

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

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Speaker*

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-Second Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ADAMS, Danielle	Thompson	NDP
ALTOMARE, Nello	Transcona	NDP
ASAGWARA, Uzoma	Union Station	NDP
BRAR, Diljeet	Burrows	NDP
BUSHIE, Ian	Keewatinook	NDP
CLARKE, Eileen, Hon.	Agassiz	PC
COX, Cathy, Hon.	Kildonan-River East	PC
CULLEN, Cliff, Hon.	Spruce Woods	PC
DRIEDGER, Myrna, Hon.	Roblin	PC
EICHLER, Ralph, Hon.	Lakeside	PC
EWASKO, Wayne	Lac du Bonnet	PC
FIELDING, Scott, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
FONTAINE, Nahanni	St. Johns	NDP
FRIESEN, Cameron, Hon.	Morden-Winkler	PC
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GOERTZEN, Kelvin, Hon.	Steinbach	PC
GORDON, Audrey	Southdale	PC
GUENTER, Josh	Borderland	PC
GUILLEMARD, Sarah, Hon.	Fort Richmond	PC
HELWER, Reg, Hon.	Brandon West	PC
ISLEIFSON, Len	Brandon East	PC
JOHNSON, Derek	Interlake-Gimli	PC
JOHNSTON, Scott	Assiniboia	PC
KINEW, Wab	Fort Rouge	NDP
LAGASSÉ, Bob	Dawson Trail	PC
LAGIMODIERE, Alan	Selkirk	PC
LAMONT, Dougald	St. Boniface	Lib.
LAMOUREUX, Cindy	Tyndall Park	Lib.
LATHLIN, Amanda	The Pas-Kameesak	NDP
LINDSEY, Tom	Flin Flon	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Malaya	Notre Dame	NDP
MARTIN, Shannon	McPhillips	PC
MOSES, Jamie	St. Vital	NDP
MICHALESKI, Brad	Dauphin	PC
MICKLEFIELD, Andrew	Rossmere	PC
MORLEY-LECOMTE, Janice	Seine River	PC
NAYLOR, Lisa	Woleseley	NDP
NESBITT, Greg	Riding Mountain	PC
PALLISTER, Brian, Hon.	Fort Whyte	PC
PEDERSEN, Blaine, Hon.	Midland	PC
PIWNIUK, Doyle	Turtle Mountain	PC
REYES, Jon	Waverley	PC
SALA, Adrien	St. James	NDP
SANDHU, Mintu	The Maples	NDP
SCHULER, Ron, Hon.	Springfield-Ritchot	PC
SMITH, Andrew	Lagimodière	PC
SMITH, Bernadette	Point Douglas	NDP
SMOOK, Dennis	La Vérendrye	PC
SQUIRES, Rochelle, Hon.	Riel	PC
STEFANSON, Heather, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
TEITSMA, James	Radisson	PC
WASYLIW, Mark	Fort Garry	NDP
WHARTON, Jeff, Hon.	Red River North	PC
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
WISHART, Ian	Portage la Prairie	PC
WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, October 27, 2020

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

Please be seated.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 206—The Provincial Court Amendment Act (Mandatory Awareness Training)

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): I move, seconded by the member for Point Douglas (Mrs. Smith), that Bill 206, The Provincial Court Amendment Act (Mandatory Awareness Training), be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Ms. Fontaine: I rise to introduce Bill 206, The Provincial Court Amendment Act (Mandatory Awareness Training). This is the second time I'm introducing this bill, which will require a person to receive sexual assault training before taking office as a judge or a justice of the peace. A—misogynistic, racist and harmful stereotypes have gone unchallenged and—relied upon in decisions in the criminal justice system.

As legislators, we owe it to all victims of gender-based violence to ensure all people who will be judges in our criminal court system know the realities of sexual assault and are aware these—of these realities as they deliver their judgments.

I look forward to unanimous support of this long-overdue bill. Miigwech.

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

Committee reports?

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Minister of Agriculture and Resource Development): Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to table the Manitoba Habitat Heritage Corporation 2019-2020 Annual Report.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Madam Speaker: The honourable Minister of Conservation and Climate, and I would indicate that the required 90 minutes notice prior to routine proceedings was provided in accordance with our rule 26(2).

Would the honourable minister please proceed with her statement.

Recycling Week

Hon. Sarah Guillemard (Minister of Conservation and Climate): Last week was Waste Reduction Week in Canada, and I was very happy to proclaim the third week of October 2020 and each year going forward will be hereby known as recycling week in Manitoba.

Our government has a strong mandate to deliver our Made-in-Manitoba Climate and Green Plan. This plan sets out our vision for improving waste diversion and recycling practices, among many other green initiatives. Our goal is to transform Manitoba into the cleanest, greenest, most climate-resilient province in Canada.

To support this transformation, it is important for our government to work with all Manitobans, including individuals, businesses, Indigenous communities, municipalities, environmental organizations and educational institutions, to support and celebrate sustainability initiatives in our great province.

Notre gouvernement a un mandat fort pour mettre en œuvre notre Plan vert et climatique conçu au Manitoba. Ce plan présente notre vision pour améliorer les pratiques de réacheminement et de recyclage des déchets, parmi de nombreuses autres initiatives vertes. Notre objectif est de transformer le Manitoba en la province la plus propre, la plus verte et la plus résiliente au climat du Canada.

La semaine du recyclage a été une excellente occasion de reconnaître et d'honorer les précieuses contributions apportées par des individus, des

organisations et des institutions dans nos communautés.

Translation

Our government has a strong mandate to implement our Made-in-Manitoba Climate and Green Plan. This plan presents our vision to improve waste reusing and recycling practices, amongst other green initiatives. Our objective is to transform Manitoba into Canada's cleanest, greenest and most climate-resilient province.

Recycling week was an excellent opportunity to recognize and honour the valuable contributions of individuals, organizations and institutions in our communities.

English

Thank you to GFL Environmental's Winnipeg material recovery facility for the fascinating tour last week. Their facility was recently awarded the National Waste & Recycling Association's 2020 Recycling Facility of the Year Award. Congratulations.

Another highlight from recycling week was an informative visit to Brady 4R Winnipeg Depot. I learned in many different ways how local recycling is sorted and processed for reuse.

Thank you to all of our waste management workers across the province for your efforts to innovate and become cleaner and greener over the years. Manitobans appreciate you year-round.

We all have a role to play in protecting Manitoba's environment, and our collective action will help shape attitudes toward sustainable waste management practices. By working together, we can make Manitoba the cleanest, greenest, most climate-resilient province in Canada.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Ms. Lisa Naylor (Wolseley): Recycling is a tangible behaviour that all Manitobans must do to protect our environment, and it is important to remind citizens of that responsibility. However, as we learn more about climate science and sustainability, we have also learned that recycling should be a last resort, that reducing, reusing and ultimately refusing to create unnecessary waste is much more effective. I would like to thank all Manitobans who are taking steps to adapt the way they live in order to reduce their carbon footprint.

Unfortunately, the province's greenhouse gas rates are at an all-time high. The government has been taking us backwards, not forwards, on sustainability. They have cut clean energy programs like Manitoba Hydro's hugely popular solar rebate program, ended transit funding, decreased the number of electric busses and created the debacle with Efficiency Manitoba.

During the pandemic, they also cut annual funding for environmental organizations that actually provide education to Manitobans, including Green Action Centre, Climate Change Connection and the Manitoba Eco-Network, and then they forced the same organizations to reapply and compete against private businesses for their funding.

The Premier (Mr. Pallister) wasted millions of tax dollars on a lengthy challenge to the federal carbon tax and jeopardized \$67 million from the federal government Low Carbon Economy Fund because he was refusing to sign onto the agreement. His Made-in-Manitoba Climate and Green Plan has no emission targets, and in 2018, the Pallister government cancelled its own carbon tax plan without explanation, creating uncertainty for Manitobans.

The Pallister government is also assessing the potential for divesting park infrastructure assets, and just yesterday we revealed that they're developing a strategy that will fulfill government direction to achieve a system for the sale of leased provincial park cottage lots. This is not a government that prioritizes our environment or our public shared spaces.

And this government has also frozen funding at 2016 levels for municipalities, meaning it has become harder than ever for them to afford services such as waste and recycling services, or to implement a comprehensive composting program.

* (13:40)

It is genuinely nice to recognize recycling week once a year, but we're still not on track to meet our Paris Agreement climate targets. We have no clear emission goals. We have a Premier who spends more time fighting the federal carbon tax than he does fighting climate change. The Pallister government needs to aggressively improve its climate strategy because recycling alone will not get us out of the climate crisis.

Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface): I ask for leave to speak in response to the minister's statement.

Madam Speaker: Does the member have leave to respond to the ministerial statement?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Madam Speaker: Leave has been denied.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

The Pumpkin Promise

Ms. Janice Morley-Lecomte (Seine River): Halloween offers everyone, young and old, an opportunity to dress up and become a superhero, masked villain or Dracula. Homes are decorated for a night of fright with cobwebs, ghosts, pumpkins and eerie-sounding mummies. In the midst of this, one hears the screams of excited children as they fly from house to house, yelling trick or treat.

I want to introduce a local hero who has been sharing his love of Halloween and fundraising for CancerCare Manitoba. The Pumpkin Promise is a celebration that has evolved out of a love for Halloween, desire to help Manitobans and to carry on a cherished memory.

Chris Okell and his mother Marietta started to celebrate Halloween over 20 years ago. Marietta would decorate a space in the old Eaton's building downtown and host inner-city children to an evening of Halloween haunts and screams.

As the space no longer was an option, the Halloween theme was moved to Chris's home. It quickly attracted crowds and grew into a neighbourhood delight. Pumpkins, carved, lit with trouble lights and billowing smoke, prominently sit in front of Chris's home.

As the event grew, so did the size of the pumpkins. What began as a 60-pound jack o' lantern has grown into a 1,500-pound jack o' lantern.

Sadly, Chris lost his mother to cancer in 2010. Chris continues to honour his mother and his mother's wish to help people, and this is how The Pumpkin Promise was born. Each year in May, Chris begins the work of preparing for his annual Halloween event. Farmers need to be contacted, and arrangements are made for the large pumpkins to be delivered after the annual pumpkin competition. These Atlantic Giants draw in crowds wherever Chris takes them. Chris said the event draws survivors, families and friends together

To quote Chris: Thank you to all Winnipeg and surrounding neighbours in Manitoba who have helped

keep this event going over the years. I couldn't have done this without you.

In continuing the tradition of celebrating Halloween and supporting people in the memory of his mother, Chris has raised close to \$24,600 in support of CancerCare Manitoba.

Thank you.

Changes to Agriculture in India

Mr. Diljeet Brar (Burrows): Madam Speaker, I rise in the Chamber today to acknowledge many of my constituents and those across Manitoba who have been impacted by detrimental changes to agricultural legislation in India. These legislative changes will have a significant effect on the future of their families, both here and abroad.

In India, an overwhelming number of producers own small plots of land. They are under significant financial pressure to put their product for sale immediately because most do not have the ability to store or transport their harvest. For decades, they have relied on government regulation to ensure some level of fair prices and services.

Due to legislative changes, government regulation is swept aside for a wide-open system that favours corporate power and consolidation. Small producers without means to hold or ship their product will be prone to the manipulations of private actors.

In what has become a familiar refrain of right-wing governments everywhere, the Modi government has referred to its changes as giving freedom of choice to producers. But for many producers, it means that they will have no choice but to accept unfair payment of the fruit of their labour.

Farmers in India are protesting on roads and railway tracks. Non-resident Indians are standing in solidarity, protesting against these laws in Canada, the US, Italy, the UK, France and New Zealand. Many Indians are supporting their friends and families who are impacted by these changes.

I, along with my NDP colleagues, stand against the exploitation of farmers here and around the world. We urge all governments to take action to ensure farmers are treated fairly.

Thank you.

Michelle Carlos

Mr. Jon Reyes (Waverley): Today, I have the great honour to recognize the courageousness of Waverley

constituent Michelle Carlos and her battle against cancer to highlight your extraordinary support provided by the South Winnipeg community.

In late 2019, Michelle was diagnosed with stage 3 cancer. With a husband, three children in school and a very active community life, she and her family were faced with a difficult year ahead. Through resilience and strength, the Carlos family endured six rounds of chemotherapy, radiation treatments and two surgeries.

With most of Michelle's extended family currently living in Swan River, they looked towards their friends and extensive community for support. They truly rose to lend a helping hand. Transportation to and from treatments were provided by her compassionate neighbours, one of whom, a nurse using her day off from HSC to drive Michelle to her treatments downtown. Their tackle football club providing gift cards and groceries. And their basketball club, with the club Ignite, provided meals and rides so that their three children could continue to participate in after-school activities.

Local schoolteachers of the Carlos kids sent well-wishes and emails of support, along with their church and faithful friends generously contributing to parking expenses and the medical needs during Michelle's time off work.

Finally, throughout her many visits to urgent care and rounds of chemotherapy, the wonderful staff at Victoria hospital tended to her every step of the way. Likewise, the brilliant team of doctors, nurses, dieticians and specialists at CancerCare Manitoba all provided the best level of possible medical care.

Madam Speaker, I am pleased to report that a few months ago, Michelle 'gally' danced out of CancerCare and no further cancer has been detected. This is truly a remarkable example of how communities should care for one another and why community activities and relationships are the backbone of this great province.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Mrs. Michelle Carlos for a swift recovery and in sending my gratitude to the south Winnipeg community for their heartfelt and loving support.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Recognition of Two-Spirit Elders

MLA Uzoma Asagwara (Union Station): Today, I rise to recognize the incredible contributions of two-

spirit elders in our communities and to honour the 30th anniversary of the two-spirit name.

August 4, 2020, marked the 30th anniversary of the adoption of the two-spirit name by Indigenous LGBTQIA people in North America.

In 1990, at the 3rd gathering of Native American gays and lesbians near Beausejour, Manitoba, Dr. Myra Laramee brought the two-spirit name to a sharing circle of 80 LGBTQIA people from across North America. It was received through ceremony and many Indigenous LGBTQIA groups adopted it the following year.

In 2019, the national inquiry into murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls included 32 2SLGBTQIA-specific calls for justice in its final report.

Reclaiming the name two-spirit during the year of Oka and the Meech Lake resistance was an act of decolonization and reconciliation.

It's important to note that in attendance at that gathering 30 years ago were local two-spirit elders who, to this very day, continue to contribute invaluable leadership to communities here in Manitoba. They are: Connie Merasty, Dr. Albert McLeod, Elder Barbara Bruce and Dr. Myra Laramee herself.

I, like many queer Manitobans, have been blessed with the opportunity to know them, to work with them and to learn from them. I am forever grateful for their teachings, generosity and ongoing contributions to all of our communities.

As legislators, we must insist and ensure that two-spirit peoples are acknowledged, uplifted and celebrated. All Manitobans should know and be aware of the powerful history of the two-spirit peoples and of the two-spirit name.

I ask my colleagues to join me in honouring all two-spirit elders for their immeasurable contributions across Turtle Island and in celebrating the 30th anniversary of the two-spirit name.

Thank you.

Political Speech During a Pandemic

Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface): In the midst of this pandemic, it is worth looking back on the lessons of the past.

The central lesson of John M. Barry's *The Great Influenza*, a book about the pandemic of 1918, was that, in a crisis, that you have to tell the truth.

In 1918, America's political leaders—even health commissioners—sugar-coated bad news to avoid panicking the public. That greatly undermined their authority when citizens saw friends and neighbors dying in great numbers, he explains. Those in authority must retain the public's trust. The way to do that is to distort nothing, to put the best face on nothing, to try to manipulate no one.

