

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

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**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Forty-Second Legislature**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
AL TOMARE, Nello	Transcona	NDP
ASAGWARA, Uzoma	Union Station	NDP
BRAR, Diljeet	Burrows	NDP
BUSHIE, Ian	Keewatinook	NDP
CLARKE, Eileen, Hon.	Agassiz	PC
COX, Cathy	Kildonan-River East	PC
CULLEN, Cliff, Hon.	Spruce Woods	PC
DRIEDGER, Myrna, Hon.	Roblin	PC
EICHLER, Ralph	Lakeside	PC
EWASKO, Wayne, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	PC
FONTAINE, Nahanni	St. Johns	NDP
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GOERTZEN, Kelvin, Hon.	Steinbach	PC
GORDON, Audrey, Hon.	Southdale	PC
GUENTER, Josh	Borderland	PC
GUILLEMARD, Sarah, Hon.	Fort Richmond	PC
HELWER, Reg	Brandon West	PC
ISLEIFSON, Len	Brandon East	PC
JOHNSON, Derek, Hon.	Interlake-Gimli	PC
JOHNSTON, Scott, Hon.	Assiniboia	PC
KHAN, Obby, Hon.	Fort Whyte	PC
KINEW, Wab	Fort Rouge	NDP
KLEIN, Kevin E., Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
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
MICHALESKI, Brad	Dauphin	PC
MICKLEFIELD, Andrew	Rossmere	PC
MORLEY-LECOMTE, Janice, Hon.	Seine River	PC
MOSES, Jamie	St. Vital	NDP
NAYLOR, Lisa	Wolseley	NDP
NESBITT, Greg, Hon.	Riding Mountain	PC
PEDERSEN, Blaine	Midland	PC
PIWNIUK, Doyle, Hon.	Turtle Mountain	PC
REDHEAD, Eric	Thompson	NDP
REYES, Jon, Hon.	Waverley	PC
SALA, Adrien	St. James	NDP
SANDHU, Mintu	The Maples	NDP
SCHULER, Ron	Springfield-Ritchot	PC
SMITH, Andrew, Hon.	Lagimodière	PC
SMITH, Bernadette	Point Douglas	NDP
SMOOK, Dennis	La Vérendrye	PC
SQUIRES, Rochelle, Hon.	Riel	PC
STEFANSON, Heather, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
TEITSMA, James, Hon.	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
<i>Vacant</i>	Morden-Winkler	

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, March 13, 2023

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

**Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk):** It is my duty to inform the House that the Speaker is unavoidably absent. Therefore, in accordance with the statutes, I would ask the Deputy Speaker to please take the Chair.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker (Andrew Micklefield):** 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.

We acknowledge we are gathered on Treaty 1 territory and that Manitoba is located on the treaty territories and ancestral lands of the Anishinaabeg, Anishinewuk, Dakota Oyate, Denesuline, Nehethowuk nations. We acknowledge Manitoba is located on the Homeland of the Red River Métis. We acknowledge northern Manitoba includes lands that were and are the ancestral lands of the Inuit. We respect the spirit and intent of treaties and treaty making and remain committed to working in partnership with First Nations, Inuit and Métis people in the spirit of truth, reconciliation and collaboration.

Welcome, everybody. Please be seated.

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

#### Bill 31—The Animal Care Amendment Act (2)

**Hon. Derek Johnson (Minister of Agriculture):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage (Mr. Khan), that Bill 31, the animal care amendment act, be now read a first time.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Agriculture, seconded by the honourable Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage, that Bill 31, The Animal Care Amendment Act (2), be now read a first time.

**Mr. Johnson:** I'm pleased to introduce Bill 31, the animal care amendment act. This legislation will allow

for timely review of appeals brought before the Animal Care Appeal Board under The Animal Care Act.

The Animal Care Act appeal board was established in 2009 as an independent appeal board for members of the public that come into contact with The Animal Care Act. The Animal Care Appeal Board hears appeals on animal seizures and orders made by the Chief Veterinary Officer for Manitoba. Appeals can be a very—can vary in length from three weeks to 50 days.

The proposed bill will provide added flexibility to how the Animal Care Appeal Board hears and processes appeals that will help ensure regular and timely review of animal care appeals and streamline the process for appeals brought before the board.

