young child on the side said, well, why don't we just let the air out of the tires?

So out of the mouths of babes is the point, mister—Madam Speaker.

And the other thing in education which I thought was very, very positive that our government did is they also—they—they've also created—they've also started the ball rolling before we even determined that we were going to go ahead with a commission.

* (16:10)

And the life for learning summit—the Manitoba summit that took place in January of 2018—and the member from Portage la Prairie, the former member of Education, had initiated it. And this was excellent.

It was a three-day collaboration process that all of the stakeholders attending had an opportunity to submit topics for discovery, and it was a forum that different categories were presented and all of the results of those discussions were compiled by it and certainly that information would be transferred to the commission and that opportunity would create further opportunities for discussion.

For example, what skills do future teachers need to be successful leaders in learning? What diversity of First Nations people and the Truth and Reconciliation, and where do we go from here?

No fail—does that mean not competent kids? Kindergarten, grade 12 to post-secondary transition issues: standardized testing, secondary and post-secondary and measuring learning, standardized tests, early learning, grade 8, literacy and numeracy for adult learning to make transitions into college, supporting literacy and numeracy and social studies, science and other cross-curricular settings.

I mean, determining whether or not a royal commission on education should take place, the essentials of career mathematics, literacy for new homeowners and new people entering our country. What type of challenges do they have, and how can we address that? Career literacy, indigenous language literacy in our school system—do we need to go further in regards to that?

New vision and the mission of French immersion programs and the impact on literacy, and critical thinking for youth, Madam Speaker.

Those are all different areas that were discussed and looked forward, and that's the type of thing that we're looking to do, is create an opportunity for discussions and come up with real solutions.

Madam Speaker, my time is running short, and just before I sit down, I just wanted to again indicate how—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): And thank you to all who have put their thoughts on the record in respect of this wonderful Throne Speech. I appreciate the commentary from all members, and I certainly want to especially thank my colleagues with their thoughtful responses and comments.

In case, I run out of time, I wanted to begin by saying thank you for your work. Everyone here in this House who has had experience under previous Speakers and in previous sessions knows that your performance as Speaker has been exemplary, that your willingness to accommodate some of our various forms of behaviour has been also sensitive and moderate but effective, and that I believe, frankly, Madam Speaker, the conduct in this session among members, at times fractious because we do not always agree, most certainly, has been among the very best I have ever seen in my time in public life. So I want to say to you, thank you so much for your work on behalf of all members here.

Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to join with my colleagues and offer some additional comments to conclude the debate on our fourth Speech from the Throne. It is fascinating to think that it has been four speeches from the Throne just in the last two and a half years. This time has, in some respects, sped by and in other ways, dragged, because we are so anxious to see progress and to make gains on behalf of the people of Manitoba here.

So I would also like to say, before I proceed in respect of the Throne Speech, what an honour it was this past week, and I know you would agree, that we had the opportunity to host Her Excellency Julie Payette, the Governor General of Canada, here on her first official visit to Manitoba. We can't wait for her return. We appreciated her comments. She spoke of the splendour of Manitoba. She noted the beauty and the friendliness of the people.

We know that, Madam Speaker, but we sometimes perhaps are guilty of taking it for granted, especially when we're in close contact with one another in this Chamber. And I think it's important to

realize that there are others elsewhere around the country and around the world who do appreciate very much the beauty that, at times, perhaps we're guilty of taking for granted.

So I say thank you to Her Excellency. She had the chance to tour many facilities in our province, to enjoy—we enjoyed seeing her enthusiasm, her willingness to engage with people. We're excited to strengthen the positive relationship to the benefit of all Manitobans. And we look forward, as I said earlier, to her next visit.

Madam Speaker, we believe very strongly that there are large challenges ahead. And this speech reflects the ambition we all feel to achieve positive gains for the people of Manitoba.

We have inherited some challenges. And this has been very apparent to us over the last two and a half years as unfortunate realities have been uncovered which were previously covered up. We do not believe that there is any sense in waxing too much on the challenges we face, Madam Speaker. Rather, we choose to turn and face them directly. And that is exactly what we are going to do.

Fundamentally, we differ from our worthy opponents in respect of this, Madam Speaker: we believe that hard-working families and seniors in this province deserve to see more money on their kitchen tables, not have more taken away in higher taxes.

We believe that Manitobans deserve that security in the face of real threats to it that are emerging. We see higher interest rates in particular impacting on families who have mortgages and who need to borrow money to survive. And those higher interest rates mean less money at the kitchen table, as do higher local taxes, federal taxes, higher hydro bills and so on.