* (13:50)

I contrast that with our present politics, where truth is often treated as irrelevant to the game. There are plenty of people who are concerned that democracy is in retreat and that strongmen and totalitarians having been rising into power around the world.

One of the characteristics of totalitarians is a total disregard for the truth.

Jacob T. Levy, a professor at McGill, had this to say: The great analysts of truth and language in politics, including George Orwell, Hannah Arendt, Václav Havel, can help us recognize this kind of lie for what it is. Saying something obviously untrue, and making your subordinates repeat it with a straight face in their own voice, is a particularly startling display of power over them. It's something that was endemic to totalitarianism.

Arendt and others recognized, writes Levy, that being made to repeat an obvious lie makes it clear that you're powerless. She also recognized the function of an avalanche of lies to render a populace powerless to resist, the phenomenon we now refer to as gaslighting.

The sense by which we take our bearings in the real world—and the category of truth versus falsehood is among the mental means to this end—is being destroyed.

The ground thus pulled out from under them, most would depend on whatever the leader said, no matter its relation to truth. The essential conviction shared by all ranks, Arendt concluded, from fellow traveller to leader, is that politics is a game of cheating.

Chilling words, Madam. We can hope it doesn't take an enduring hold here, because in a crisis, there is no denying reality.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Personal-Care Homes and Hospitals COVID-19 Outbreak Prevention

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Madam Speaker, each day seems to bring new grim statistics about the impacts of the pandemic here in Manitoba. And each of those numbers represents a person, a grandparent, a child. Today, unfortunately, we saw a new record-high case count in Manitoba, another death related to the outbreak at Parkview Place and more deaths related to outbreaks at hospitals.

Now, on this side of the House we believe that a government can protect Manitobans from this pandemic, in fact, should be doing everything within its power to protect Manitobans from COVID-19. One of the important ways we can do that is to ensure that seniors and other people living in homes like Parkview Place get the staffing, the resources and the protection that they need. There have been numerous failures documented, including by the WRHA.

What will the Premier announce today in terms of new steps to keep seniors and other folks at Parkview Place safe?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Well, as we are in the midst of a pandemic, it is important to remind all Manitobans to follow the health advice that we have been giving, that Dr. Roussin has been giving, and to make sure that they are diligent in remembering that COVID is a formidable risk to all of us and in particular to our vulnerable populations, seniors included.

There have been numerous steps taken by this government out of respect for seniors, out of respect for the health of all of us, out of respect for the love and care that we deserve to show at all times to our seniors population. We'll continue to take additional steps and we will continue to act with focus to ensure that we do our very best to protect our seniors population here in Manitoba.

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

Mr. Kinew: There are numerous outbreaks at hospitals and health-care facilities across the province even as we speak. There are patients who are dying. There are staff who are sick or can't work because they're on isolation. There's a tremendous amount of stress for everyone in the system, whether they're a patient or a front-line worker.

Unfortunately, today we heard of two more people dying as a result of the outbreak at St. Boniface Hospital. My condolences to the friends and relatives of the deceased.

But this is a major concern. St. Boniface is a hub for cancer care. St. Boniface is also a hub for cardiac care. There are a lot of sick people who are going to St. Boniface Hospital on a good day, and now, of course, COVID casts a cloud over that whole situation.

What specific measures is the Premier going to put in place today to ensure the safety of patients at St. Boniface Hospital?

Mr. Pallister: Well, of course, the member knows that visitations have been suspended. This is an immediate and short-term necessity, I think, to protect the health and well-being of—not only of patients but of staff as well.

I think it's also important to understand that, over the longer term, this government has taken the approach that we need to concentrate our resources in key emergency sectors so that we can do a comprehensive job when people come in, rather than shipping them off to another ill-equipped emergency room, which was the case for many years in our province, sadly. And so a focus of our investments has been and will continue to be at St. Boniface Hospital.

The member didn't ask about the mid- or longer term, but I think it is important to understand that while we are taking steps today we are also taking steps to protect the future of our seniors and our patients in our care facilities in the future as well.

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

COVID-19 Financial Assistance Small-Business Support

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): This Premier's cuts to health care have left these hospitals vulnerable to the COVID-19 pandemic, and unfortunately, we need new investments—long time coming—to help address that situation.

Another sector that needs long-term and urgent investments at the same time is the small-business community here in Manitoba. Businesses have been left behind by this government. Many are hanging on by a thread.

With new restrictions potentially being on the horizon, there is a requirement that the government step up to help support those businesses that have already been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. We need to ensure that these job creators see it through the winter. And, again, we're past the point of loans. We're past the point of deferrals. We're past the point of existing programs. We need new grants to help these job creators survive.

What new programs to help small business in Manitoba will the Premier announce today?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Well, sadly, I again have to point out the flagrant falsehoods in the member's assertions. We've invested—this year's budget alone, pre-COVID, we committed to a half-a-billion-dollar additional investment in health care, higher than any previous NDP contribution. Madam Speaker, that is not a cut; that is an investment and a focused one designed to achieve better outcomes. In addition, hundreds of millions of dollars have already been invested in health care and in other aspects of responding to COVID.

I can only tell the member that he is totally wrong when it comes to response in respect of our small-business community. The StatsCan reports from just three weeks ago show that the No. 1 province in increasing employment in the country was Manitoba, Madam Speaker. And this is in part because of the partnership and support we offer small business.

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

Addiction Treatment New Approach Needed

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Seriously, Madam Speaker, the new COVID case counts would show you that a lot can change in three weeks, and the small-business community would tell you just the same: there is an urgent need for new action.

Unfortunately, there is also another epidemic at work here in Manitoba. There is another public health crisis, at many times unseen, which is unfolding across the province. This is the addictions crisis. It is driven by mental health issues, by unresolved trauma, but it has been aggravated and made worse by the impacts of the pandemic.

There is one area that I want to draw your attention to, in particular, that is an alarming new statistic. There were 30 babies born with congenital

syphilis this year, Madam Speaker. This is 30 babies born in our province with STBBIs that are a result, in part, of the addictions crisis. I'll table the document for the Premier.

What steps will he take to address this public health emergency?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Well, I'll let the minister speak to additional steps. I can only share with the member that we have introduced literally dozens of new programs in relation to the topic he has just raised, additional investments approaching or exceeding now, I think, \$20 million in addictions-related programs, not to mention additional investments in specific programs around mental health and so on.

So we are focusing on these issues. They are, as he quite rightly points out, exacerbated by the stresses presented to Manitobans as a consequence of COVID. I can also say to the member the one thing we will not be doing in respect of the small-business community is going back and jacking up taxes the way they were used to for 17 years under the NDP.

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

Mr. Kinew: Madam Speaker, we know—we know—this Premier would prefer to raise their hydro rates and to raise their property and education taxes instead. We are asking for assistance for those small businesses.

* (14:00)

But on the subject at hand, the document that I tabled shows that there are 30 cases of congenital syphilis in Winnipeg in only the first part of the year. To put into perspective—that 30 cases here in Winnipeg—last year, there were 45 cases in all of Canada. Now we've seen 30 just in our city alone.

Here's another piece of food for thought, Madam Speaker. The WRHA—this is a direct quote here—says, and I quote, there should be zero cases of congenital syphilis. End quote. This is entirely preventable with access to primary care and prenatal care.

What steps will the Premier commit to today—new initiatives—to help us combat the addictions crisis?

Mr. Pallister: Sadly, the member again chose to put another misrepresentation on the record, Madam Speaker, in his preamble.

The fact of the matter is, Madam Speaker, that it was the NDP who raised taxes on people's property in this province. They did it repeatedly. They did it year

after year. And we have actually reduced the taxes by taking the PST off residential and business insurance for Manitoba property owners.

So I should mention, Madam Speaker, though the member is not familiar directly with small business, that small businesses like the fact that they are now saving, along with residents of the province, more than \$75 million—\$75 million more in their hands because we trust the small-business community to create jobs; previous administrations distrusted them instead.

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

Mr. Kinew: Well, Madam Speaker, the small-business owner might save a few pennies on a double-double, but because of this Premier, they are going to pay hundreds of more per year on their hydro bill. It ain't right.

Returning to the subject at hand. The addictions crisis is—[*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: —not merely a challenge that is confronted on the streets. When we're talking congenital syphilis, of course that is one worrying indicator, but that is just the tip of the iceberg. People ought to know that the addictions crisis is province-wide. We're talking about people in the suburbs, we're talking about people in rural Manitoba, when payday comes around, who go rush and spend too much of their incomes on pills. We're talking about families damaged.

This is a major public health crisis. This is an epidemic that demands a substantive response from the government. The current approach is not working.

What new steps will this Premier take to address addictions in Manitoba?

Mr. Pallister: I encourage all Manitobans at this particular time of year to stay off thin ice, Madam Speaker. It's dangerous. And the member is on thin ice with each of his preambles.

Because he brings up the topic of hydro, he allows me to respond to the reality, Madam Speaker, of hydro rate increases as a necessary consequence of \$10 billion that the NDP threw away without asking for Manitobans' permission: \$10 billion thrown away when Hydro board opposed them in doing this, when the senior Hydro executives opposed them in doing this. And now the member—[*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: –through the crocodile tears, Madam Speaker, talks about sympathy for small business and for families on hydro bills.

Madam Speaker, the NDP handcuffed Hydro to Manitobans, and they handcuffed billions of dollars of additional debt to Manitoba families, as well. Shame on the member for raising this as a topic without admitting—[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: –to the people of Manitoba that it was his government that was responsible for this massive, massive boondoggle, this massive mistake that is saddling Manitobans in their future, Madam Speaker.

We will stay focused on addressing the problems of the future.

Opioid Addiction Treatment Government Support Needed

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): We previously informed this House that the numbers of needles distributed to deal with the addictions crisis were rapidly rising. Unfortunately, the situation has got worse.

Through freedom of information, which we are releasing today, we're seeing a continued and significant rise. In fiscal year 2019-2020, there were a million more needles distributed here in Winnipeg than just a few years prior. That's a staggering number and shows just how serious this situation is.

Why isn't this Pallister government taking the opioid crisis in this province seriously?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): Madam Speaker, we reject the preamble: \$42 million of investments in mental health and addictions over the past seven months shows just how much this government takes these issues seriously.

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

Mrs. Smith: For weeks now we've been asking this minister and this Premier (Mr. Pallister) how many people have died due to the opioid crisis during this pandemic and we've got no answer. The people of Brandon know this, too. We've previously shown that needle distribution has rapidly increased in Brandon. Unfortunately, it's getting worse.

In 2017 they distributed 100,000 needles. Now, in fiscal year 2019-2020, they distributed 373,451 needles—a 300 per cent increase. Again, a truly staggering increase, and this minister is not taking it seriously.

Why have they allowed this opioid crisis to grow unchecked?

Mr. Friesen: Well, Madam Speaker, the member is conflicted because she, herself, says that the response has been there and increasing as, indeed, the activities have increased.

But there is more evidence of the ways this government is responding: increasing access to naloxone, doubling the number of kits that have gone out. As of August this year there were 118 authorized prescribers for methadone in the province, 125 authorized prescribers for Suboxone—just some of the ways in which our Province and this government is taking action.

I would just leave members with this thought, that in just three years there were 7,000 take-home naloxone kits distributed in Manitoba by this government: shows the extent to which we take these issues seriously.

Madam Speaker: I just need to ask the member to clarify, for the record, that she meant to actually table those documents that she was making reference to.

Mrs. Smith: Yes, I was.

Madam Speaker: Okay, thank you. Appreciate that.

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

COVID-19 Pandemic Opioid Overdose Deaths

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): One million more distributed needles here in the province or in the city of Winnipeg: that's a 300 per cent increase in distribution, even in Brandon. What are we—what we're seeing is an out-of-control opioid crisis, and this government has failed to act or do anything. It's contributed to just horrible outcomes, even including 30 babies that were born with congenital syphilis, an outcome that no humane government should accept.

But it requires much more from this government, and this government can act. It can do something. It could ensure that no other baby is born or nobody has to die from this—from overdose.

Why can't the minister today tell us how many people have died of an overdose during this pandemic?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): Madam Speaker, we reject the preamble.

Here are some of the things that this government is doing, and I can only reflect on some in the time allotted to me: a new RAAM clinic opened just in October; a new RFP to expand 24/7 community drop-in capacity in September; new addiction supports of HSC emergency department, a \$3.5-million investment in September; in July, expansion of eating disorder program in Manitoba; in June, the expansion of the take-home naloxone kit program; in May, \$300,000 in education programs for people who need special care; Madam Speaker, peer support and family support programs in April.

This government will continue to invest in mental health and addictions responses.

Roots of Empathy Program Future of Program

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): Since 2002, the Roots of Empathy program has been teaching children and youth all about empathy, certainly something that members opposite could learn a little bit about. Thousands of students each year participate in this program and evidence has shown consistently that this program works, Madam Speaker. It helps—
[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Fontaine: —increase good attitudes and better outcomes for children and youth.

And so what has the Premier (Mr. Pallister) done with this program, Madam Speaker? Well, under the cover of this pandemic, the Premier cut the Roots of Empathy program.

* (14:10)

Why has the Premier cancelled this most excellent and important program for children?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Education): We certainly support the Roots of Empathy program. As a result of the pandemic, of course, there was advice that's been given by public health officials that we should limit the number of people who are entering a school to try to reduce the number of new people who are entering a school. So the program has been suspended only for this year.

Of course, we are hopeful that in the next school year it can return if a normalization of school can return as well. [interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order. Order.

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

Ms. Fontaine: We learned through FIPPA, which I table today, that the minister was planning on cutting this program as far back as May, Madam Speaker. But we also know that COVID is just a pretext for cuts by this government and this minister.

The Roots of Empathy program was delivered—
[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Fontaine: —by the Healthy Child branch of the government, Madam Speaker, which this—is being cut in the BITSA bill. The Healthy Child branch of government is being cut in BITSA. The consequences of these cuts will hurt children.

Why is the Premier cutting services that improve the lives of children in school?

Mr. Goertzen: Madam Speaker, there was nothing actually in anything that the member said that is true.

We have advised the—[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Goertzen: —Roots of Empathy they have been—
[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order. [interjection] Order.

Mr. Goertzen: Maybe roots of decorum would be helpful in here as well, Madam Speaker.

We have advised the Roots of Empathy that we will be resuming the program when we can allow people back into the school.

I would remind her that her critic yesterday was just saying that we need to keep schools safe. And while I didn't agree with much else that the critic said, I certainly did agree with that. And part of that is listening to public health advice and not just allowing people into the school who otherwise would not need to be there for the normal programming of a school.
[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

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

Ms. Fontaine: I would suggest to my colleague that he read the documents that we just tabled that show that the Roots of Empathy program has indeed been cut.

And we know that evidence shows that the Roots of Empathy program works. It's cost effective. It's made a difference in the lives of thousands of Manitoba children. And it is simply another attack on children and youth who need support all across the province.

The evidence is clear, Roots of Empathy works: So why is the minister and the Premier (Mr. Pallister) cutting this program?

Mr. Goertzen: Madam Speaker, I recognize that my friend across the way had three prepared questions and she was determined to deliver them regardless of what the answers were going to be, but I would give some friendly advice that sometimes—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Goertzen: —when you get these—the answer, it's not a bad strategy just to move on.

We have written to Roots of Empathy and advised them that we want to resume the programming, potentially as early as January. However, Madam Speaker, we don't know what's going to happen, of course, with the pandemic—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Goertzen: We all look forward to school being normalized and to other things in life being normalized, but until then, we need to follow the public health advice.