The Animal Care Amendment Act supports Manitoba Agriculture's mandate on animal welfare. This bill sets out that the time limit for an appeal may be extended by the board. The appeal board may also dismiss a matter without a hearing in certain circumstances.

In addition, the bill will enhance the hearing process by introducing electronic submissions of appeals, as well as allowing hearings to be held by telephone or other electronic means. The proposed amendment will bring greater clarity to The Animal Care Act, introducing a more efficient way of adjudicating appeals brought before the Animal Care Appeal Board.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

#### Bill 11—The Reducing Red Tape and Improving Services Act, 2023

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Consumer Protection and Government Services (Mr. Teitsma), that Bill 11, The Reducing Red Tape and Improving Services Act, 2023, be now read for a first time.

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Goertzen:** I'm pleased to introduce this annual bill. This bill amends four statutes to reduce or eliminate regulatory requirements and to streamline government

and provincial services. This is for Manitoba residents and organizations.

We remain committed to the annual reducing red tape and improving services act so that departments and governments agencies are able to propose legislative amendments to reduce red service—red tape and improve services.

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

#### **Bill 26—The Limitations Amendment and Public Officers Amendment Act**

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** I move, that bill—seconded by the Minister of Education, that Bill 26, The Limitations Amendment and Public Officers Amendment Act, be now read for a first time.

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Goertzen:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, The Limitations Act came into force on September 30th of last year and establishes a new and modern regime pertaining to the limitations of actions when individuals can bring court cases against another individual.

The bill supports the modernization of the laws and limitations in Manitoba and clarifies The Limitations Act to provide certainty about the operation of the law for Manitobans and responds to recent judicial interpretation to ensure that the discoverability of damages remains an element of the limitation period for claims against public officers.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Is it the will of the House to adopt the motion? [*Agreed*]

#### **Bill 28—The Local Government Statutes Amendment Act**

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Indigenous Reconciliation and Northern Relations (Ms. Clarke), that Bill 28, The Local Government Statutes Amendment Act, be now read for a first time.

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Goertzen:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, The Local Government Statutes Amendment Act makes amendments to The Elections Act, the City of Winnipeg charter, The Municipal Act, The Northern Affairs Act and The Public Schools Act.

\* (13:40)

This bill would bring consistency to how those who are at the school board level or at the municipal level, who are seeking to run for election in the Manitoba Legislature, how they have to operate. It'll require that municipal and community councillors and school trustees take a leave of absence from their position if they run for election as a member of the Legislative Assembly.

These proposed amendments safeguard the electoral system by ensuring that it removes a real or perceived conflict of interest when councillors or trustees run for election provincially, and it also aligns with other jurisdictions in Canada.

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

#### **Bill 27—The Intimate Image Protection Amendment Act**

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Health (Ms. Gordon), that Bill 27, The Intimate Image Protection Amendment Act, be now read for a first time.

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Goertzen:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, the bill establishes a reverse onus on the burden of proof of consent in civil court proceedings regarding non-consensual distribution of intimate images. Placing the burden of proof of consent on the person who distributes an intimate image will enhance access to civil remedies for people whose intimate image has been shared without their consent, strengthen social deterrence to participate in such offences and bring The Intimate Image Protection Act into alignment with other Manitoba law and similar jurisdictions in other areas of Canada.

And this bill has received the support of the Canadian Centre for Child Protection.

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

#### **Bill 227—The Workplace Safety and Health Amendment Act (Access to Washrooms for Delivery Persons)**

**Mr. Mintu Sandhu (The Maples):** I move, seconded by the member from the Burrows, that Bill 227, The Workplace Safety and Health Amendment Act (Access to Washrooms for Delivery Persons), be now read a first time.

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Sandhu:** I am pleased to introduce Bill 227, The Workplace Safety and Health Amendment Act. Bill 227 amends The Workplace Safety and Health Act to ensure delivery persons have reliable access to washrooms at the business they deliver to.

Delivery persons such as the SkipTheDishes driver, truck driver and more who work on the front line of the pandemic delivering food, medical supplies and other essential goods, yet they often did not have reliable access to washrooms.