And so, as we concern ourselves with the reality that Manitoba families have less to spend, due to these other pressures, it's incumbent on us to make sure that they get a break. And this government is about making sure that we lower taxes, not raise them.

The two alternative throne speeches offered up by the opposition parties demonstrate their belief in something different from that, Madam Speaker. They demonstrate their belief that higher taxes are a good

thing. They demonstrate their belief that their job is to redistribute the taxes that they take from other people.

We see our job as much, much more than that. We are—we see our job as one of making hope real for people who want to do better, who want to have a stronger financial future and greater security. And we base that hope on the fact that we are listening to Manitobans.

We've made an effort to go out and consult with Manitobans ever since the day we were elected to government, and we will continue to do that. I am proud of the accomplishments of our government to date, Madam Speaker, but mindful that we have much, much work left to do.

We have established a smaller Cabinet—40 per cent smaller, in fact. And my budget is 40 per cent smaller than Greg Selinger's was. But, at the same time, we take pride in the fact that we are getting the job done while setting a different tone at the top, a tone which was exemplified by our members' willingness to freeze their wages, something I have great confidence members opposite have done, as well. We have trimmed at the top of the civil service. We have set a tone at the top in that way, as well. And this has resulted in an 8 per cent reduction in the overall size of the civil service while protecting the front-line workers whose services we very much value.

Now, Madam Speaker, we restored also the secret ballot in union votes, something that was a fundamental right taken away by the previous government. We have cut subsidies to large corporations. We have eliminated the vote tax subsidy, a subsidy designed by the previous government to compensate them for not doing any work. And it's not a subsidy that Manitobans want to see supported. And we have eliminated bracket creep, a nefarious way that the—a previous administration and others had used to let the effects of inflation erode even further the purchasing power of Manitobans.

Madam Speaker, we are dedicated to making sure that Manitoba, in our first term, becomes known as Canada's most improved province, and we are delivering on that promise.

* (16:20)

Nous avons promis de faire du Manitoba la province où la situation s'améliore le plus au Canada, et nous y parvenons.

Translation

We promised to make Manitoba the most improved province in Canada, and we are succeeding.

English

It's difficult work, Madam Speaker. It's hard slogging, but Manitobans do it. Manitoba small businesses do it. Seniors living on fixed incomes do it, and we're going to do it too, out of respect for those people. It's difficult work, but it is a requisite and necessary to build the kind of province that the people of Manitoba deserve to have.

Now, the tasks may seem daunting, but we are seeing results. Just recently, Dominion Bond Rating Service offered the following commentary, and I'll quote from their commentary: The credit profile appears to have stabilized after a decade of deterioration, and the government's commitment to further improvement appears credible.

Manitoba's credit profile deteriorated over much of the last decade because of chronic deficit spending. Over the past two years, the direction of fiscal policy has shifted under the PC-led government. The Province now appears to be credibly committed to deficit reduction, and Dominion Bond Rating Service has observed a far greater focus on budgetary results, and the new government has outperformed its fiscal targets since coming to power.

I want to pay a special compliment, if I may, Madam Speaker, to all the members of our caucus team who have contributed to achieving these results by listening to front-line civil servants, by consulting with hard-working Manitobans, by taking the perspectives that were shared with them by the small-business community and by working together with one another in various capacities to achieve, for the first time, a positive comment from a bond rating agency in the last 18 or 19 years. Congratulations to everyone in the caucus.

Madam Speaker, my opposition colleagues seem to dismiss reports like this because they don't like the comments, but the fact of the matter is that financial management does matter. Manitobans know that. Manitobans have to make money work in their homes.

I come from a background where I know—and many others do in this House as well—where we know what it's like to see the money run out before the end of the month. And I can tell you, Madam Speaker, it's not a good feeling.

And I know Manitobans—in fact, over half our households in this province—have less than \$200 of discretionary income at the end of the month to spend after the bills are paid.

And recognizing the fragility of that, of that relatively no—low dollar amount, is important because financial management matters to these folks, and because it matters to them, it matters to us as well.

Why should our government be run any differently than a hard-working Manitoba family runs their household? It shouldn't. Increased deficits and debt are nothing more than deferred taxes. They are a tax bill run up on the credit card of children not yet even able to vote.