Every day, the members opposite say we should follow public health advice. We do, until they come and say we should ignore the public health advice. We won't. We're consistent. They're all over the place, flip-flopping one way or the other, Madam Speaker.

Changes to Crown Land Leasing Agricultural Producer Case Concern

Mr. Diljeet Brar (Burrows): Nearly two weeks ago, I raised with the minister our ongoing concerns with his changes to Crown lands policy and the specific concerns of ranchers.

I told the minister that their lease has doubled and two years of bills have come due close together due to changes the Pallister government has made. They simply can't afford the tens-of-thousands-of-dollars

increase this government is imposing. A letter from the minister's department really isn't sufficient.

Why has the minister not directly called them?

Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Minister of Agriculture and Resource Development): Madam Speaker, while I can't speak to an individual's case, I can tell him—the member—that the department did reach out, as late as last Friday, to this particular rancher.

First of all, Madam Speaker, the program does allow payment extensions under extenuating circumstances. However, it's up to the leaseholder to provide a viable repayment plan. It is not up to the department to create a repayment plan for this particular rancher. Farm specialists have been offered to help this rancher. The rancher has not agreed to use those specialists.

We continue to work with this rancher as well as we can.

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

Mr. Brar: The deadline for this producer has come and it has gone. They risk everything because of the minister's short-sighted changes to Crown lands. They tell me that their ranch means everything to them and that, at the very least, they need a payment plan or risk immediate loss of their farm.

I remind the minister of this rancher's words: You truly have no idea, nor can you even fathom the stress and worry I carry every day.

I ask the minister again: Will he do more than just send a letter, signed by his deputy, that doesn't help them? Will he show compassion and call this producer and their family to let them know he will help resolve this issue?

Mr. Pedersen: Madam Speaker, this is a challenge that the opposition has: they keep reading from their questions; they don't listen to the answers that were provided.

It is not the responsibility of the department to create a financial plan for—a repayment plan for this rancher. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pedersen: The department has offered farm specialists to work with that rancher in order to—for the rancher to create a viable repayment plan. Thus far, the rancher has refused to do that. There's only so

much we can do. We can offer our help, but we do not create financial plans for the rancher. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

The honourable member for Burrows, on a final supplementary.

Mr. Brar: This minister doesn't even think that keeping the Agriculture critic in the loop is something that he should be doing.

Thousands of producers are seeing rent increases that double or triple their costs, and because of the changes the minister has made—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Brar: —two years of bills have to be paid very close together. This is tens of thousands of dollars. It's stretching producers past the breaking point. We have generational producers and their farm managers that are being forced out, broken by the stress.

Why the minister—why is the minister pushing forward on his harmful plan for Crown lands?

Mr. Pedersen: Madam Speaker, it's unfortunate that the NDP try to make political gains at the expense of the farm community. You know, earlier the Leader of the Opposition was talking about hydro rate increases. Farmers are paying a tremendous load because of the misspending—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pedersen: —of the former government on Manitoba Hydro, not to mention that they had that eyesore of the west-side waste line of Bipole III going right through farmland, despite—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pedersen: —never asking farmers whether that should happen or not. *[interjection]*

The NDP talks one game in Winnipeg, but they talk a different game out in the country. They talk about a \$300 carbon tax in the city—*[interjection]*—but they don't mention that when they're out in the country.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Pedersen: Shame on the NDP.

Madam Speaker: Just going to ask for everybody's co-operation please. I was having a very hard time hearing that last part.

* (14:20)

We are now going to go to a—*[interjection]*—Order. We are now going to have a question from a remote MLA, and I would just ask that, because we need to be able to hear them very well, I'm going to ask for everybody's co-operation to please listen carefully to these questions.

Vale Nickel Mine Workforce Reduction

Ms. Danielle Adams (Thompson): Madam Speaker, the people in Thompson are on the edge. Vale has signalled it will be reducing its workforce. The Pallister government has had years to develop a game plan to help this city and the North.

Why won't the minister tell us how many jobs are going to be lost in Thompson?

Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Minister of Agriculture and Resource Development): Madam Speaker, it's always difficult when there is layoffs. And we certainly feel for those—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pedersen: Empathy. That's what I was thinking about.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: I'm going to allow the minister to start again with his response. I'm going to ask for everybody's co-operation, please, that we be able to hear, as we want to hear the questions, we want to hear the answers. I will allow the member to start his response again.

Mr. Pedersen: Madam Speaker, layoffs are no laughing matter, by anyone, especially in this House.

Madam Speaker, Vale has announced plans to reduce the workforce, which is always unfortunate. However, Vale has informed us, too, that, in the long run, they continue to extract mineral nickel out of Thompson.

In fact, what they are projecting is that right—currently they're producing about 900,000 tons of concentrate—nickel concentrate—per year. They expect in two to three years they will be up to 1.1 million tons of nickel, thereby making sure that the mine is viable.

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

Ms. Adams: Madam Speaker, the minister talks about empathy, but thousands of jobs have been lost in

northern Manitoba. But that department estimate is now several years old.

The reality is this situation has gotten far worse. The minister has told this House that he's been in discussions with Vale, but he won't tell us how many jobs are at stake.

Why won't he tell us how many jobs are on the chopping block in Thompson?

Mr. Pedersen: Madam Speaker, the member talks about jobs in the North in mining. There's lots of great things happening right now.

HudBay in Snow Lake can't hire enough people as they expand their mining within Snow Lake. The Rockliff Resources is in—just to the west of Thompson, just to the west of No. 6 Highway. They've actually leased the Wabowden concentrator. They're developing three different mines in that area.

There's lots of activity happening in here, contrary to when the NDP were in, who did their very best to discourage all mining, as the Leader of the Opposition can attest to.

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

Ms. Adams: Madam Speaker, the minister won't tell us because northern jobs aren't his priority.

As we speak, Vale continues to review with its eye on reducing its workforce. The Premier's message to our communities is a—is clear: You are on your own.

These workers need leadership that can develop jobs with a plan for the next 30 years to grow our northern communities and a plan for real investments for people in the North.

Why has the Pallister government abandoned the people of Thompson and the North?

Mr. Pedersen: Madam Speaker, it's always been a puzzle to us why the Leader of the Opposition would sign the Leap Manifesto, which says leave it in the ground. And yet, at the other hand, they say they want jobs in the North.

We're working with mineral companies all across the North. There's pent-up excitement about claims—doing claims in the North. And we've—we're moving to have a streamlined permit system, which I'm sure the NDP will support. We're going to—we've got our First Nation mineral development protocol, which

we're working with First Nations to develop good-paying jobs beside those communities.

We're doing all this. Where the NDP failed, we're going to get it right.

Inclusion Support Programs Funding Concerns

Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface): In recent weeks, there's been a clear double standard when it comes to what this government is asking of Manitobans.

We've seen the Premier stacking the civil service with PC Party donors, candidates and lobbyists, giving them six-figure salaries and five-figure raises, all while this government continues to ask for freezes and firings from Hydro to health care.

I table this letter from Children's House, which shows that Manitoba Early Learning and Child Care has cut their inclusion support grant by 28 per cent. Workers who were caring for children with autism are facing a pay cut of \$5 an hour, from \$17 to \$12.46.

Can the Premier explain why his government is gutting front-line supports to children and families with autism?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): I don't have to explain it, Madam Speaker, because it's untrue.

The fact of the matter is we're—we've increased the investments and supports for vulnerable people in this province by massive amounts, and, Madam Speaker, we'll continue to do that.

What the member needs to do is rise in his place in the next preamble—[*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: He needs to rise in his place in his next preamble—[*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: The member needs to rise in his place, and he needs to explain why he doesn't want Manitoba workers to get paid sick leave when they have COVID symptoms.

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

Mr. Lamont: Unlike the NDP, I have no interest in propping up the Premier's empty self-promotion.

I quote from the letter: It is hard to understand a cut of 28 per cent—[*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Lamont: –when the provincial government has not seen fit to raise this wage support by 1 cent–
[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Lamont: –over the last five years. We find it very hard to understand a cut that will severely damage our program while saving the government \$6,250 a year.

Now, Madam Speaker, this government tried in 2016, before, to cut autism programs. This summer, they shared the personal information–[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Lamont: –of 9,000 children with disabilities, including one of my children. And it's clear to me that this government, by its actions, believes that people with autism and disabilities are less-than.

Will the government prove me wrong by reinstating all of the funding to inclusion support programs now?

Mr. Pallister: It's not up to me to prove the member wrong. He does it when he speaks.

The member has an obligation here to the people, the workers of Manitoba–the people who are concerned about the transmission of COVID, who are concerned about community transmission, as well. He has an obligation to the people of Manitoba to do the right thing.

He takes a partisan attack and drills it down against a government and an opposition for standing up for workers who have COVID symptoms, for a plan that was developed by an NDP Premier in British Columbia, a Conservative Premier in Manitoba, and okayed by a Liberal Prime Minister. And the member needs to stand in his place and explain why he doesn't support paid sick leave for workers in this province with COVID symptoms today.

Personal-Care Homes Funding and Staffing

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, the news is full of shocking stories of appalling conditions in Parkview Place. Jan Legeros with the Long Term & Continuing Care Association has said these result, in part, from 15 years of funding freezes with no inflationary increases.

The freezes lasted for 11 years under the NDP and continued under the Pallister government. Indeed, for the two years before the pandemic, there were further

funding reductions which negatively impacted personal-care homes.

When will the government provide adequate funding for personal-care homes and ensure adequate staffing levels of 4.1 worked hours per resident per day, and when will the government send in a team of well-trained health professionals to take over the care at Parkview Place?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Well, we've taken significant initiatives and have worked in partnership with health-care leaders to address the issue at Parkview Place. Sadly, Madam Speaker, it's necessary to continue to focus on that facility at this point, and we will continue to do that.

But the member cannot escape his responsibility, and that of his party, to stand in their place and apologize to workers across this province, who deserve to be protected. And they have to explain this, Madam Speaker. They don't want paid sick leave for people with COVID symptoms. What do they want? Do they want people to stay home and take a pay cut? Or do they want sick people to go to work and give each other COVID?

Which one is it, Madam Speaker?

* (14:30)

Employment Standards Code Amendment Act Paid Sick Leave Legislation

Mr. Josh Guenter (Borderland): Madam Speaker, our government is working hard–[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Guenter: –to protect Manitobans and support our economy.

Yesterday, our Premier tabled the paid sick leave legislation that will protect Manitobans during these unprecedented times.

Can the Minister of Finance share some background with the House today about the paid sick leave legislation?

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance): I first would like to thank the Premier for the leadership role he's taken across the nation on providing a strong advocate for a national sick leave program, Madam Speaker. As part of our commitment, our Province will be the first to introduce legislation to ensure that no gaps between our code and eligibility requirements under the Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit isn't there.

While our government is doing everything we can for sick leave, we have an opposition, No. 1, that's blocking budget bills, as well as an NDP, as well as a Liberal party that's blocking sick leave for Manitobans. We encouraged the opposition to come on board and support Manitoba people that are working.

Manitoba Hydro Subsidiaries Privatization Concerns

Mr. Adrien Sala (St. James): We know this Premier has admitted to interfering in the operations of Manitoba Hydro and that his interference is costing Manitobans money, and it's now becoming increasingly clear that his government is preparing to break off more pieces of Hydro for sale to the highest bidder. How else does he explain his continued interference with Manitoba Hydro International, which is crippling their ability to do business and setting the stage for their financial failure.

Will the Premier commit in this House that no subsidiary of Manitoba Hydro will be wound down or sold off?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): We've long ago committed to that, Madam Speaker, and the member is as ineffective in his critic's role, whether here or afar. The fact of the matter is that we are going to stand up and defend Manitoba Hydro and make sure that we've worked strongly to make it the jewel of this province, not erode its effectiveness and not, most certainly, engage in unbelievable waste, as the NDP administration did: \$10 billion handcuffing Hydro is not a record the NDP should be proud of. I appreciate any question from the NDP on Manitoba Hydro. Where they put it at risk, we will defend it.

And I want to say a thank-you, send a congratulations today to two folks and their teams, Madam Speaker—John Horgan, on recapturing government in British Columbia; Scott Moe in Saskatchewan—and say congratulations to them and their teams and also congratulations to all candidates who put their names forward and allowed democracy to work in both those provinces.

Madam Speaker: Time for oral questions has expired.

PETITIONS

Madam Speaker: Are there any petitions to be read? No?

We will move, then to orders of the day—oh. We do have a petition.

Vivian Sand Facility Project—Clean Environment Commission Review

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, I want to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

The Vivian sands project is a proposed silica sand mine and processing plant to be built in the RM of Springfield. The overall project includes mining claims of over 85,000 hectares, making it the largest claim ever given to a single company in Manitoba's history. It is larger than the city of Winnipeg, which is 46,410 hectares.

The amount of dry, solid sand mined—produced per year according to the Environmental Assessment Program is 1.36 million tons, and much of this sand will be used in fracking.

A major concern of the proposed mine and plant is that, if developed, it could contaminate the Sandilands aquifer, including both carbonate and sandstone aquifers, which covers much of southeastern Manitoba. It has excellent water quality and is the water source for tens of thousands of Manitobans, including many municipal water systems, agriculture, industry, private wells and an abundance of wildlife and ecosystems. Further, people in the Indigenous communities that are potentially affected by this were not afforded the required Indigenous consultation from either federal or provincial government officials.

The sustainable yield of the combined sandstone and carbonite aquifers has still not yet been established by provincial authorities.

The mine could cause leaching of acid and heavy metals and pollute the aquifer, as it will go down 200 feet into the Winnipeg formation of the sandstone aquifer. There is concern that the shale, which separates the carbonate and sandstone aquifers—sand and pyritic oolite itself contains sulphides—will, when exposed to injected air from the CanWhite Sands extraction process, turn to acid.

An additional concern with the proposed mine and plant is the potential to pollute the Brokenhead River and the aquatic food chain leading to Lake Winnipeg.

Residents in the area have also expressed fears of being overexposed to silica dust during production, as there has been a demonstrated lack of safety and environmental procedures by the CanWhite Sands

Corporation during the exploratory drilling phase. Signage and fencing has been poor; identifying and required mine claim tags were missing; there were no warnings for silica dust exposure and no coverings to prevent exposure of the silica stockpiles to the elements.

Residents' concerns include the fact that boreholes, which should have been promptly and properly sealed, were left open for a year. The drilling of hundreds of improperly sealed boreholes yearly create significant risks of surface contamination, mixing of aquifer waters and drainage of surface fecal matters into the aquifer.

There is also a risk of subsidence around each borehole as a result of sand extraction.

There are also potential transboundary issues that need to be addressed as the aquifers extend into Minnesota.

This project should not proceed, as no licensing conditions and mitigation measures will alleviate the risk to all Manitobans and the environment since white-Canada white sands corporation plans to use an unprecedented mining technique with no established safe outcome. The corporation has gone on record indicating that it does not know how to mine for the silica in the water supply and needs to develop a new extraction methodology that has never been done before.

Contamination of the aquifers and the environment is irreversible and there are many surface sources of high purity silica that can be extracted without endangering two essential regional aquifers.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to undertake a combined review of the Vivian Sands Facility processing plant and the mining/extraction portion of the operation as a class 3 development with a review by Manitoba's Clean Environment Commission to include public hearings and participant funding.

To urge the provincial government to halt all activity at the mine and plant until the Clean Environment Commission's review is completed and the project proposal has been thoroughly evaluated.

Tamara Sanford, Brian Bowler [*phonetic*], John Wagny [*phonetic*] and many others.