Bill 227 will change that. I look forward to the unanimous support of this House.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

### Introduction of Guests

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Before going further, I wish to draw attention to the loge on my left, to your right. We have former members with us today: Peter Bjornson, former member for Gimli; and Drew Caldwell, former member for Brandon East.

We welcome you to the Manitoba Legislature.

And in the public gallery, from Niverville High School, 50 grade 9 students under the direction of Danielle Marion. This group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Springfield-Ritchot (Mr. Schuler).

And also a shout-out to my good friend Tony Clark, joining them as well.

So, great to have you guys here. Hey, Tony.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Committee reports? Tabling of reports? Ministerial statements?

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### Rural Child-Care Facilities

**Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside):** I stand you before today to speak about government's investment to provide a much-needed child-care facilities within various communities across the province. This program aims to create more than 1,200 new, regulated child-care spaces across the province, focusing on rural communities.

I'm happy to re-announce, through a collaborative program with the provincial and federal governments, that Stonewall and Stony Mountain are two of the Manitoba communities selected to receive child-care

facilities. The pilot project uses prefabricated construction processes so buildings can be constructed off-site, then moved to the permanent foundations. Each of these buildings will provide 74 new child spots.

These facilities will not only allow families to thrive but also to create value to those communities. The spaces will go a long ways into helping families in need as they face the challenges rural communities experience with a lack of existing child-care facilities. The extra spaces will benefit communities across the province since they play a key role in allowing parents with young children to return to work, also preparing the next generation of healthy and capable workers.

High-quality child care keeps children safe and healthy. In addition, helps children develop skills they will need to focus the success in their school and lives outside school.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this investment will provide a safe and supportive environment for young children to grow and learn about positive health behaviours, is a worthwhile investment in our rural areas and well across the entire province.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

#### Louise Bridge Replacement

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood):** The clock is ticking on the Louise Bridge replacement. But even though people in northeast Winnipeg have been asking for it for years—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Maloway:** —the PC budget last week made it clear that the government and this Premier (Mrs. Stefanson)—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Maloway:** —are ignoring their needs. It's a shock because northeast Winnipeg residents had high hopes Tuesday.

For seven years, the PC government has taken no action on replacing the functionally obsolete 112-year-old Louise Bridge before it's shut down or falls into the Red River.

City plans for a new six-lane bridge and its placement have been signed, sealed and ready to be delivered last summer. A \$6-million Nairn Avenue upgrade leading to the bridge was just completed in October.

And just like under Brian Pallister, the government's new budget shows a failure to invest in the

needs of northeast Winnipeg. This is consistent with their failures to address infrastructure issues across Manitoba for the past seven years while they've been in office.

The current traffic congestion in Winnipeg is bad enough and will only get worse if people are forced to take alternate routes. Commuters from all over the city would be impacted by an increase in traffic congestion, especially during rush hour.

People in northeast Winnipeg are tired of waiting for the PCs to take action and address their needs and they're ready to hold this government accountable for its failures.

While the clock may be ticking on the Louise Bridge, the bell is surely tolling for this government and Premier (Mrs. Stefanson), who are ignoring the needs of northeast Winnipeg.

### **Ikjyot Kaur Bharaj**

**Hon. Jon Reyes (Minister of Labour and Immigration):** It gives me great pleasure to share with you today the interesting story of a rare gem discovered in my constituency of Waverley. I am speaking about Ikjyot Kaur Bharaj, a 21-year-old second generation Canadian, born and raised in south Winnipeg.

From her earliest days as a child, she has been keenly interested in music. Currently a full-time student at the Desautels Faculty of Music at the University of Manitoba, Ikjyot has received two consecutive undergraduate research awards. Her research investigates the composer and arranger representation of wind band music performed by a random selection of Winnipeg-based high school and community bands. Of the repertoire performed, only five of 184 pieces were composed or arranged by a visible minority male. Ikjyot has broken that barrier, becoming the first visible minority female composer or arranger.

This body of work led to her amazing exploit as the national winner of the 2022 Canadian Winds critical essay competition. The essay was based on her research and discusses the significance of inclusion for such under-represented voices. She is in her final year and term with a GPA of 4.26, and upon a completion of her music degree, she'll be pursuing her teaching degree. In addition to consistently making the dean's honour list, she's also a president's scholar. She has received a variety of awards and scholarships from the university, totalling a sum of \$36,350.