And the fact of the matter remains, Madam Speaker, that the NDP's legacy of doubling our debt in just the last few years of the previous mandate is one that Manitobans will not forget. They will not forget it as interest rates rise and the debt obligation—which, for the first time in Manitoba history, this year passes \$1 billion—continues to rise as a consequence of continually rising interest rates.

They will remember who ran up that debt on their children and on them. We can no longer dismiss the challenges facing us today, because if we do that, we would only be compromising the services we can provide to our loved ones tomorrow and in the future.

Debt service costs alone are the fourth largest department of our government. They are representative, those costs, of money that cannot be used to provide care to a child or a senior, learning to a student or support someone with a disability. That money is gone, and a moneylender may be happy somewhere in New York City, but here in Manitoba, we are without those resources.

Madam Speaker, because of that, we must act responsibly as stewards of the public trust. It's folly to spend today what we cannot afford for short-term political gain, as was done by the previous NDP government. It's a gamble every man, woman and child in this province doesn't deserve to see taken by their elected representatives anymore.

We say enough is enough. We are making the difficult choices, but we are increasing investments in the caring departments upon which our citizens rely.

What the members refer to as cuts on the other side, Madam Speaker, are steady increased investments year after year in families, in education and in health care: \$1.4 billion of increased investments in the caring departments that manage the major issues faced by Manitobans is hardly a cut. One point four million dollars is an investment we are making, but we are getting better value for the money as well.

Manitobans want a health-care system that's cost effective and focused on delivering the right care, at the right time and the right place, better care sooner. We have budgeted more than \$700 million of increased investment in health care this year than the NDP previously ever did.

And, Madam Speaker, we're investing more, and we're investing more wisely. And we'll face these challenges we've inherited head-on. We will face future challenges the same way.

And I'd be remiss if I didn't mention the outstanding efforts of Manitoba's professional public service. They've been absolutely crucial to our work in transforming our public service to make it a safer place for people to work harassment free, where people can be confident, where Manitobans can be confident that their children and their grandchildren who work here will always be safe, respected and heard. And, in terms of our transformation strategies, we asked Manitoba's front-line workers to give us ideas, and we were hopeful we would receive them, and we did: bountiful numbers of ideas and suggestions that we are working to achieve with our front-line workers.

In terms of our economy, Madam Speaker, our economic indicators show that our plan of working in partnership with Manitoba's small-business sector is working. We lead the country in exports to the United States. We lead the country in gains in average weekly earnings. We lead the country in private sector capital investment. This is where Manitoba deserves to be. We deserve to be in the leadership position that Manitobans want us to be in. And with more hard work we'll build upon these great successes.

Our opposition colleagues in the NDP have not offered up any new ideas, but rather have instead

chosen to confuse going backward with courage. They have chosen to support failed ideas. They have chosen to make debates about improving services debates about ideologies when, in fact, they should be discussions about how to get better results.

Madam Speaker, the previous administration chose to use the private sector when it privatized Teranet. It chose to use the private sector when it increased significantly the use of air ambulances by the private sector. It chose to use the private sector when it bought Tiger Dams as well. But it didn't shop smartly; it shopped sloppily instead.

And that's not how we'll work. We'll work the way Manitobans do. You know, rushing a stadium doesn't work well; rushing a quarterback might. A lack of tenders, a lack of standards in the air service branch, having regional health authorities borrow directly from banks instead of paying lower interest rates and using the government for that, untendered Costco-size liquor stores, and the list goes on and on and on. Probably the reason the NDP doesn't like the private sector is because they don't understand how to use it the way Manitobans do. Manitobans understand how to get value for money. They have to; they pay some of the highest taxes in Canada.

We can't return to the old, tired ways of doing things. We have to forge a new path, and we will not shy away from the imperatives of leadership.

Nous redresserons—redressons notre situation financière, pour offrir plus de stabilité.

Translation

We will improve—we are improving our financial situation, to provide more stability.

English

We're repairing our services so that Manitobans will have greater security. We're rebuilding our economy so that Manitobans will have greater opportunity, and we continue to make progress towards returning to balanced budgets, which also will allow us to provide tax relief for Manitoba families. We are committed to making our communities safer, to protecting vulnerable Manitobans, to improving health care, education and social services.

Abraham Lincoln once stated it often requires more courage to dare to do right than to fear to do wrong. Madam Speaker, I am proud and honoured to serve with a courageous group, a courageous group

of people who are not afraid and do not walk away from challenge.