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

Are there any further petitions?

Cochlear Implant Program

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition as a-is as follows:

(1) People who suffer hearing loss due to aging, illness, employment or accident not only lose the ability to communicate effectively with friends, relatives or colleagues; they also can experience unemployment, social isolation and struggles with mental health.

(2) A cochlear implant is a life-changing electronic device that allows deaf people to receive and-*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Lamoureux: -process sounds and speech, and also can partially restore hearing in people who have severe hearing loss and who do not benefit from conventional hearing aids. A processor behind the ear captures and processes sound signals which are transmitted to a receiver implanted into the skull that relays the information to the inner ear.

(3) The technology has been available since 1989 through the Central Speech and Hearing Clinic founded in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The Surgical Hearing Implant Program began implanting patients in the fall of 2011 and marked the completion of 250 cochlear implant surgeries in Manitoba in the summer of 2018. The program has implemented about 60 devices since the summer of 2018, as it is only able to implant about 40 to 45 devices per year.

* (14:40)

(4) There are no upfront costs to Manitoba residents who proceed with cochlear implant surgery, as Manitoba Health covers the surgical procedure, internal implant and the first external sound processor. Newfoundland and Manitoba have the highest estimated implantation costs of all provinces.

(5) Alberta has one of the best programs with Alberta aids for daily living, and their cost share means that patient pays only approximately \$500 out of pocket. Assistive Devices Program in Ontario covers 75 per cent of the cost, up to a maximum

amount of \$5,444, for a cochlear implant replacement speech processor. The BC Adult Cochlear Implant Program offers subsidies, replacements to aging sound processors through the Sound Processor Replacement Program. This provincially funded program is available to those cochlear implant recipients whose sound processors have reached six to seven years old.

(6) The cochlear implant is a lifelong commitment. However, as the technology changes over time, parts and software become no longer functional or available. The cost of upgrading a cochlear implant in Manitoba of approximately \$11,000 is much more expensive than in other provinces, as adult patients are responsible for the upgrade costs of their sound processor.

(7) In Manitoba, pediatric patients, under 18 years of age, are eligible for funding assistance through the Cochlear Implant Speech Processor Replacement Program, which provides up to 80 per cent of the replacement costs associated with a device upgrade.

(8) It is unreasonable that this technology is inaccessible to many citizens of Manitoba who must choose between hearing and deafness due to financial constraints because the costs of maintaining the equipment are prohibitive for low-income earners or those on fixed incomes, such as old age pension or Employment and Income Assistance.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to provide financing for upgrades to the cochlear implant covered under medicare, or provide funding assistance through the Cochlear Implant Speech Processor Replacement Program to assist with the replacement costs associated with a device upgrade.

This petition has signed by many Manitobans.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): Resuming debate on Throne Speech, Madam Speaker.

THRONE SPEECH (Sixth Day of Debate)

Madam Speaker: It has been announced that the House will consider the motion of the member for Swan River (Mr. Wowchuk), and the amendment and subamendment thereto, standing in the name of the

honourable member for St. Vital, who has 11 minutes remaining.

Mr. Jamie Moses (St. Vital): Continuing my comments regarding the Throne Speech and how it sadly hasn't been representative of the times that we're facing: the people of Manitoba, who are looking at so much more when it comes to this government.

Right now, to continue off where I left off, I was speaking about some of the racial injustice and racial awakening that we've seen throughout North America and around the world over the last several months. Specifically, here in Manitoba, a rally was held in early June where approximately 20,000 Manitobans participated to speak out against racism, and this effort and this ability for people to protest and combat racism is a powerful thing.

Now I'll—to put that into context. Approximately 20,000 people is roughly the same amount of people that are in any one of our constituencies. Now, this is a huge number of people to come out and actually put some effort in, put some—their—show their faces, to put their feet and raise their voices to fight against inequality. And that sort of commitment and dedication from those folks is admirable, and it deserves to be responded to and respected by the government; that it should be working for them.

Sadly, we have had very little comment from this government on that, on any anti-racism policies, guidelines, procedures. And even the Premier (Mr. Pallister) not only failed to attend the rally, but often very disparaging comments, I find, disparaging when it came to the movement of Black Lives Matter, and I feel that many Manitobans also were disparaged and disheartened to see a lack of respect and a lack of understanding of what many Manitobans face, not just here and there and not just at the end of the month, you know, when it comes to economic challenges or other concerns, but racial inequality affects people on a daily basis, and I think it deserves to have at least the bare minimum of acknowledgement by this Premier, which I think he has sadly failed to do.

In—furthermore, beyond just that rally, which I found—personally I found quite empowering, but recently, even as to yesterday, we have seen a story come out which reported that over a third of Winnipeggers note that it's a serious problem with how the Winnipeg Police interact with people of colour. And I quote that—say that number because it is the second highest per cent of people to think that there's a serious problem with their local police, the second highest in Canada. And it's, quite frankly,

something that the Province should take note of to address these issues. When they know that there is a large number of people who are being disenfranchised, it is our responsibility to not just wait until these issues boil over but take a proactive approach to work positively together with community groups to solve these issues and provide supports, to listen and find positive solutions that we can all work and live in this province together.

Moving on from that issue—which I think has shown how much our lives have changed—to another aspect of how our lives have changed, and that is the economic crisis that was a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Now, whether you are a small-business owner, a large-business owner, an employee, a worker, whether you had children in school, in child care, no matter where you are, retired, young and students, you have been affected economically over the last several months. And I look right now at some of the challenges and some of the choices that this government has made, starting by laying off workers at the start of the pandemic when most people and most economics—and certainly, I would say nearly all economists were advising that keeping workers in place, providing them a steady salary during a time of economic struggle was the wisest course of action, both in the short term and in the long term. However, this government chose a different approach and chose to lay off people at a time of economic difficulty.

Small businesses, which were struggling and continue to struggle to this day, have been left on the wayside. You know, often our government mentions the term made-in-Manitoba approach to some of their action items. However, when it comes to supporting small business, apparently made in Manitoba, it doesn't exist. There—it comes down to what can the federal government do to support small businesses and allow the provincial government to administer those programs? There was no Manitoba approach to supporting small business, and many of them are, quite frankly, have struggled and are on the verge of collapse if not have already. And we need to have a support plan that will lift them up and provide them the resources to be successful through this difficult time so that they can continue to be a source of economic growth for our communities and our province.

But beyond that, we know that all small businesses and large businesses are powered by our workers and our hard-working Manitobans. And it's only right that we pay them a strong minimum wage, a living wage that is going to allow them to work in

our province and not live in poverty. What has been abundantly clear over the last few months is that the fragility of individuals' and families' economic fortune during this pandemic. A couple of weeks without pay mean that a person or family would be in economic ruin.

* (14:50)

With a living wage it would provide a further level of support and the financial flexibility for people to live their lives and have the resources so that they can benefit from the aspects and benefit in our economy. This is not a small or trivial amount. Raising our minimum wage to a living, liveable amount should be the bare minimum that we should be doing now.

Mr. Doyle Pivniuk, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

It is abundantly clear the struggle that people face and have faced throughout this pandemic. That should be the bare minimum that we should be looking to do to support people and make sure that they have the right opportunities to be an active and growing member of our economy.

I will continue on to say that that portion of affordability is absolutely critical to folks being able to weather this economic storm. You know, we know that job opportunities have been depressed. We know that wages have been relatively stagnant but—and we would think that a government that is elected to help people would be looking at ways to make individuals' lives more affordable.

What, instead, has this government proposed? Well, they have proposed to raise folks' hydro rates by 2.9 per cent, and not with consultation with Manitoba Hydro and not in consultation with everyday Manitobans. They've done that unilaterally and, quite frankly, that shows their lack of empathy and lack of understanding of the challenges that everyday Manitobans face when it comes to their affordability at the end of their two-week pay period or at the end of the month.

It also goes to show that their agenda not only doesn't make the lives of Manitobans easier, it is completely out of touch with where we are and how our world has changed over the last six or seven or eight months. We are living in an area—in a time where we have a health crisis, a daily health crisis with people getting sick, where we need to have a stronger health-care investment. That is absolutely without question.

And at the same time, thousands of Manitobans are struggling economically, and not just at a small-business level, which, again, is necessary, but on an individual financial level. We need to ensure that Manitobans have the resources financially to be successful without relying solely on the federal government. A strong minimum wage would go to help many Manitobans.

And on top of that, we face challenges in our education system. You know, with classroom sizes the way they are, it has exasperated the impact of COVID-19. If we were able to make some investments in education sooner, we would have been in a better position to slow the spread of COVID in our schools.

And on top of that, we face an existential threat from our climate and our climate change. We can see that all of these massive issues were simply left off the table when it comes to this government's Throne Speech. That climate change piece—and I know I only have a few seconds left—is huge, and I wish I had an opportunity to speak about that more because it is simply so huge that we need to deal with it on a massive scale.

We have so much work to do in this province, and we should be leaders in getting this accomplished, but sadly, this government has failed at getting that done.

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

Ms. Malaya Marcelino (Notre Dame): Sorry, can you hear me?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for Notre Dame.

Ms. Marcelino: Can you hear me? Yes? *[interjection]*

As the elected MLA for the constituency of Notre Dame, I humbly represent, to the very best of my ability, over 22,000 people from the neighbourhoods of the West End, Brooklands, Weston, and west Alexander. My parents raised my siblings and I here and my husband and I are now raising our two young sons, aged three and five, here in the West End.

On behalf of my neighbours and constituents, I voice my opposition to the contents of the PC government's Throne Speech presented.

Some days ago I listened to the member representing Lagimodière praising the government's Throne Speech, in particular for funding important initiatives

like Save Our Seine that work to restore natural areas that really adds so much richness and beauty and eco-diversity to neighbourhoods. He represents, like, Sage Creek, Bonavista, Island Lakes, and on the Friday before Thanksgiving the member representing Riel also praised the government's Throne Speech and, in particular, mentioned how proud she was of the government's record of investment in developing and maintaining natural trails. She encouraged us to, over the long-Thanksgiving long weekend, to enjoy some of Manitoba's natural trails.

When I listened to these members discuss—discuss these much-needed, very beneficial steps to restoring and enhancing green spaces for their communities, I can't help but feel mixed emotions of, I'm a little ashamed to say, some envy, wistfulness, maybe some anger. None of this is directed to these communities or to the members themselves.

My family and I have enjoyed living in these parts of the city before and I strongly believe in publicly funded stewardship of natural spaces. I've gone on daily walks as a new mom, dragging a red wagon with my two little toddler sons and our cocker spaniel and I've enjoyed this very same Sage Creek trails that the member from Lagimodière mentions in his response to the Throne Speech.

In Notre Dame neighbourhoods we are actively dealing with lead contamination in soil in the very few green spaces that we do have, in our public playgrounds, in our school fields and in our back yards and gardens. According to a commission report the Province released in January, we are part of the list of 10 known neighbourhoods in Winnipeg that is dealing with lead contamination in soil and suspected elevated blood lead levels in young children. For the most part, the families that live in Notre Dame, including mine, are here, living with this threat and there's no announcement in the Throne Speech to help us.

This past Thanksgiving Monday, my husband and sons were raking the leaves in our front and back yard. They collected 17 paper bags of leaves while I was, you know, trying to make Thanksgiving dinner. They all came in afterwards and my husband said to me: look at my phone, there's a funny video of the kids jumping in piles of leaves and instead of it being a happy moment, it was a tense moment when I questioned, well, have the kids washed their hands yet? Did you happen to see if they got any leaves in their mouths? And I asked this because of what I learned about lead contamination in soil and how very

young children like mine are typically exposed to the contamination through ingesting contaminated soil particles from the ground or contaminated soil and dust particles that can float up to the leaves on the trees. I learned this from Dr. Francis Zvomuya, the department head of soil sciences at the University of Manitoba.

Dr. Zvomuya's life's work has been on researching the remediation of contaminated soil. Once the Province released the intrinsic report on lead concentration in soil in the city of Winnipeg this past January, I requested a meeting with the minister. I have subsequently requested briefings from the department on this topic so I, as the MLA for Notre Dame, can learn more about lead contamination. I haven't taken a science course in over 20 years and this important report is over 300 pages long. And after repeated requests for a meeting January, February, March, April, May, June, July, August, September, and now we're well into October and I'm still waiting, and more 'cruciantly'—more crucially, Notre Dame constituents are still waiting for a response from this minister or the department about a briefing or a meeting on this serious issue.

* (15:00)

So, like any good MLA, or any good concerned mother, I tried to get some help on my own in understanding this issue. Again, the good folks at the faculty of soil sciences at U of M helped me understand this topic better. Our universities, our public learning institutions, their mandate is to serve the public with knowledge and research.

Now, the faculty and graduate students here are willing; in fact, they see it as part of their mandate to assist our communities for free on further soil sampling and public awareness campaigns going forward. And the faculty certainly has the expertise to provide reports like the intrinsic one that was commissioned by this Province and, in fact, they would be able to do it for a fraction of the cost that the Province paid for this intrinsic report.

But, in any case, I sincerely thank this government for commissioning that report because it was a needed document that amalgamated and standardized all the findings over the years from the previous studies on this same topic.

This report also yielded important recommendations in how to deal with lead contamination in soil, and most recommendations have to do with

seasonal landscaping to prevent contaminated dust from blowing everywhere.

Now, lead has been an issue for a long time in these communities, even under the previous NDP government, and calls had been issued to help our neighbourhoods for a long time. So let's talk about that for a bit.

I actually, point blank, raised this issue with the two previous NDP members who served these neighbourhoods in the West End. Separately, they each told me that the evidence that they had presented to them clearly showed that the lead levels and its effects to community members were so small, so negligible, that they didn't warrant any action on the government's part.

Now, I have a tremendous amount of respect and trust for these former members, and since I'm actually a proud niece of one of those members, I even have love for that former MLA who served Weston and Brooklands before me.

I also know that their constituents also held them in high esteem because I've canvassed in their wake, going door to door, and hearing constituents speak very highly of them and the service that they received from both MLAs. Both these MLAs did their utmost best to connect and to serve their constituents, and I can only hope to be able to fill their shoes one day.

But, in the passage of time, and with the introduction of new evidence, and especially in light of the new findings such as that presented to this government in the intrinsic report, we now know that no matter how seemingly small or negligible is the risk of exposure, no matter that there are currently no active sources of lead contamination, once lead is present in soil, it will never disintegrate or go away, so regular seasonal landscaping of soil to keep it moist and covered is necessary to spread—to prevent the spread of contaminates.

And, crucially, we've learned that even if there is a range of acceptable amounts of exposure of lead to adults, there are no known safe levels of lead 'exposure'—exposure to children, and children suffer irreparable damage to their nervous system.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's way past time for the government to deal with this issue. All children should be able to play safely outside in their backyards and green spaces, not just the ones in Lagimodière and Riel. Children of Weston School should be able to play in their school field and school playground safely, just like the children in École Sage Creek do.

Again, Madam Speaker, this Throne Speech—sorry—Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Throne Speech does not make any reference to the recommendations outlined in the intrinsic report to make our green spaces safer for the children in Notre Dame. So on behalf of my neighbours and constituents I cannot support this government's Throne Speech.

As a critic for immigration, I would most definitely welcome any moves by the government to increase immigration numbers for our province, but this government's track record of funding cuts to gap training, to bridge programming and other credential-recognition programming will mean that any new immigrants and their families that come to Manitoba will continue to experience unnecessary hardships because they will not be able to practise in their fields of study and experience.