\* (13:50)

Ikjyot is a member of the chamber choir; plays the classical clarinet primary instrument; jazz band tenor sax, alto sax; and acoustic guitar. She is learning to play almost every instrument possible in pursuit of her childhood aspirations of becoming a music educator for a middle or seniors band.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honouring Ikjyot Kaur Bharaj for being an icon of academic excellence and pledging her commit to impact the next generation of Manitobans through her love for teaching.

Thank you.

### **Supports for Ukrainian Refugees**

**Mr. Mark Wasyliv (Fort Garry):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, while we speak, a war is still ongoing in Ukraine.

While government has been preparing the budget, we've heard nothing of support for Ukrainian refugees in Manitoba. It seems as though the provincial government has—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Wasyliv:** —lost interest in supporting Ukraine since the news cycle has moved past the arrival of refugees. *[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Wasyliv:** Manitoba has played a significant role in Ukrainian resettlement to Canada. With more than 180,000 Ukrainian Manitobans, our province has historically been a home for Ukrainians fleeing from war and persecution. Over the years, Ukrainians in Manitoba have strength and enriched our culture and our economy. They built roads, railways and businesses; they've enhanced our province by contributing to cultural, artistic and political life in Manitoba. They've helped Manitoba, the—and the least we can do is support Ukraine in their time of need. Unfortunately, though, the Province's support has greatly diminished since the war began.

More than a month ago, I sought a meeting with the minister of education early child learning and the Minister of Labour and Immigration, regarding the urgent supports needed for Ukrainian students seeking higher education in Manitoba. Many Ukrainian students seeking education beyond high school are faced with a test of English as a foreign language. This is a barrier to further opportunities.

As of now, the Minister of Immigration has taken no responsibility and refused to meet, while the

Minister of Education hasn't even acknowledged the receipt of the letter.

This is just one example of a government not adequately supporting those who are in the most desperate need. It seems the government was willing to provide supports when it drew attention from the media. However, the support was only as shallow as this government's intentions.

We must demand better from this government. This Province must continue to support refugees we've welcomed into the province. They are among our most vulnerable, and there's a duty on this government to provide supports for them to prosper here.

Thank you.

### **Helen Lillian Granger**

**Hon. Andrew Smith (Minister of Municipal Relations):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, November 1st is well known as All Saints' Day, but in Manitoba it has another special meaning: the day a Manitoba artistic icon was born just over a century ago in Mimico, Ontario.

From a very young age, Helen Lillian Granger known exactly what she wanted to do, and she always aspired to be an artist. In her teens, she won a scholarship to the prestigious Ontario art college, where she studied under Canadian artists Charles Comfort and Franklin Carmichael, the latter of which was one of the famous Group of Seven.

Early in her career, she worked as a commercial artist for Eaton's and The Bay catalogues, as well as participating in Canada's war effort during World War II, creating various technical illustrations for both the aerospace and military tank industries. She is also noted as having done some work for Avro, which later included creating technical drawings for the historic Canadian Avro Arrow jetfighter.

In 1947, she moved to Winnipeg where she met the love of her life, William Allan Young, and married him in 1949. From then on, she'd become known as the iconic Manitoba artist Helen Granger Young.

She reached her stride in the 1960s, and over the years her body of work would include portraits and landscapes in oil and pastel, portraits in bronze, sculptures in porcelain and bronze monuments. Her artwork can be found in prominent locations around the world, from Rideau Hall, to the White House and to the Vatican, though it is her works located throughout Winnipeg for which she is most celebrated,

especially the bronze Nellie McClung monument right here on the Legislative grounds.

Some of the pieces have most probably seen are the First Flight, which is an airman on Memorial Boulevard, and the Tri-Service Monument, which depicts Father Aulneau and de La Vérendrye, located at St Boniface basilica.

In addition to her accolades as a sculptor, she is also a renowned painter and portrait artist, having painted a number of notable subjects, such as Jackson Beardy and Chief Dan George.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I ask the House today—unfortunately, she wasn't able to join us; she is 100 years old, but she's unable to join us here today. But her son—Helen's son, Dale Young, and her daughter-in-law, Debbie Haliuk-Young, are with us here today. Please join me in welcoming them to the Legislature.