Taking the first step towards recognizing there's a problem is the key, and we do that, Madam Speaker. We have seen the problem, and we are facing it head-on. Serving as your Premier is a tremendous honour. To be in this role is a sacred trust. I very much appreciate the opportunity, and that trust means ensuring that we fight for equality of opportunity for all Manitobans. I'll always fervently and faithfully carry out those duties. I'm driven by a purpose, as are my colleagues, that is greater than our own personal goals. I urge all members of this House to vote in favour of this speech.

* (16:30)

May God bless the people of Manitoba.

Madam Speaker: The hour being 4:30, I will now put the questions necessary to dispose of the proposed motion of the honourable member for Southdale (Mr. Smith), that is, the motion for an address in reply to the Speech from the Throne and all amendments to that motion.

Therefore, the question before the House is a proposed subamendment of the leader of the second opposition party: the subamendment to the motion for an address in reply to the Speech from the Throne.

Do members wish to have the subamendment read?

Some Honourable Members: No.

An Honourable Member: Yes.

Madam Speaker: All those—is the—is it the pleasure of the House—oh, there was a yes?

Do the members wish to have the subamendment read?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Madam Speaker: I heard noes. Okay.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the subamendment?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Voice Vote

Madam Speaker: All those in favour of the subamendment, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Madam Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Madam Speaker: In my opinion, the Nays have it.

Recorded Vote

Hon. Jon Gerrard (Second Opposition House Leader): Madam Speaker, on a recorded vote, please.

Madam Speaker: A recorded vote having been called, call in the members.

The question before the House is the motion of the leader of the second opposition party, that is, the subamendment to the motion for an address in reply to the Speech from the Throne.

Division

A RECORDED VOTE was taken, the result being as follows:

Yeas

Allum, Altemeyer, Fontaine, Gerrard, Kinew, Lamont, Lamoureux, Lathlin, Lindsey, Maloway, Marcelino (Logan), Marcelino (Tyndall Park), Saran, Smith (Point Douglas), Swan, Wiebe.

Nays

Bindle, Clarke, Cox, Cullen, Curry, Eichler, Ewasko, Fielding, Friesen, Goertzen, Graydon, Guillemard, Helwer, Isleifson, Johnson, Johnston, Lagassé, Lagimodiere, Martin, Mayer, Michaleski, Micklefield, Morley-Lecomte, Nesbitt, Pallister, Pedersen, Piwniuk, Reyes, Schuler, Smith (Southdale), Squires, Stefanson, Teitsma, Wharton, Wishart, Wowchuk, Yakimoski.

Deputy Clerk (Mr. Rick Yarish): Yeas 16, Nays 37.

Madam Chairperson: I declare the subamendment lost.

Madam Speaker: The question now before the House is the proposed amendment moved by the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Kinew) to the motion for an address in reply to the Speech from the Throne.

Do members wish to have the amendment read?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Madam Speaker: I will read the amendment, after I have a drink of water.

THAT the motion be amended by adding the following words at the end:

But this House regrets that the provincial government has:

- (a) refused to invest in resources for addictions, such as detox beds, treatment beds or a safe injection site, for families suffering the effects of the methamphetamine crisis which is gripping Winnipeg, Brandon and other areas of Manitoba while spending hundreds of thousands on an advertising campaign to warn of the dangers of cannabis with no corresponding campaign for the methamphetamine—for methamphetamine; and
- (b) continued to undermine the front-line health care services that Manitoba families and seniors rely on by pushing ahead with the closure of emergency rooms and urgent-care centres, ending obstetric services in Flin Flon, eliminating outpatient physiotherapy and occupational therapy services and coverage for sleep apnea supports while threatening important services, like CancerCare, with the prospect of further cuts; and
- (c) put the health-care system at further risk by refusing to invest in nurses and instead forced nurses and other front-line health-care workers to the brink of exhaustion and fatigue through the Premier's plans for cuts and consolidation; and
- (d) continued the attack on women's health care in Manitoba by refusing to provide real access to necessary reproductive health services like the abortion pill for all Manitoba women and girls, closing the mature women's health centre and cutting lactation supports services and the midwifery program; and
- (e) ignored the needs for vulnerable seniors by failing to build one personal-care-home bed for another year; and
- (f) cut supports for life-saving medication through the special drug program for those suffering from diabetes, cystic fibrosis and other debilitating diseases while making no effort to support the creation of a real, publicly and universally accessible Pharmacare program; and
- (g) failed to acknowledge that the Premier's cuts have exacerbated the wait times for hip, knee and cataract surgeries, which have worsened by significant margins since 2016; and
- (h) failed to apply a gender-based lens to its policies and to help increase representation of women across society; and
- (i) disrespected the message clearly stated by climate science as no plan or initiative has been presented to fight climate change or global warming, nor has there been any offer to provide real protections for lakes and rivers, especially Lake Winnipeg, or to help lower and middle-income Manitobans access green options on top of a failure to remove subsidies for big oil and gas polluters; and
- (j) continued to pick fights with municipalities, including the City of Winnipeg, by refusing to work collaboratively or co-operatively in making unilateral cuts such as the ending of the Municipal Road and Bridge Program, dictating massive cuts to the infrastructure budget while freezing transit budgets and ending historic partnerships to support transit; and
- (k) failed to offer a jobs plan which can address the challenges facing the province as Manitoba's unemployment rate rises, an unconstitutional wage freeze is imposed, front-line public sector jobs are cut and private sector companies move good-paying jobs to other jurisdictions, including the United States; and
- (l) ignored the needs of northern and rural Manitobans who are looking for an economic plan that keeps education affordable and accessible, by cutting important programs like the Northern Patient Transportation Program; and