My very own constituency assistant in Notre Dame, Beth Campomanes, was a trained lawyer working as a Philippines government lawyer. Her husband was a trained engineer in the Philippines who worked for an architecture firm that designed high-end housing subdivisions.

Beth, who is a million times smarter than me, couldn't find work and ended up staying at home to raise her three sons. Now that her kids are older, she works in the constituency office handling casework. Her husband has been working at The Home Depot in the parts department for nearly 10 years. And I'm sure that many of us know of many new immigrants that are, like Beth and her husband, outrageously underemployed.

There is an Office of the Manitoba Fairness Commissioner and that office is tasked with working with Manitoba regulators like the college of nurses, for example, to make sure that registration practices are in compliance with the law, and that there's a push for more internationally educated professionals working in their field to achieve their fullest potential with significant economic benefits to the province.

Now recent data from the Office of the Manitoba Fairness Commissioner shows that in a four-year span, only 16—one sixth—16 per cent of internationally educated professionals get full accreditation and work in their field of study and experience. That statistic is unacceptable. There is no mention in the Throne Speech of sufficiently funding gap training, bridge programming or how this government will tackle the barriers that newcomers face to achieve credential recognition.

Next weekend, I'll be meeting with a group of internationally educated nurses who immigrated to Manitoba but so far have been unable to get accreditation here as nurses in Manitoba. So this group of internationally trained nurses are mostly from the Philippines. They have families here and back home to support, and they are continuing to face many barriers to accreditation in Manitoba.

They were successfully able to get their gap training and accreditation, however, in Ontario, and have found work in hospitals, nursing stations and long-term-care homes in northwestern Ontario. On the weekends, they come back to Winnipeg to see their husbands and their children.

One of them even has two jobs. So she works as a nurse in a hospital in Kenora and then here in Winnipeg, she comes on the weekends and she works as a health-care aide in a long-term-care home. She works as a health-care aide here in Winnipeg because she doesn't have her nursing credentials recognized here in Manitoba.

Does this situation make any sense to anyone? Certainly not to these families. It is a big strain on their finances to have to rent two apartments—one in Kenora, another in Winnipeg—let alone the sacrifice on their families' part to have mom work so far away because Manitoba does not recognize her credentials.

Now, we know that there exists right here in our province, especially in rural and northern parts of Manitoba, unacceptable vacancy rates for nursing staff. Now Manitobans, especially in a pandemic, need a new lifeblood of trained, skilled newcomer health-care workers to support patients and residents in our own province's hospitals, long-term-care homes and nursing stations.

I know that no member here needs to be reminded that we're in extremely serious stages of a pandemic in this province. Our hospitals are full. Our health-care workers are exhausted. They've been mandated overtime since even before the pandemic and many, like the health-care workers now striking currently in Alberta—are health-care workers; they are at their breaking points.

Some hospitals in rural and northern regions this government has closed due to high vacancy rates. Our province desperately needs more trained, qualified nurses. Why does this government make it so difficult for newcomers to contribute to the health-care needs of Manitobans, especially during a pandemic?

* (15:10)

Again, in this Throne Speech, there was no mention of a plan of action to sufficiently fund gap training, bridge programming and addressing barriers to credential recognition for newcomers.

Last week, the member for St. Vital (Mr. Moses), who is also the NDP critic for jobs, training and post-secondary institutions, together we both met a group of Filipino community leaders here in Winnipeg over Zoom so we could get their take on recent findings by Statistics Canada in September.

Now, Statistics Canada released a labour force survey in July, and it shows that Filipino-Canadian labour participation rates of Filipinos 15 years and older has declined by 7.5 percentage points this year. Statistics Canada report, which was called Experiences of discrimination during the COVID-19 pandemic, that documented that many ethnic groups suffered disproportionately from the COVID-19 pandemic, but that Filipinos have felt the economic pain more than most visible minority groups.

According to Statistics Canada, more than 42 per cent of Filipino-Canadians reported job losses or cut hours compared to 34 per cent of white people. And in a recent presentation to City Council, Winnipeg City Council, Tyler Markowsky, City of Winnipeg economist, looked at the data from the Chamber of Commerce, the Conference Board of Canada and determined that the economic effects of the pandemic has not hit all people in the city equally.

Now, many of these folks from the Filipino community who are experiencing this job loss and reduction in hours, they work in retail, in restaurant and hospitality sectors, those hardest hit by pandemic restrictions. So the Filipino community leaders that the member for St. Vital and I spoke to said that these findings speak to long-standing, underlying issues that policy makers and community leaders have not been able to address.

And one long-time respected community leader of the Philippine Heritage Council, Perla Javate, said that in her over 40 years of helping newcomer Filipinos settle in Manitoba, very little change has occurred to address barriers to credential recognition. According to Tita Perl, employers back then and employers even now will still ask the same question of a newcomer fresh off the plane: Hmm, but where is your Canadian experience?

So without the gap training and bridging programming supports, of course this lawyer will take any admin job she can take and of course this engineer

will work at Home Depot in order to pay their rent, to pay bus fare, to put food on the table and to pay for medication for sick parents back home.

But the defeating bad situation doesn't end there. The Institute for Research on Public Policy, research from York University's Philip Kelly, called an intergenerational social mobility: Filipino youth in Canada, now shows that there's something slightly counterintuitive happening for the second generation of Filipino immigrants in Canada.

Despite all the sacrifices that their parents made in coming to Canada, leaving their careers and working multiple, often literally back-breaking, jobs, these children are not achieving. They're not seeking post-secondary schooling. In fact, their parents have higher rates of post-secondary education, and it has left many people in my community saying, well, why did we come here?

It's our job as policy makers to connect with community and to address these concerns of underemployment, systemic racism, barriers to accreditation. That's our job. It will make a world of difference to these individual families. It will mean the world to these newcomer communities, who we celebrate every year for the diversity and strength they bring to our province.

It will make a difference, even a life and death difference to rural and northern communities experiencing various skilled labour shortages. Addressing these concerns will provide economic stability to our province.

So, again, as critic for immigration, I wholeheartedly will welcome any moves by this government to increase immigration quotas, but without sufficient government focus, on the Throne Speech, to address—

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

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): Appreciate the opportunity here to rise in my place and to begin my remarks this afternoon simply thanking the people of Concordia, acknowledging their sacrifices and acknowledging how, during this last eight months of this pandemic, they have really stepped up and really shown the kind of community that they are. It's been incredible. I have to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, over these eight months and the amount of contact that I've had with individuals in the community—obviously not in a face-to-face, in-person way—but we—I think we've all gotten a little bit more used to communicating over

Zoom, as we're doing here today, communicating by email, through social media and over the phone.

And certainly, that level of engagement hasn't stopped and, in fact, has only increased, I would suggest. And it's been those people in the community who have come forward to me and just wanted to let me know about how they're doing, how they're working through the pandemic. Whether it be parents who, early on in the pandemic, were struggling with trying to educate their kids. I think there's a lot more respect out there now for the work that teachers do because of the work that parents stepped up and had to step into that role.

You know, there's been challenges with child care, and certainly, we've heard that from members on this side of the Chamber. You know, the impacts that child-care centres and early childhood educators have tried to deal with as they've stepped up and tried to provide that so—such an important service during this time.

Really, this is a COVID generation that's being raised right now, and so I also want to acknowledge those students and those kids right now, who, in many cases, missed out on some very important times in their lives, including graduations—you know, the last few months of their high school career. Or now, for students who are just entering university, who you normally would have that full university experience, that bit of autonomy and a chance to spread their wings a little bit and are trying to do that now in a very different way.

They've stepped up. They've shown their resilience. They've been rock solid through this pandemic. Course, we know our front-line workers have done the same. Whether it be truck drivers, as the—or, members on this side have many times acknowledged. Truckers who are moving our goods across the country, who, in the beginning of the pandemic, couldn't even find places to use the washroom as they travelled, who had no resources and no ability to do their job, still pushed on and still did what they needed to do. Grocery store workers—again, folks that maybe we don't pay enough attention to the work that they do. Food service—they stepped up and they made sure that everybody had what they needed for their family to keep them healthy and safe. And, of course, our front-line workers, our first responders, our nurses on the front lines, our doctors.

You know, I've shared many times, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I've got nurses in my family and to hear the stories of what they've had to deal with. Already

pushed to the brink by this government, already pushed to the breaking point in many cases by this government, and the number of hours they have to work and the conditions that they have to work in, we now ask them to do more, and they stepped up in every single chance that they had to keep us safe. And now here we are, a—eight month—the eighth month, I would say, of this pandemic, and we're asking even more of them, of our personal-care-home staff, of our nurses, aides. Incredibly important to acknowledge the work that they did.

We have certainly done that. We've acknowledged that work. And I think if you listen, and I have, Mr. Deputy Speaker, every single member of the opposition who stood up, who's given their 20 minutes to put on the record the concerns of their constituents and what they're hearing from real Manitobans, they have begun and ended with that important message—that we are so thankful for the Manitobans who have stepped up. We're so proud of the people of Manitoba who have shown what it is to be Manitoban, to look out for one another. We aren't a selfish people. We aren't a people who only care about ourselves, by and large. We are a people who care about one another, who look out for one another.

That's why, you know, when we were asking for a mask mandate—when we were saying that, you know, there should be masks being worn in the city of Winnipeg, that was the position of our caucus. That was unanimous, and it was our leader who was out front and centre asking for that months before we got into the situation we are in now, because we knew that Manitobans would have no problem doing that.

* (15:20)

This isn't, you know, some places in the world where it's become a political issue; this is a Manitoba issue. And Manitobans understand that they need to make certain sacrifices to keep everybody safe, and they're willing to step up and they are willing to do that, and we thank them for that.

But part of that thanks needs to be action, and that's what we're not seeing from this government. When given the opportunity to show an equal amount of concern and effort, this government fell very short. You know, this Premier (Mr. Pallister) said before we came into the Chamber, before we restarted, before he prorogued the last session, restarted, new Throne Speech. Did he say this is our chance to talk to people and thank them and show them that we are really behind them? No, he didn't say that. That's not the document we're debating here today.

In fact, what he said is it's business as usual in the Legislature; it's back to business and it's back to the same set of legislation that we were debating back in spring. The same legislation that Manitobans before the pandemic was an issue, roundly rejected and stood behind us as the New Democratic Party to stop that legislation in its tracks. We stopped it. Manitobans said thank you for standing up to this government. And what does this government do? They disregard everything that's happening right now with regards to the pandemic. They disregard all the sacrifice that Manitobans have made. And they say it's business as usual; it's back to business, and we're going to ram through the legislation that we have in front of us. And that's not right, Mr. Deputy Speaker; that is not what Manitobans have told us is important to them.

What have Manitobans in fact been saying? Well, they—we heard lots from people in my neck of the woods, in northeast Winnipeg, but I know this is an issue across the province. They talked about testing. Now, again, this is before the testing of COVID was an issue, and I'll have a chance to talk about that shortly, but just with regards to testing in their own communities. And we saw lineups for testing because of changes this government made. We saw people standing out in the heat at that point waiting to get in to get testing done. So we raised this as an issue.

This should not be something that comes as a surprise to this government. They made the change. They handed off this important part of our health-care system, and now the issues that we see are only becoming more and more prescient now because we, of course, see the testing for COVID-19 through the roof.

And, you know, it doesn't take a rocket scientist to know that if you put the students back in schools, if you ask people to go back to restaurants and restart the economy, if you put up billboards that proudly proclaim ready, safe, grow, well, people are looking for that safe part first, and this government missed that step. They missed that step.

So they're asking people go out, restart the economy. Everything's fine; don't worry about it, but when you do that you have to know that there's going to be more cases, there's going to be more exposures, and that you better have your system to monitor and support people well established before you do that. Did they do that? No, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they did not.

In fact, as I said, lineups around the block. You know, the member for Point Douglas (Mrs. Smith)

will tell you in her community—and I had a chance to see that first-hand—people wrapped around the block. Maybe it's St. Johns—oh, I'm sorry, the member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine) will tell you in her community, and as I said I saw that first-hand, wrapped around the block, lineups that—of people who are waiting to be tested. And how crucial that testing is to making sure that we are, in fact, all safe, that things are ready here in the province. But, of course, this Premier (Mr. Pallister) will simply worry, concerned about putting up billboards and not about supporting the people of Manitoba.

Personal-care homes, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The member for Union Station (MLA Asagwara) who stood up and said we need more staffing, we need more supports in personal-care homes. This was long before we knew about the pandemic.

And now that we have the pandemic, again, we didn't need to look far. We could have looked at Ontario. We could have looked at other provinces in this country to see that personal-care homes were hubs of this transmission. So you need more support. You need more testing. You need more staff. Did this government do that? No. They put up the billboards and they said, you're on your own. That's not right, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That's not right at all.

So Manitobans are asking, they're saying, look, we're willing to do our part. We have done our part. It's now been eight months. You haven't done your part, but give us something. Give us a document. Give us a vision. What does that vision look like? What are we going to be doing going forward? You've fumbled it so far, but can we have something now? Can we see what's going forward?

This government had that opportunity with their Throne Speech. They had an opportunity to lay out a comprehensive plan. That plan was non-existent here, Mr. Deputy Speaker. There was no information that helped Manitobans have any confidence that this government was throwing aside their old ways, would say, no, you know what, we were an austerity government but now there's not an economist in this world, there's not—even right-wing think tanks aren't saying, well, now's the time to pinch pennies.

No one is saying this. Business leaders aren't coming forward and saying, well, we need to curb government spending. In fact, they're saying the opposite. They're saying these guys, the government here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is completely out on their own in this. No government anywhere in the world is pulling back, is looking to save money at a time when

people's lives are at stake and where support from the government can actually enhance the economy, can actually help us get restarted.

That idea of getting restarted is what everybody is looking for. You know, every Manitoban wants to get to a place where we can get back to some normalcy. There is broad support for this idea, so why is it only this Premier (Mr. Pallister) who continues to worry about the bottom line, to come out and be so excited about a budget that is completely—that means nothing to anybody because we're in a totally new world from where we were back in the spring.

So this government has completely dropped the ball and I—you know, I do, I realize my time is short once again. I could ask for leave. The member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine) I know would give me leave. I'm sure others might. Maybe not the Liberal Party, they don't like to give leaves; you know, when we're trying to defend workers and give workers benefits, you know, they didn't stand up.

But what I want to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is this failure goes from top to bottom within this government—not only failing individuals, not only failing our first responders and our front-line workers, not only—you know, looking out for our small-business owners, they have completely dropped the ball, and it goes all the way from, as I said, the top to the bottom.

And what I mean by that is, is that at time where municipalities are bearing a good chunk of the brunt of this pandemic, they are the level of government that is least able to absorb these kinds of changes. When they're looking for support to ensure that they can continue to provide services, where is this government?

Where is this government? Why is the Premier not picking up the phone when he's asking the mayor of Winnipeg to step up? Why is it that the Minister for Municipal Relations sends a letter to municipalities saying, well, we think you should probably start cutting employees, start firing people in the middle of a pandemic. Why is that the attitude?

They've already frozen municipal funding at 2016 levels. They've already forced municipalities to cut when it comes to transit, when it comes to pools, when it comes to libraries, when it comes to arenas. They've already asked municipalities to go above and beyond. But they refuse to support them.

Now, the federal government has certainly turned on the taps, and I don't hear anybody complaining

about Justin Trudeau and his funding that he's offering to the people of Manitoba and to this provincial government. In fact, every announcement that this government seems to make, it's just federal money that they're maybe giving out, but in many cases, not even doing that much. I mean, it's bizarre to me.