## **ORAL QUESTIONS**

### **Grace Hospital ER Patient Safety Concerns**

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Doctors at the Grace Hospital are speaking out. They've tried to go through official channels, but they just can't get anywhere with this Health Minister and this Premier, and now they have major concerns.

In an open letter, they write that doctors at the Grace no longer feel comfortable working there because of the lack of patient safety which occurs after hours in that building.

This is remarkable. When Brian Pallister and the Premier announced their plans to close emergency rooms and make cuts to health care, they said that the Grace was going to be one of the most important hospitals in our province. Now, doctors are afraid to work there overnight.

Why did the Premier make these cuts to health care?

**Hon. Heather Stefanson (Premier):** Well, once again, Madam—or, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition continues to put false information on the record here in the Chamber.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the fact of the matter is we're investing 9.2 per cent more in health care this year alone, \$668 million more this year. That's more in our health-care system, not less.

It's my understanding that the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority approved the hiring of additional physician resources for the Grace Hospital. Mr. Deputy Speaker, these additional resources include physician assistants and a hospital medical officer for the overnight shift on the acute medicine ward.

So, action is being taken when it comes to this issue.

**Mr. Kinew:** Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, not only did this Premier cut the number of emergency rooms and cut the number of beds within our hospital system, you know what happened to that proposal that the Grace doctors brought forward once it was approved? This government cut it.

That's why those physicians had to go back and try to lobby for these resources to be returned to the bedside. Where did they get with the Health Minister? Nowhere. Where did they get with this Premier? Nowhere.

And that's why these physicians, who are duty bound to look after their patients, are speaking out publicly and they are saying that they no longer feel safe working at the Grace Hospital overnight.

Can the Premier explain to the people of Manitoba how she let things in our health-care system get this bad?

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Well, once again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the litany of false accusations by the Leader of the Opposition—he continues to put false information on the record within this Chamber.

We are investing more in health care—in fact, 23 per cent more in health care alone since we took office in 2016. Mr. Deputy Speaker, those are investments that are being made in our health-care system as we speak.

But I will tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will remind Manitobans of what happened under the previous NDP government. They promised that every single Manitoban would have a family physician. They failed to deliver on that. We continue to clean up their mess.

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

**Mr. Kinew:** It's a bizarre talking point because fewer Manitobans have a doctor today under the PCs. Only the Manitoba NDP can fix that.

Let's review the facts. This government cut the number of emergency rooms. They then cut the number of beds in our hospital system. Today, physicians say

they, quote, no longer feel comfortable working at the Grace because of patient safety. End quote.

These are all facts, facts that the Premier cannot dispute. An additional fact is that this government has had five months—five months—where the doctors were trying to work behind the scenes to get their concerns addressed, five months in which nothing happened.

\* (14:00)

Why has the Premier ignored the voices of those working on the front lines of our health-care system for so long?

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we don't ignore the voices of our front line. In fact, the Minister of Health (Ms. Gordon) has been out visiting with those and meeting with those who work on our front lines.

She's been meeting with health-care professionals; she's been meeting with nurses; she's been meeting with doctors, to ensure that we're listening to them. And by doing so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we're also making inroads in terms of recruitment and retention and training of doctors.

By listening to doctors, by listening to nurses in terms of what they need, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we're able to put things in place that are helping to retain nurses, doctors and health-care professionals in the province of Manitoba.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, on a follow-up question—on a new question.

#### **Premier's Financial Disclosures Conflict of Interest Concerns**

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Actually, the physicians are going to the media because they no longer feel safe working for this government. It's time to fix health care in Manitoba. The Manitoba NDP will deliver.

The Premier sold \$31 million worth of real estate and did not disclose that publicly, as she was required to, under conflict of interest law. It took the efforts of the official opposition to bring this to light. I will table a letter from the member for Fort Garry (Mr. Wasyliw), which did—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** —share this publicly with the people of Manitoba.



A court has now ruled that the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson)—[*interjection*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** —broke the law with this failure to disclose. Manitobans expect better from their leaders.

Why did the Premier break the law a second time since she took office? [*interjection*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order. Order, please. Order.

**Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Finance):** I'm surprised the member of the opposition would go down this particular road. Clearly, this—there's a ruling just recently released by the courts.