- (m) failed, for another year, to put forward a comprehensive poverty reduction strategy that raises families and children out of the cycle of poverty and has instead decided to attack the most vulnerable in society by cutting Rent Assist and freezing the minimum wage for two years while giving multimillion-dollar contracts to high-priced consultants instead of listening to regular families and front-line workers; and
- (n) cut small class sizes for early learners, failed to properly fund or create a truly publicly accessible, high-quality child-care system, while refusing to fund K-to-12 education at the rate of economic growth while engaging in a review which will set the stage for more cuts; and
- (o) continued to increase tuition for post-secondary education, especially colleges, while cutting training spots in colleges, making it more difficult for regular families to get the education and training they need to secure good jobs close to home and ending the tuition income tax rebate which helped make university and college more affordable; and

* (16:40)

- (p) pushed ahead with a plan to privatize Lifeflight Air Ambulance services in spite of front-line doctors warning the Province of the dire consequences of that plan; and
- (q) eliminated health coverage for international students at the same time as instituting a new \$500 fee for participants in the Provincial Nominee Program; and
- (r) failed again to present any commitments to build new social or affordable housing or a provincial housing strategy, despite having promised to do so repeatedly while having sold off affordable housing or eliminated requirements for affordable housing in projects; and
- (s) failed to meaningfully consult with indigenous peoples and their representatives, made offensive and divisive comments regarding indigenous groups and has ignored the Pathway to Reconciliation laid

out by The Path to Reconciliation Act, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission "Calls to Action" and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; and

- (t) broken its promise to deliver real reforms to families in Manitoba after cutting support for restorative justice programs while making cuts to services that help families navigate difficult court proceedings like family conciliation services, all while crime rises in Winnipeg; and
- (u) failed to make any clear commitments to invest in needed health-care services in Brandon or Westman; and
- (v) continued to lay the groundwork for the privatization of Manitoba Hydro while refusing to keep rates affordable for regular Manitoba families; and
- (w) failed to offer any plan to keep cellphone rates affordable for regular families while cheerleading corporate mergers of big telecommunication companies; and
- (x) failed to condemn the federal government for its approach to climate change which allows big coal polluters in Saskatchewan to avoid a price on pollution while the federal government makes cuts to health-care transfers; and
- (y) failed to implement the recommendations of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner's report; and
- (z) hurt young farmers with the provincial government's changes to the Crown lands program, making it harder for small family farms in Manitoba to access Crown lands.

As a consequence of these and many other failings, the provincial government has thereby lost the trust and confidence of the people of Manitoba and this House.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

Madam Speaker: All those in favour of the amendment, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Madam Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Madam Speaker: In my opinion, the Nays have it.

Recorded Vote

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader): A recorded vote, please, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: A recorded vote having been called, call in the members.

The question before the House is the motion of the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Kinew), that is, the amendment to the motion for an address in reply to the Speech from the Throne.

Division

A RECORDED VOTE was taken, the result being as follows:

Yeas

Allum, Altemeyer, Fontaine, Gerrard, Kinew, Lamont, Lamoureux, Lathlin, Lindsey, Maloway, Marcelino (Logan), Marcelino (Tyndall Park), Saran, Smith (Point Douglas), Swan, Wiebe.