But do these municipalities get a call, a phone call from this minister, from this Premier? No. In fact, they say, we haven't heard from them. And what does the minister say in the Throne Speech? What does this government proclaim they're going to get right onto? And that is taking more power away from municipalities and their own planning and their own representation.

* (15:30)

And I think, you know, well, we haven't seen the bill yet so I am waited—waiting with bated breath, but I did see that it was front and centre in the Throne Speech, so we know it is this government's—it is their interest, as they did—as they brought it in the spring, to bring forward a bill that takes away municipalities' control and power.

We know that this government continues to leave money unspent on infrastructure. Again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we're not talking about some far-out, leftist plan, you know, when it comes to government spending. We're talking about what every single economist, every single thinker, every single right-wing government anywhere is saying: infrastructure is one of those key points where you could increase government spending and have—and see a direct impact on the economy.

We can actually put people to work. We can have our economy growing. We can actually build at this time. This is a time to build, but what does this government do? Billions of dollars left on the table of budgeted infrastructure money unspent.

Now, they'll come out and they'll say: Oh, look, we planned to spend so much this year. Oh, this is going to be the biggest year in infrastructure ever. Well, would that be the case even if they spent it? No, Mr. Speaker, but if they did spend it, at least it would be a start.

They can't even follow through on the commitments that they've made. This government's obsession with privatization goes far beyond just the areas that we've already identified. We know that they're privatizing—they're selling off Lifeflight. They got rid of our water bomber facilities, the

Pineland nurseries. We know that snow clearing and highway maintenance is their target next.

These are all totally ideological moves by the government, who can't see past the end of their own ledger. It makes no sense when you have this opportunity. When you have an opportunity to look after people and invest in our province in a way that gets things restarted, gets the money flowing and gets people back to work, why wouldn't you take that? Why wouldn't you take that opportunity?

Well, I can tell you why and it's pretty clear and I think we've maybe mentioned it a time or two before. It's because of the Premier (Mr. Pallister) who's sitting in the chair across from us here today. Because this Premier continues to only see one thing of importance and one thing of value and that is how many pennies he can pinch.

Now, I think he needs to be reminded from time to time that this isn't his money. This isn't the money that, you know, he needs to look after in his own business. I know he has, I think, a very successful business. I think he's doing quite well for himself, and that's great, but, in fact, this is the money that Manitobans have entrusted to this government.

And they've said to us—and we've listened very carefully—to say that it is important that we be smart with that money, that we be judicious with that money, too—we make sure that the investments that we make are good ones. They have been very clear about that. We have listened and I think, you know, you've seen that time and time again from the NDP that that is our priority: that we want to be smart managers of money.

What we don't want to do is to treat it like it's not available to the people who need it. When you're talking about a crisis, when you're talking about a time when health care is the top-of-mind issue for Manitobans, when education is the top-of-mind issue for Manitobans, when having a good job and getting back to work and having a livelihood is what's important to Manitobans, to at that time hold back monies or not spend or continue an austerity agenda that was happening before the pandemic, to say full steam ahead and keep your blinders on, that is wrong, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I think it's clear that we have a better vision. We have a throne speech document, I think, that's been widely accepted as being a smart and a good step in the right direction. You've heard from members after

member after member of this opposition give impassioned defences of what they think is important.

You hear nothing from the government except for a document that's out of date. It's wrong and it doesn't make sense in this time of a pandemic. We will not be supporting this government's Throne Speech.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for The Pas-Kameesak.

The honourable member for The Pas-Kameesak if—you're on mute, please. There you go.

Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas-Kameesak): Okay. Can you hear me well? Thank you.

Deputy Speaker, it's an honour to provide a few words and put on record as to why—I'm going to provide reasons why I do not support the Throne Speech delivered for 2020.

First of all, it's an honour to stand here today as the MLA for The Pas-Kameesak constituency and to put forward my rebuttal towards the Speech from the Throne.

I just want to put on record that this government has now had seven months to develop plans to address the challenges of this pandemic, but the Throne Speech simply shows they do not have a plan.

This Throne Speech is a missed opportunity—one of many missed opportunities—for this government to address the real concerns of our families and to honour the sacrifices so many Manitobans have made. In terms of COVID, right now in northern Manitoba the northern regional health authority has posted that there are eight cases here in the regional health authority. And I know for a fact that those numbers will climb.

Right now, in my own hometown, we were doing quite well with having—avoiding COVID. But of—unfortunately, there was a family celebration and, of course, Thanksgiving. That's when we started to see our numbers show up within our community.

And as an MLA, a few of us had the honour to sit with Dr. Brent Roussin, maybe a month a half ago, to talk about our concerns as a caucus and providing some of our options, if you will, in how to go ahead and move forward and prevent the spread of COVID.

And one of those options was that—I had the opportunity to ask specifically, as somebody who lives in northern Manitoba, who travels quite often from Winnipeg to The Pas, and still to this day, there are still no indicators on Highway 6 or Highway 10 to

enforce and make aware to travellers who do not live in the North that there are public health orders that are in place that restrict travel into northern Manitoba.

Now that northern Manitoba is in the orange zone, I feel that those indicators should be there, especially if this is an orange zone, and especially now that we actually have numbers within my own community of The Pas and OCN.

So with that, I'd like to stress out that if we're going to protect our North, those measures should be in place, along with RCMP assistance to have random checkpoints, rather than having conservation officers and handing out pamphlets. I think real enforcement should be implied to this public health order as a collaboration, if you will, in order to keep our communities safe.

I'm not asking to take our RCMP away from fighting crime. I'm just simply asking to have assistance for our law enforcement and community members, as well, to take this pandemic seriously. We are in a global pandemic.

And I just wanted to talk, too, about the Throne Speech. After listening to it in the Chamber and then re-reading it, I—was quite disturbing as to how little—how very little was mentioned about providing services and resources to northern Manitoba. And just like what my colleague, Ian Bushie, said from—MLA for Keewatinook, Manitoba does exist beyond a town of Swan River. We face many barriers, but we're resilient in the face of adversity, if you will.

And with that, speaking of resilience, in terms of Manitoba Hydro, as an Indigenous person being in university and learning about the flood—Northern Flood Agreement and many other constructions of dams that have almost decimated some of our communities, the thing is about—with Manitoba Hydro, and working as a former researcher for land claims, I fear that once—I fear that this government is lurking towards privatization of Manitoba Hydro.

* (15:40)

And what I'm trying to get out is that, as an Indigenous person, what's going to happen to those agreements that were made because of the impacts of Manitoba Hydro? Are those agreements going to disappear once privatized? How is that going to look when we're working towards reconciliation, and by all means, Manitoba Hydro and Indigenous communities, our worlds really do need that reconciliation, even something simple as resource

sharing. That will not happen if Manitoba Hydro is privatized.

And another good example is my own community. We, Opaskwayak Cree Nation, a very, very progressive First Nation, know what economic development is all about. What's going to happen to our 50-year agreement that we have in place with Manitoba Hydro? This agreement was put in place because of the effects that were done to our fishermen, trappers and our community, our livelihoods.

So this 50-year agreement is in place with Manitoba Hydro, and it's basically there to provide monies each year to top up our programs to serve our band members for Opaskwayak Cree Nation and programs important to top up initiatives in terms of education; basically investing into our children.

Another thing I wanted to bring up was health care. Once again, we're—this Throne Speech doesn't really address the lack of services and the lack of—what's going to really happen once these numbers start rising here in northern Manitoba.

For example, I just wanted to say that this Throne Speech did indeed thank our front-line workers. However, I think more should have been done to provide plans, such as there was no commitment to hire any new nurses or health-care aides to meet the challenges of this pandemic. And I wanted to talk a little bit about the front-line workers, just from my own experience as to how resilient these folks are, and how much we more appreciate and honour the work that they do.

For example, I was at the Health Sciences Centre the last time I was in the city, for a diabetic issue, and I tried to go into a walk-in clinic, but since we're in the middle of a pandemic, we cannot enter walk-in clinics. We need to be called back. Well, I didn't get called back, so I knew I had to go into the war zone, if you will: the emergency room at the Health Sciences Centre.

And I just want to—I'd like to share that brilliance of the workers that were in there, like, when I entered there with mask on, hands sanitized, I just looked around the room and felt so emotional because I've seen so many of our broken, sick Indigenous people filling up that room seeking medical attention in the middle of a pandemic. And there's this beautiful nurse who was treating an Indigenous woman beside me who was quite sick and vomiting, and we're in the middle of a pandemic, and this nurse picked her up, held her, and smiled through the whole time—I couldn't

tell if she was—you could tell she was smiling through her eyes, she was wearing a mask—and she picked up the Indigenous woman with no fear of, you know, COVID. She had no gloves on. Thank God she had a mask on, but just the love and the attention and the compassion.

She picked her up and said, you can lean on me, I'm nice and sturdy. And I smiled and watched this treatment, because I'm an Indigenous woman, I am used to systemic racism within the health-care system, so to see this was quite warming.

So, anyway, thank goodness I was treated by the same kind woman, and I just wanted to go on to with—speaking of kindness, with our children in CFS in care. As of Saturday, visits with children in care have ended and that includes my two nieces. So the last time that this pandemic—we were on lockdown, it was 80 days since—until I was able to see my two youngest nieces, so, you know, with members out there, you know, let's pray for our families who are already broken but are going to be even more separated even more because of this pandemic.

Also, too, I wanted to talk about what this Throne Speech also lacks, which is Indigenous issues. It's no secret that it's been all over the news and also all over the Chamber. It's been spoken about, but I think it needs more attention about the lack of consultation that this government claims to provide with our First Nation communities.

I know this is not working out with this government because this is going to be numerous times where I've brought this up, with all due respect with the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Relations (Ms. Clarke). I think more dialogue has to happen between the critic and the minister. When I happened to be the critic, I rarely got to talk to my minister during question period.

My questions were Indigenous, dealt with Indigenous issues. Instead, Minister of Justice (Mr. Cullen) would get up, Minister of Families (Mrs. Stefanson), Health, Infrastructure (Mr. Schuler), those ministers will step up and that's concerning. We used to have an Indigenous issues committee and the ministers would inform the minister of Aboriginal affairs that—it was called before that, and these conversations would take place, so therefore the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Relations will be able to stand up on his or her feet and answer these very important issues, questions.

For example, I attended two media panels as the MLA for The Pas-Kameesak constituency in regards to the Lake St. Martin-Lake Manitoba outlet channel. The first one was in February, here in Winnipeg, and there was no representative from the provincial government, no representative from the Indigenous and Northern Relations, nor a representative from Infrastructure, okay?

I'm just putting a shout-out there for our minister that this group has been requesting meetings, and I would like to assist our constituents to move forward to have this conversation take place, especially in terms of consultation and in terms of talking about real partnerships, in terms of employment, training for our Indigenous communities that are surrounding this infrastructure project, which is the largest in Manitoba. Just think about the collaboration that can happen with these two groups of people in order to have good things happen in the end.

Also, too, I just find that in terms of lack of consultation, I really strongly advise that this government should really, really take into consideration what this term means to us. Consultation is important between nation and nation. I, as an Indigenous woman, come from Opaskwayak Cree Nation, and I would like for my government to be treated like so, like a nation, with that respect, with that consultation that should be there. In order for that to happen, that's when actually we can actually see steps towards reconciliation between Canada, Manitoba and our Indigenous peoples.

So with that, I just wanted to end that—I just wanted to honour my family that are going through a tragedy right now. My cousin Joyce, who's like my big sister, has a missing foster son that she's had since she was—since he was a toddler. He has been missing since four—about three weeks now and we predict that he may have fallen into the lake—Saskatchewan River, so I just wanted to put out prayers and to the searchers and the community and the donations that have come out for my family, and we may have to wait until spring to look towards the end of this very hurtful journey for my family.

* (15:50)

Also too, I just wanted to thank the front-line workers that are out there putting their lives at risk in order for us to seek medical attention and, particularly, I wanted to thank the workers at the testing site. Yesterday, we had found out—or, I should say, over the weekend, we found out that COVID is in our home, and my daughters and my brother and I got

tested yesterday, so we are now waiting for results. And just the positivity, I guess, if you will—no pun intended—you know, with the nurses and the caregivers that were there and providing us all the information that we needed.

So right now, my family and I are waiting for our results, and I wanted to wish everyone in the Chamber to stay safe, keep your bubble closed so you don't have COVID enter your home like the way it has with mine, and I just—again, prayers out there for all my colleagues in the Chamber and prayers out there for my communities as we move forward and hopefully stop the spread and find the vaccine soon for this virus that's affecting our world.

Thank you.

Mr. James Teitsma (Radisson): It's a real pleasure and to be standing in this Chamber, also to deliver these remarks and grateful for the opportunity to do so, and I'm conscious of how precious it is.

Now, Halloween is just around the corner. It's a few days away, but from what we saw in question period, I think the NDP bogeyman is already out in full force trying to scare Manitobans. They call themselves— *[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Order.

Mr. Teitsma: —today's NDP, but if we look at yesterday's NDP, there really isn't any difference, is there? They're neither new nor democratic. *[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Teitsma: They both use fear and division to further their own agendas and to further their own self-interest. You would think—you would think—that the NDP would at least have some humility in respect of the past. You would think that they might be just a little bit ashamed of promising Manitobans that they would not raise the PST, but then raising it anyways. You would think—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Teitsma: You would think—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Teitsma: —that they would be at least a little ashamed—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Teitsma: —of the mismanagement—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Order. Order. I said order.

Mr. Teitsma: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Apparently, the arrow was striking a little too close to the centre for the—for those on the other side.

Now, you would think that they would be at least a little ashamed of the mismanagement of Manitoba Hydro and its multibillion-dollar megaprojects like Bipole III and Keeyask. You would think, Madam—Mr. Deputy Speaker, you would think that they would at least be a little bit of—ashamed of their horrendous record on child welfare, on sexual harassment in the workplace, including right here in this building, on poverty—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Teitsma: —on addictions and on mental health. *[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Order.

There has to be some respect in this Chamber here, and there's none of this today.

Mr. Teitsma: Mr. Deputy Speaker, sadly, the lack of respect being shown today is similar to the lack of respect that was shown to Manitobans over 17 years of NDP rule. Where they failed to achieve meaningful results in addictions, on mental health, where they failed to achieve meaningful results on financial management and budgeting—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I just want to remind again that we've—let's have some respect to this—in this Chamber. I can't hear the speaker, and there's a lot of heckling. So would everyone be—calm down and let's have the member for Radisson continue with his speech.

Mr. Teitsma: You would think that they could stay silent at least for a few minutes, considering what they would tell some of their own staffers to do, but—and you would think that they can hold back on heckling. *[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine), I'll—just want to remind you again, I'm calling you out here. Just have respect for the Speaker.

Mr. Teitsma: So you would think that, wouldn't you, Deputy Speaker, but you would be wrong. No, instead, without a hint of shame, the NDP and the words that come out of their mouths are intent on manufacturing fear, on fomenting division, on spreading doubt. So today I would like to spend a little time setting at least part of the record straight.

Now, I'll speak on a personal matter first. As a member of the software development and high-tech sector here in Winnipeg, I take exception to the words of the member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Kinew). You know, the members for Fort Rouge and St. James (Mr. Sala) seem to somehow think that a private company, Teshmont Consultants, is somehow magically a public company.

Well, I have news for the members: Teshmont was a private company when it was founded and they continue to be a private company. Has Manitoba Hydro acquired an ownership interest in it? And it continues to be a private company today. The truth is that buying the shares, owning the shares, and selling the shares in Teshmont provided excellent value for Manitobans and for Manitoba Hydro.

Madam Speaker in the Chair

Madam Speaker, it's good to have you here with us today.