I will say that our government recognized the deficiencies in the conflict of interest rules. That's why we went about and we changed the rules around the conflict of interest. We consulted with Manitobans. We actually asked the commissioner to look at other jurisdictions as well. So what we have—going to bring forward and have passed in legislation is best practices across the country.

We recognize the challenges, recognize the deficiencies and we've taken steps to correct them.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, on a follow-up.

**Mr. Kinew:** If the Deputy Premier wants to understand the deficiencies, he should look to his right.

Just today, a judge in Manitoba ruled that this Premier broke the conflict of interest law. Manitobans should be concerned that this government is now trying to amend the conflict of interest law yet again.

We know that they have had many issues over the years. Former premier Brian Pallister failed to disclose many things. He didn't pay taxes in Costa Rica and he ignored laws right here at home.

And now we have the current Premier, who has failed to disclose \$31 million in real estate sales, and a judge now says that this was in contravention to the law.

Will the Premier stand today and apologize to the people of Manitoba?

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** The Leader of the Opposition indicates that he's concerned about this government changing the conflict of interest law. The recommendations come from the conflict of interest officer.

Why does he not respect the conflict of interest officer—or, frankly, any officer? [*interjection*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** Well, you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this government is all about law and order. They come riding into town, except when it is their—[*interjection*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** —own Premier.

We know today—[*interjection*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** —that the Premier of Manitoba broke the law. [*interjection*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** They love law and order, except when it comes to their own Premier. Their Premier broke the law once—[*interjection*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** —when she was running for leader and again a second time now, according to a judge in Manitoba.

So, the only exception is, of course, for their own Premier, who a judge says today broke the law a second time since she took office.

Will she simply stand in her place and apologize to the people of Manitoba?

**Mr. Goertzen:** Yes, we do actually like law and order, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I know that the member opposite has some experience with disorder, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but we are absolutely putting money into our prosecutions. We are absolutely putting money into our police, when it comes to the high-risk warrants. You know, we're putting money into the downtown community safety protection. We're getting tough on those who are harming our children.

I know the member opposite is disappointed that we are the law-and-order party. He's the disorder leader of the disorder party. We'll continue to stand up for Manitobans, defend the police and they'll defund them.

But we won't let them get into office, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order. Order, please.

### Drug Overdose Deaths Public Reporting

**Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas):** Instead of taking meaningful action to address the addictions crisis, the PCs are now refusing to release the number of over deaths—overdose deaths here in Manitoba for 2022. This data is critically important, and we are the only province that is not transparent with these numbers.

It's clear that the PCs want to release the numbers of overdose—or they don't want to release the number of overdose deaths, as they failed to address the addictions crisis.

When will this Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) do the right thing and release the data on overdose deaths here in Manitoba?

**Hon. Janice Morley-Lecomte (Minister of Mental Health and Community Wellness):** I first want to begin by offering my condolences to the family members—or, families who have lost members to overdose.

Our government has looked at and has put forward a Substance Related Harms Surveillance Report in December of 2022, and we're hoping these numbers come out in early spring.

Thank you.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The honourable member for Point Douglas, on a supplementary.

**Mrs. Smith:** We know the number of overdose deaths have risen under this PC government. There were 371 overdose deaths—that's 371 families that lost their loved ones—in 2020. In 2022–2021, 424 families lost their loved ones, yet we don't know the number of overdoses in 2022.

The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner used to provide this data, but now this Premier is telling them that they can't. That's shameful. That's not being transparent. Why are they hiding this data?

Will the Premier do the right thing and release the data for 2022 overdoses today?

**Ms. Morley-Lecomte:** To continue, the 2022 Substance Related Harms Surveillance Report is a central—and it will share data on 'overdothes' deaths, hospitalization and emergency room presentations for individuals to go and see the numbers.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The honourable member for Point Douglas, on a final supplementary.

**Mrs. Smith:** The government provided data on the number of overdose deaths in 2020, 2022—or, 2021—and now that we're in an election year, they're refusing to provide those numbers.

Why is that? Why are they not being transparent, and why is it that every other province is able to provide those numbers in a timely manner?

\*(14:10)

Will this Premier get up today, apologize for Manitobans for not being transparent on overdose deaths and release the data today?