Nays

Bindle, Clarke, Cox, Cullen, Curry, Eichler, Ewasko, Fielding, Friesen, Goertzen, Graydon, Guillemard, Helwer, Isleifson, Johnson, Johnston, Lagassé, Lagimodiere, Martin, Mayer, Michaleski, Micklefield, Morley-Lecomte, Nesbitt, Pallister, Pedersen, Pivniuk, Reyes, Schuler, Smith (Southdale), Squires, Stefanson, Teitsma, Wharton, Wishart, Wowchuk, Yakimoski.

Deputy Clerk: Yeas 16, Nays 37.

Madam Speaker: I declare the amendment lost.

Madam Speaker: The question now before the House is the motion of the honourable member for Southdale (Mr. Smith) that is, the motion for an address in reply to the Speech from the Throne.

Do members wish to have the motion read?

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

Madam Speaker: All those in favour of the motion, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Madam Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Madam Speaker: In my opinion, the Yeas have it.

Recorded Vote

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): Recorded vote, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: A recorded vote having been called, call in the members.

The question before the House is the motion of the honourable member for Southdale, that is, the motion for an address in reply to the Speech from the Throne.

Division

A RECORDED VOTE was taken, the result being as follows:

Yeas

Bindle, Clarke, Cox, Cullen, Curry, Eichler, Ewasko, Fielding, Friesen, Goertzen, Graydon, Guillemard, Helwer, Isleifson, Johnson, Johnston, Lagassé, Lagimodiere, Martin, Mayer, Michaleski, Micklefield, Morley-Lecomte, Nesbitt, Pallister, Pedersen, Pivniuk, Reyes, Schuler, Smith (Southdale), Squires, Stefanson, Teitsma, Wharton, Wishart, Wowchuk, Yakimoski.

Nays

Allum, Altemeyer, Fontaine, Gerrard, Kinew, Lamont, Lamoureux, Lathlin, Lindsey, Maloway, Marcelino (Logan), Marcelino (Tyndall Park), Saran, Smith (Point Douglas), Swan, Wiebe.

Deputy Clerk: Yeas 37, Nays 16.

Madam Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Mr. Goertzen: Could you canvass the House to see if it's the will of the members to call it 5 p.m.?

* (16:50)

Madam Speaker: Is there leave to call it 5 p.m.?
[Agreed]

The House is adjourned and stands adjourned 'til 1:30 p.m. on Monday.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, November 29, 2018

CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS			
Introduction of Bills		B & L Foster Care Agency	
		B. Smith	248
		Cox	249
Bill 7–The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Immediate Roadside Prohibitions)		Foster Care Service Providers	
Cullen	241	B. Smith	249
		Cox	249
Bill 207–The Manitoba Conservation Officers Recognition Day Act		Personal-Care Homes	
Lagimodiere	241	Swan	249
		Friesen	250
Bill 201–The Health Services Insurance Amendment Act (Personal Care Home Staffing Guidelines)		Privatization of Water Bomber Services	
Swan	241	Lamont	251
		Pallister	251
Bill 202–The Public Schools Amendment Act (Small Classes for K to 3)		Review of Police Services Act	
Wiebe	242	Fontaine	252
		Cullen	252
Committee Reports		Emergency Room Services	
Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs First Report		Teitsma	253
Nesbitt	242	Friesen	253
Members' Statements		Home Repair Programs	
Gaurav Sharma		Lamoureux	253
Mayer	243	Cox	253
Review of CancerCare Manitoba		Gilbert Park Residents–Eviction Notices	
T. Marcelino	243	Lamoureux	253
		Cox	253
Eva Hawryshko		Northern Manitoba Communities	
Lagimodiere	244	Lindsey	254
		Pallister	254
Tyler Dueck		Pedersen	254
Martin	244	Petitions	
Festival du Voyageur 50th Anniversary		Flin Flon General Hospital Obstetric Services	
Lamont	245	Lindsey	255
Oral Questions		Concordia Hospital Emergency Room	
Closure of HudBay Mining Operations		Wiebe	256
Kinew	246	Vimy Arena	
Pallister	246	Fletcher	256
Privatization of Water Bomber Services		Addictions Services– Brandon and Western Manitoba	
Kinew	247	Swan	257
Pallister	247	Medical Laboratory Services	
		Gerrard	258

ORDERS OF THE DAY
GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Throne Speech
(Sixth Day of Debate)

Maloway	259
Fletcher	259
Lathlin	274
Clarke	277
Johnston	281
Pallister	284

The Legislative Assembly of Manitoba Debates and Proceedings
are also available on the Internet at the following address:

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/legislature/hansard/hansard.html>