For the members opposite, I think, their concern that they show about Teshmont Consultants shows that, for them, it's a one-way road. It's a one-way road to larger Crown corporations. It's a one-way road to bigger government. The members opposite don't seem to mind at all when a Crown corporation acquires part of a public—or, of a private company as part of their routine operations. But, if then the Crown corporation decides to divest their interest in that same company as part of their routine operation, suddenly the members opposite want to meddle. They want to interfere in the operations of Manitoba Hydro.

At least the member for St. James seems to have realized that Manitoba Hydro only owned a part of this private company. The member for Fort Rouge has continued his mendacious claims that Manitoba Hydro owned all of Teshmont.

Now, that member is not stupid, so I can only assume he's being duplicitous by making this claim and refusing to correct these misstatements. Perhaps he should take some direction from his own colleague, the member for St. James, and at least correct that mistreatment of the facts. And somehow, the member for Fort Rouge also seems unaware of how healthy the high-tech business climate is in Manitoba.

In my previous career, I helped grow a company from a small start up here in Winnipeg to having over 300—[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order. Order. Order.

When members are speaking they don't need to be heckled to the point where you can't even hear what is being said in the House. When members stand to speak, they want people to listen to them, so the same goes for the whole House. When somebody's speaking, let's have the courtesy to please hear them and not try to heckle them down, because I know a lot of members don't like to get heckled down themselves. So sitting here and heckling in turn is not a very respectful way to conduct business in this House.

So I'm going to ask for everybody's co-operation, please.

Mr. Teitsma: Thank you so much, Madam Speaker, for your efforts to restore decorum in this Chamber.

Now, the member for Fort Rouge seems unaware of these accomplishments within the Winnipeg high-tech sector. He seems unaware of the great work being done at New Flyer, right next to my—the constituency of Transcona, or at Permission Click, who quickly built apps for our government, in the early days of this pandemic, for student employment and for PPE acquisition.

The member for Fort Rouge seems unaware of the work done by Varian, by North Forge, conquest, Ubisoft, Magellan, RAPID RTC, Momentum Healthware, Standard Aero and even Manitoba Hydro themselves. No matter how much the Leader of the Opposition would like to deny it, software development and the high-tech sector in Manitoba isn't just surviving, Madam Speaker, it is thriving.

* (16:00)

Speaking of leaders, among Her Majesty's loyal opposition—I'm not sure how they're doing on that loyal part today, but the member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine) once again fills her mouth with words that are particularly egregious, not to mention mendacious. Shall we set the stage?

Manitoba began this century by enduring 17 years of NDP government. It was during this time that the member for St. Johns was hired on to work for that NDP government. What she accomplished during her employment no one can quite seem to say but that she was there at the table is beyond dispute.

What is the record of that government in respect of children in care?

Well, under their watch and the watch of the now-member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine), the number of children in care doubled. And I remind this House that

90 per cent of these kids are Indigenous. Under their watch and the watch of the member for St. Johns, thousands more children were taken from their parents under their watch and the watch of the member for St. Johns—[*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Teitsma: Child benefit payments—[*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Teitsma: —were—[*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order. Just a caution to the member that words such as mendacious is not a word that is allowable in the House because it does have a certain reference to it, so I would encourage members to be very careful in choosing their words.

And I'm going to ask members again, because I have had to caution members a number of times in the last couple of days—I've been very generous so far in not calling out members by their constituency names, but we're getting darn close to the point where I'm going to start to do that if this House doesn't rein in some of these—this heckling, because that is totally, totally disrespectful and I'm going to have that expectation of everybody in this House.

So just a word of caution. I'm coming to the end of my patience on this and there's absolutely no reason that we can't have a respectful discourse in this House.

And I'm asking members to take this seriously and not make hand signals that—and I'm not sure who she was referring to with the hand signal, but I would just be very cautious. I would be very cautious because being flippant in here—people being flippant in here is not really beholden anybody in these prestigious positions that everybody has here, representing thousands and thousands of people. So I want everybody to remember that you are here representing a lot of people. It's been a lot of history in this place. Let's treat it respectfully, please.

Mr. Teitsma: I thank you for your instruction, Madam Speaker.

As I was saying—[*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order. Order. Order.

I would just caution the member for St. Johns, I have been standing. She has been heckling while I have been standing and I have just indicated I am not going to tolerate this kind of behaviour. I'm asking for respect to be shown to everybody, but respect has to be shown for the Chair, too, because this Chair

happens to represent us trying to represent members and us trying to be civil to each other and things are starting to get quite agitated in here and we're going way beyond the behaviours that the public expects us to.

So I'm encouraging members and I'm—and that means all members here, too. I'm asking for everybody to please show respect for each other, show respect for this Chair and use your positions here with great care and caution because you have all earned a place here to represent people and you've got some important issues. Let's not let those issues get clouded by poor behaviour in this Chamber, please.

Mr. Teitsma: I thank you, Madam Speaker.

As I was saying, under the watch of the previous NDP government for all 17 years and under the watch of the now-member for St. Johns, the number of children in care doubled. Under the watch of that previous government and under the watch of the member for St. Johns, thousands more children were taken from their parents. Under their watch and the watch of the member for St. Johns, child benefit payments were redirected into general revenues instead of going to help to care for these children. [*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Teitsma: Under—

An Honourable Member: And I'm supposed to just sit there?

Madam Speaker: Yes.

An Honourable Member: Just sit there and just—

Madam Speaker: Yes. Yes.

An Honourable Member: Okay—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The member for St. Johns is showing some disrespect for the Chair.

You may not like, and members may not like, what other people say in this House, but they have the right to say it. That's why I urge caution with what we say. We may not like hearing history repeated, but we have that privilege here to indicate and review history of the last number of decades. There's nothing wrong with that.

And members may not necessarily like to hear what maybe their party did or didn't do, but that is what is part of debate in this House. And members then have a chance to get up and either correct the record or, you know, make their own statements. That

is what is allowed in this House, and that is what we're expecting of everybody.

You know, come in here and represent your constituents well, but let's please do it respectfully at all levels. And I shouldn't have to stand and ask for this as much as I am right now.

Mr. Teitsma: Well, that is their record. That's her record, Madam Speaker.

Now, we get to 2016 and the change in government. What happened? Well, the number of children in care was reduced for the first time in a decade, and it continues to drop. The average length of stay for a child in care continues to drop. And the child-pave-benefit payments now go directly to the CFA-CFS agencies to help pay for care.

So I would expect that that member can see this issue in light of her own shortcomings, and I would expect that member to be grateful for the progress, small though it may be, that has been made by this government. And we intend to continue to make more progress.

Now, these attitudes that I have outlined here should be a cause of concern among the members opposite. They should be careful in 'choodising' their leaders. They should be careful in deciding who to follow and who to model.

When it comes to race relationships, too, it is clear more progress needs to be made, and I thank the members who have spoken on this. And I encourage especially the members opposite and those of my own colleagues to be thoughtful. I encourage them to follow the example of Nelson Mandela, to follow the example of—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Teitsma: Martin Luther King, Jr.—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Teitsma: I encourage them to follow the examples of Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King Jr. and to affirm and to recognize that we need to work to eliminate race-based laws and entitlements, because that's what the road to racial harmony that Martin Luther King Jr. and Nelson Mandela would point to. That is the road to racial harmony. Because, first and foremost, we need to understand that we are all brothers and sisters, that we are all people and that we share that in common.

Now, I think there are plenty of role models for the members opposite to choose from, whether that's

the optimism and grace of the minister of Indigenous relations, the sharp-minded wit of the Minister of Education (Mr. Goertzen), the compassion and caring of the Minister for Families, the relentless diligence of the Minister for Health, the patience and perseverance of the Minister of Justice (Mr. Cullen)—I could go on and on. Good leadership is on display on this side of the House.

I should not fail to mention our Premier (Mr. Pallister). And although I'm sure our Premier might prefer to dwell on our government's many successes, I find that it is in those rare occasions where we fall short of the mark that true leadership is on display, because he admits that we can do better and then he sets about making sure we do exactly that. And that's effective leadership.

Now, I can understand if the members opposite don't want to look to members of our government as their role models. If that's the case, they could perhaps look to the member for Tyndall Park (Ms. Lamoureux). While she and I agree on some things and disagree on others, she at least looks forward for ways to have our government do an even better job. She understands that being a good legislator is trying to do what's best for all Manitobans.

* (16:10)

The behaviour of most of the members opposite in the past few days has not been in the interests of—best interests of Manitobans. It's pretty clearly self-interest. The quest for power—that's what's guiding these members. What they do not realize, Madam Speaker, is that Manitobans can see right through it.

Manitobans know the difference between the member for Tyndall Park and the member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine). Manitobans know that the NDP will twist the truth to their own advantage. Manitobans know that the NDP will break their promises as they have before. Manitobans know that the NDP will do and say pretty much anything to get or hold onto power in this province.

Manitobans can see right through the bogeyman that the NDP try to trot out every day, all year round, not just around Halloween. That's why last fall, they chose wisely; that's why last fall, they chose better; that's why last fall, they chose us.

Thank you.

Hon. Ron Schuler (Minister of Infrastructure): What an honour to be in this great Chamber and put a few words on the record.

In the very short time that I have I'd like to first of all start by thanking those who put in a lot of hours working very hard for us. I'd like to thank my executive assistant Tyler Slobogian, my special assistant Andrew Clark, and, Madam Speaker, my constituency assistants who've been there for some time. I'd like to start by speaking about Gladys Hayward Williams, who represents myself in my constituency—[interjection]—when I can't be there, and I appreciate all the heckling that takes place in this Chamber, including that of my own colleagues, and I want to thank Gladys Hayward Williams, and Joan Golebioski, for all the work they do in the constituency, and they're the individuals that are the face of us MLAs when we're here working hard and they're doing an amazing job, and I really do thank them.

I also want to thank the Department of Manitoba Infrastructure, who I represent here in this Chamber. I would like to thank the men and women who, today, will be out on our highways making sure that the highways are safe, to make sure that the highways are protected and, Madam Speaker, I do get notifications constantly when there's an incident on one of our highways. There were several notices that came through today, and I know how they bother me as the minister, because I think that someone on our highway has been injured, there's a problem on the highway, there's a reason why the highway was shut down.

And I can tell you, Madam Speaker, I know this firsthand, that those men and women who are responsible for that stretch of highway, they take it very, very serious and they wear it.

Madam Speaker, when we had the Ethan Boyer accident on Brady Road, I know firsthand from the family how tough it was. I know that he survived the initial accident—no fault of his own. And the first responders and Manitoba Infrastructure staff who showed up on site and tried to save his life, he succumbed while they were attempting to do so, and I know from the employees who work for Manitoba Infrastructure, how they wore that, and we received 120 letters asking us to do something.

I'd like to point out that the South Perimeter safety review had already identified that intersection. We had already identified money to improve that intersection. We were just trying to buy the land to be able to build the road that would then take the Brady

Road garbage trucks off of the Perimeter Highway. And, Madam Speaker, our government this year decided to name that side road the Ethan Boyer Way in honour of Ethan.

But it shows you the men and women that work for us, that work for government, work for the people, and I know they're out today and, Madam Speaker, we have amazing equipment. Now we don't just put sand down; we put a salt brine down, and that way, it makes it safer. The equipment is very large and we have one individual, he still works for our department. He's been there now for 50 years.

Madam Speaker, he has just done an amazing job and I got to sign a certificate for him complimenting him. He started working for the department about the same time as the member of Elmwood joined this Chamber, so there you go; there's the joke of the day.

And, Madam Speaker, there are incredible men and women. Anyway, this individual does not listen to weather reports, doesn't listen to any of that. He walks out his front door, looks at the skies, and he knows exactly where to run his equipment, knows exactly where the snow piles will be and where the snow drifts are. So we have just tremendous men, women.

I just want to highlight a few things that we have faced as a department through Emergency Measures. We had the Thanksgiving 2019 snowstorm. We had the spring 2020 high-water event. We had COVID-19, which is through Emergency Measures Organization. We had the early summer 2020 eastern Manitoba rain event where, in one evening, one rain event, nine inches of rain fell.

We had the summer rain event in western Manitoba, a one-in-1,000-year rain event, which, in Neepawa, saw a dam blow out. We saw Minnedosa—thank God that the dam held. Rivers, the dam on Lake Wahtopanah held, and most members will know that there was some issues with that. Rapid City lost their dam and, Madam Speaker, I just want to thank all the men and women who were involved in that particular event. It was very tenuous.

I'd like to thank my ministerial colleagues from that area who showed up when the dam was in question. We drove out right away when we were notified that it was difficulty. I want to thank the Premier (Mr. Pallister) for his leadership for the fact that he made himself available constantly. I spoke to him several times on July the 1st, briefing him on the situation of the Lake Wahtopanah dam, and we drove

out there, and at 7:15 the Department of Manitoba Infrastructure advised that they could no longer assure that the dam would be able to withstand the pressure that was being put on it. And we declared at that moment that we had lost confidence in the dam and started evacuating people, and all the way down the valley, a lot of actions were taken.

I'd like to thank my colleagues. I'd like to thank the Premier for the advice that was given. Manitobans went on their way on July the 1st, July the 2nd, July the 3rd, July the 4th and did not realize that there were a lot of things taking place at that dam. And, Madam Speaker, it's a testament to us as Manitobans. That dam was built 60 years ago and it withstood all the pressure that was placed on it. It was never engineered to take that kind of pressure, and it took it. We will be doing some more work on it as we go forward.

Madam Speaker, I also would like to, as reference, thank the department for the South Perimeter safety review, which we fully funded, announced, and it's almost complete. We've also—we also announced the South Perimeter functional study, which is the vision statement for the South Perimeter Highway, which connects Highway No. 1 from east and going west.

And, under the leadership of our Premier and this government, we are ready to announce one of the projects on it, and that's the St. Mary's bridge. It's the single highest traffic intersection without a bridge in the province of Manitoba. So it was time to focus in on that intersection. I was through that intersection just this week, and there's already equipment starting to prepare the ground and get things going. It's going to be a very exciting project. And, Madam Speaker, we are very pleased that our government is going to be getting these projects done. The Perimeter Highway is very important.

I'd also like to point out that we've announced phase 2 of the safety review of the entire Perimeter. We know that there is a lot of work that has to be done. Madam Speaker, I've said this before in this House: the more safe that we make the Perimeter, the less safe uncontrolled intersections become. And the Department of Infrastructure—Manitoba Infrastructure is now going to look at the entire Perimeter. And we really do have to get uncontrolled intersections off of the Perimeter Highway. It is becoming a high-speed corridor. And the vision is that someday—and that's what the functional study was all about—that someday it will become a limited access, high-speed corridor.

Madam Speaker, there's a lot of exciting things happening. I'd like to thank our government for the fact that historic, never before, ever has this kind of money ever been invested in infrastructure in the province of Manitoba. We are looking at \$500 million this year, \$500 million next year. We are on a roll. We're in every section of this province upgrading: \$100 million being spent on Highway No. 1, because we were very close to losing our national designation of it being an RTAC highway under 17 years of mismanagement; \$50 million on Highway 75, because we were close to losing our RTAC national standard designation for our No. 1 corridor going north-south.

So, Madam Speaker, \$150 million we are going to preserve an RTAC standard going east-west, north-south—actually one of the most important economic corridors in this nation. All traffic that goes from west to east and east to west must go down that traffic—through that Highway No. 1. And we are spending money on it and we're spending money in smart places. We're building a grid of RTAC roads so that this province is going to move ahead. We're building for the future.

* (16:20)

I understand the Department of Health, and the minister—the great job he's doing. Families, Education—these are departments that have to do work that affects us today because of COVID. Departments like Manitoba Infrastructure and others have to look for the day after tomorrow. We will be there to ensure that there's an economy, that we have ways to get our goods to market, that we continue to grow this Manitoba for all Manitobans, Madam Speaker.

I'd like to thank the leadership of my Premier. I'd like to thank the leadership of the Cabinet and my caucus colleagues. All of us are unified. We're a great team and we're building this into one outstanding, strong and mighty Manitoba.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): It's an honour, Madam Speaker, to address the House in respect of the Throne Speech. It is a speech that is inspired by Manitobans and, quite frankly, was written for and by Manitobans, as well. And it is a speech that is written at an historic time, a time where it is essential that we focus on teamwork and compassion and we make our compassion real and demonstrate it in a real way.

The last time that I had the chance to see my sister alive was not in person, but through a window of a hospital. And our family has yet to have the

opportunity to say goodbye to Peggy. That's hard, but every Manitoban is experiencing challenging times now and Manitobans, perhaps as never before, have the chance to understand what true compassion means now, as people all over our province face challenges that were unheard of a year ago—job loss, the fear of losing a family member to COVID, the consequences of an economy that has had to be restrained to protect others, the challenges of educating a child at home while you're a teacher at work, or educating a child at home while you're a parent who wasn't trained to be a teacher.

The challenges are many. The sacrifices are multitudinous. People all over our province, our country, our planet are suffering, are fearful in ways that most of them have never experienced before.

Madam Speaker, I am a little bit of an amateur historian, and I can say that I don't know, apart from wartime, perhaps apart from the Spanish flu period in our history, if there's been a time where such widespread fear and concern has existed in this province's history.

And so saying that, what I will say next may sound like I'm trying to polish something that shouldn't be polished, Madam Speaker, but I've got to say that I think and I believe that we'll get through this. I believe we will look back at this time with pride. I believe that the difficult challenges we face will make us stronger and better as people and as a province and country.

Difficult challenges aren't the thing anyway, Madam Speaker. As you well know, it's not the things in life that matter, it's how we react to them. Difficult challenges have been faced by people around this Chamber and people who came before us and people throughout this province. Difficult challenges must be faced.

Those bison at the front of this building face the storm together. They form a team. They don't run. They put their young and fragile in the lee of the wind or the snow, as it's coming down today, and they know instinctively that if they work together, they can make things better and they can protect and serve one another.

This, Manitobans know, but now they have the time this time to prove it. And most are. And that's why I say we'll look back with pride.

I've had difficult challenges in my life, Madam Speaker, in sports and in business and with tragedy in

our family and I can only say that those times have shaped me as a person, and I think as a better person.

And I think that's true of all of us. I learned more about my teammates in sport when we were losing than when we were winning. I learned more as a coach about how to mentor young people and shape them when we were behind in games than when we were ahead. I learned more about making a business work in times of depression than I did in times of prosperity. And so I say with some experience, difficult challenges responded to well will shape one as a person better than the luxury of generous times.

We had generous times in this province through the early parts of the—this millennium. We didn't take advantage of them as people. Our transfer payments from Ottawa were rising rapidly. Our interest rates, which had been a horrible burden on people who were in debt, were dropping and yet—and our debt service costs were dropping as a province monumentally—and transfers from the federal government were higher in two thirds of the time that the previous government was in power than they are now. And yet our debt doubled. Our taxes went up. Our economy didn't grow. You know, there were no signs of steady growth except the ones they bought and put up all over the province before the election.

The reality was, Madam Speaker, that our health-care system had the longest waits in the country and this was in prosperous times. Our education was also the worst in this country and this in easy times. And we were taking Indigenous children into care and taking them away from their communities and their families, in record numbers, as members opposite know. And so, what came of this largesse and this generous first decade and a half of the 2000s was not good things. It was deterioration.

It's why we were elected, to fix the finances, repair the services, rebuild the economy. We did and now we must do it again. We must do it again and who better to hire to do something than someone who has done a good job of it before and, Madam Speaker, this team has done a good job of *[inaudible]*.

I speak today, not only with compassion and sympathy for the vulnerable and the hurting and the fearful in our province but I speak with pride, Madam Speaker, for those who, despite those real emotions, are rising and assisting others and I see that with Manitobans.

I've seen it throughout our history but I see it now in spades and I'm so proud of the way most

Manitobans have responded to these challenges, so proud of the way they have focused on helping others. Not pointing fingers, not placing blame, rather, but signing up to volunteer on a website we set up, called Help Next Door, where thousands of Manitobans put their names forward and said: we'll help a vulnerable senior to get their groceries or shovel their walk. We'll help and deliver food to people who need it. We'll help, we'll step up and we'll help. That's what Manitobans are all about and that's why I love Manitobans.

To see the risks that Manitoba small businesses take any time is inspiring but to realize that they are taking those risks now, to rebuild at a time of COVID is an incredible thing and, Madam Speaker, I'm impressed and I think all of us are, as we see ourselves lead the way in economic recovery.

It's easy to criticize, Madam Speaker, but there's a reason there are no statues erected in honour of critics anywhere in the world because it takes no skill.

* (16:30)

What takes skill is to build a team. That's what we've done. What takes skill is to fill the obligations of standing up Manitobans, and that's what we'll continue to do.

Madam Speaker: The hour being 4:30 p.m., pursuant to rule 47(3), I am interrupting the proceedings to put the questions necessary to dispose of the proposed motion of the honourable member for Swan River (Mr. Wowchuk), that is the motion for an address in reply to the Speech from the Throne and all amendments to that motion.

And I have some information that I need to share with you about how—[*interjection*]

The question before the House is the proposed subamendment of the honourable member for St. Boniface (Mr. Lamont), that is the subamendment to the motion for an address and reply to the Speech from the Throne.

Do members wish to have the subamendment read?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Madam Speaker: 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.

I declare the subamendment lost.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, on division.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for River Heights, on division.

The subamendment is defeated on division.

* * *

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 and reply to the Speech from the Throne.

Do members wish to have the amendment read?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Madam Speaker: And I'm hearing a yes.

The proposed motion of the honourable member—the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

THAT the motion be amended by adding at the end of the following words:

But this House regrets that the provincial government has:

- (a) failed to match the commitment Manitobans have shown in fighting the pandemic and recession with an equivalent effort to make things better for families, workers, seniors and business across the province; and
- (b) failed to develop or implement a real and comprehensive plan to address the health care and economic needs laid bare by the COVID pandemic and has instead pushed forward on a path of cuts, privatization and attacks on workers; and
- (c) further undermined the health-care system by refusing to invest in increases to testing capacity, testing sites, supports for patients

- waiting to obtain a test, and refused to arrange a system for test bookings to alleviate wait times; and
- (d) failed seniors and elders in Manitoba by raising fees on residents of personal-care homes during the pandemic, cutting home-care services, freezing personal-care-home supports for years on end and limiting access and increasing costs for seniors to obtain prescription drugs while shifting the burden of care for this vulnerable group of Manitobans by pushing more responsibilities to families; and
- (e) continued to privatize essential parts of the health-care system by refusing to invest in public health care and instead providing millions in contracts to for-profit corporations; and
- (f) continued to undermine rural health care by moving ahead with their plan to close EMS stations across the province in communities like Grandview and closing ERs and labs in communities like Roblin and Shoal Lake; and
- (g) cut northern health-care services such as closing the Flin Flon operating room during the pandemic and moving ahead with the privatization of Lifeflight services; and
- (h) refused to guarantee that all federal funding for health care is spent at the bedside, rather than on the provincial government's other priorities; and
- (i) refused to address the public health crisis by failing to provide long-term investments to community organizations and offer harm reduction initiatives which help Manitobans dealing with mental health and addictions get the help they need and reduce blood borne diseases; and
- (j) failed to offer any acknowledgement of the needs of black, Indigenous or people of colour—BIPOC—Manitobans in the Throne Speech, and presented no comprehensive plan to help reduce and end poverty, and no real plan for community safety in Manitoba; and
- (k) refused to recognize the disproportionate impact the pandemic has had on women in particular, and refused to end the funding freeze for child-care centres across Manitoba,
- putting many centres at risk of closing their doors, further harming Manitoba women, children and families; and
- (l) diverted needed funds for child care to high-priced consultants while early-childhood educators have gone years without any wage or funding supports from the provincial government, and continued to push the privatization of early-learning and child-care services in the province, instead of investing in public, affordable, accessible and high-quality child-care services; and
- (m) offered no real or effective programs for small businesses to survive the 'pandemic', with no programs to help meet rent or cover costs associated with the purchase of PPE, as many small businesses face the prospect of closing their doors; and
- (n) continuing to freeze funding for municipalities, forcing large communities like Winnipeg, Brandon, Thompson, Dauphin and Selkirk, and smaller communities like Gimli and St-Lazare, to make difficult decisions on cuts to public services and programming that keep communities safe and welcoming; and
- (o) failed again to present any commitments to build new social or affordable housing, despite being able to access funds from the federal government, and made the situation worse by selling government housing units; and
- (p) continued to put the long-term success of Manitoba students at risk by pushing ahead with an out-of-date review of the education system, having already eliminated small class sizes, slashed support services, fired education assistants, cut education funding and frozen teachers' wages; and
- (q) refused to offer a safe back-to-school plan to address the concerns of teachers, educators, students and parents by ensuring small class sizes, more supports in the classroom, using new and creative spots for classroom learning, and failing to ensure federal money earmarked for education actually makes it to the classroom; and
- (r) continued to increase tuition for post-secondary education during the 'pandemic' while demanding millions in cuts from

- provincial colleges and universities, after having cut important programs in colleges, such as 75 nursing spots at Red River College; and
- (s) interfered with Crown corporations numerous times, most recently by directing Manitoba Hydro to break up and sell off subsidiaries owned by the corporation, including Teshmont, Manitoba Hydro International and Manitoba Hydro Telecom; and
- (t) failed to offer a plan to actually use the telecommunication assets of Manitoba Hydro to bring broadband to rural and northern Manitoba, instead pushing for these assets to be sold off; and
- (u) failed again to listen to Manitoba producers who have overwhelmingly said that their approach to leasing Crown lands will cause irreparable harm to farm families in Manitoba that are already dealing with serious challenges due to climate change, while also failing to provide them with insurance supports during a time of need; and
- (v) continued to underspend highways infrastructure by hundreds of millions of dollars, while also continuing to pursue the selling off and privatization of infrastructure services; and
- (w) cut supports for French language services at the Université de Saint-Boniface, Santé en Français and translation services, and eliminated the assistant deputy minister for the Bureau de l'éducation française; and
- (x) failed to meaningfully consult with Indigenous leaderships for another year regarding the Lake St. Martin outlet channel and other initiatives that affect Indigenous rights, and refused to properly recognize the legitimate rights and roles of Indigenous leadership on matters of harvesting and management of resources; and
- (y) failed to implement a living wage, offered no supports for health and safety in workplaces, and are pushing ahead with a defence of a wage-freeze law that was ruled to be unconstitutional; and
- (z) ignored the needs of the northern communities who have lost hundreds of mining jobs by the failure to release any funds devoted to supporting mining communities; and
- (aa) failed to take any meaningful action on climate change by continuing to pursue a wasteful challenge to the federal government's carbon tax, cutting support to local environmental groups, investing in programs for green jobs or actually make progress on important projects like upgrades to the North End Sewage Treatment Plant; and
- (bb) failed to offer any supports to newcomers in the province, especially those newcomer workers who work in agricultural and manufacturing sectors every day.

* (16:40)

As a consequence of these and many other failings, the 'provin' 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: Yes.

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): Madam Speaker, a recorded vote, please.

Madam Speaker: A recorded vote having been called, call in the members.

For the information of all members, for virtual sittings of the House, we are required to conduct votes in a different manner than during normal sittings of the House. For members in the House, the vote will be conducted in a manner similar to our previous practice. For this part of the vote, those in favour will stand to be counted first, followed by those against. I will note for members that we have modified this system in one respect: once the page states the name

of the member standing to be counted, the Clerk will acknowledge that the member has voted by repeating the member's name rather than saying Aye.

Once the count in the House is complete, we will conduct an alphabetical roll call of members participating virtually. For this part of the process, the page will call each remote member's name alphabetically and then each remote member must audibly state their vote responding clearly with either I vote yes or I vote no. The Clerk will then respond to the member's name, followed by yes or no.

Finally, after the bells stop ringing for any vote, the moderator and the table will need to take a moment to verify that all members listed as remote are actually present on screen and in their seats and are therefore eligible to vote.

This delay should be brief but is necessary to confirm who can vote because for remote members, being seated before the camera is the equivalent of members being in their assigned seats in the Chamber when the bells stop ringing.

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

Adams, Altomare, Asagwara, Brar, Bushie, Fontaine, Gerard, Kinew, Lamont, Lamoureux, Lathlin, Lindsey, Maloway, Marcelino, Moses, Naylor, Sala, Sandhu, Smith (Point Douglas), Wasyliv, Wiebe

Nays

Cox, Cullen, Eichler, Ewasko, Fielding, Friesen, Goertzen, Gordon, Guenter, Guillemard, Helwer, Isleifson, Johnson (Interlake-Gimli), Johnston (Assiniboia), Lagassé, Lagimodiere, Martin, Michaleski, Micklefield, Morley-Lecomte, Nesbitt, Pallister, Pedersen, Piwniuk, Reyes, Schuler, Smith (Lagimodiere), Squires, Stefanson, Teitsma, Wharton, Wowchuk

Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk): Yeas 21, Nays 32.

* (16:50)

Madam Chairperson: I declare the subamendment lost.

* * *

Madam Speaker: The question now before the House is the motion of the honourable member for Swan River (Mr. Wowchuk); that is the motion for an address in reply to the Speech from the Throne.

Do members wish to have the motion read?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Madam Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

An Honourable Member: No.

Madam Speaker: I hear a 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 Nay—the Yeas have it. [*interjection*]

You didn't let me finish.

In my opinion, the Yeas have it.

Recorded Vote

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader): 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 honourable member for Swan River, 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

Cox, Cullen, Eichler, Ewasko, Fielding, Friesen, Goertzen, Gordon, Guenter, Guillemard, Helwer, Isleifson, Johnson (Interlake-Gimli), Johnston (Assiniboia), Lagassé, Lagimodiere, Martin, Michaleski, Micklefield, Morley-Lecomte, Nesbitt, Pallister, Pedersen, Piwniuk, Reyes, Schuler, Smith (Lagimodière), Smook, Squires, Stefanson, Teitsma, Wharton, Wowchuk.

Nays

Adams, Altomare, Asagwara, Brar, Bushie, Fontaine, Gerrard, Kinew, Lamont, Lamoureux, Lathlin, Lindsey, Maloway, Marcelino, Moses, Naylor, Sala, Sandhu, Smith (Point Douglas), Wasyliv, Wiebe.

Clerk: Yeas 33, Nays 21.

Madam Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

* * *

Madam Speaker: And at this time I would just like to thank everybody. This was history being made right now in Manitoba with the first virtual remote vote by a number of our members. And so thank you to everybody in the House for helping make this happen, and to everybody that showed up remotely, this was

the part of virtual that worried us the most, and I have to commend our team here, our clerks and everybody helping them.

* (17:00)

What—the amount of work that went into making sure the rules around this were in place and that this would work took a lot of time, and I do want to say to them a very, very special thank-you because this was a little bit scary for all of us.

And to the pages who are in a brand new world here with having to call the vote as they did, you did a great job.

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, October 27, 2020

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