**Ms. Morley-Lecomte:** Again, condolences to families who have lost loved ones. And we have worked with community partners and other government agencies to address the overdose crisis in the province.

We have offered RAAM clinics for individuals to attend. We offer naloxone kits for individuals to go to 200 different places to pick up. And we have invested in education and resources for individuals who are seeking support with their addictions.

### Dynacare Blood Collection Services Inquiry into Payment for Services

**MLA Uzoma Asagwara (Union Station):** Deputy Speaker, after going to see a doctor about pain in his stomach, Gregory Campbell was sent to Dynacare for a blood test. However, Gregory never got the blood test done, as Dynacare demanded that he pay them \$90 for that test.

Manitobans' access to health care should not be based on how much money they have in their bank accounts. Yet, that's increasingly what's happening under this PC government.

Can the Premier explain why she's forcing Manitobans to pay out of pocket for health care?

**Hon. Audrey Gordon (Minister of Health):** As a government, we want to ensure that individuals have access to the care that they need, including access to blood work being done.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I can't—I don't know the details of the case that the member for Union Station has brought to the floor of the Chamber, would be pleased to look at that, but I can say that our government is committed to ensuring each and every Manitoban does not pay for services and receives the care they need here in the province—no pay.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The honourable member for Union Station, on a supplementary question.

**MLA Asagwara:** Deputy Speaker, the problem is that, under this PC government, Manitobans are being forced to choose between their bank account and their own health needs—Manitobans such as Gregory Campbell, who was told he had to pay \$90 for an essential blood test. He couldn't afford to pay the \$90 and, as a result, he didn't get the health-care services that he needs.

That's shameful, Deputy Speaker. Health care should be free for all Manitobans regardless of how much money they do have, or do not have, in their bank accounts.

Will the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) apologize to Gregory and explain why she's forcing Manitobans to pay out of pocket for essential health care?

**Ms. Gordon:** Perhaps the two former NDP Selinger ministers that are sitting in the loge can educate the current Selinger NDP team about their broken promises to Manitobans, that they said that every single Manitoban would have a physician, Mr. Deputy Speaker. *[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order, please.

**Ms. Gordon:** Perhaps they can explain why it is now our government that has to clean up their mess, Mr. Deputy Speaker, by not making changes to streamline the licensure of international medical graduates, that we are having to launch a health human resource action plan to bring more physicians into this province—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The minister's time has expired.

The honourable member for Union Station, on a final supplementary.

**MLA Asagwara:** Deputy Speaker, in 2017, the PCs allowed Dynacare to purchase every lab in Winnipeg that does blood work. We've heard of many problems as a result, including long lines and lack of accessibility.

And now we're hearing that Dynacare is forcing Manitobans, such as Gregory Campbell, to pay as much as \$90 out of pocket for blood work. Access to health care should not be based on the size of your bank account, but it's clear this PC government thinks otherwise.

Can the Premier or the Minister of Health explain why they're forcing Manitobans to pay out of pocket for health care under their government, under their terrible decision making? Can they show some level of accountability and answer that question today?

**Ms. Gordon:** Well, once again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm going to have to ask for the help of the two former NDP Selinger ministers to explain to the members opposite that the decisions concerning Dynacare were made by them.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, our government is committed to ensuring that individuals in Manitoba have—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Ms. Gordon:** —access to the care they need, free of charge, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We will continue to remain committed—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Ms. Gordon:** —to Manitobans now and in the future.

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

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

### **Dauphin Court House Budget for Renovations**

**Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia):** The PC government has broke yet another promise.

In 2020, they announced that they'd expand and renovate the Dauphin courthouse at a cost of \$11 million. In 2022, they promised to spend an additional \$4 million. Yet the freedom of information documents that I'll table here show that they've only actually spent 3 and a half million dollars in the three years since the initial announcement.

Can the Premier explain why she so blatantly broke yet another promise to the people of Manitoba?

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, we're certainly committed to advancing and ensuring that our courthouses and the court system is modernized, that there's new technology, there's the appropriate type of technology in other sort of facilities within our court system.

We've had significant renovations over across the street at the courthouse on Broadway and, of course, we've had renovations at Dauphin as well. And we have more to do when it comes to integrating our case management system.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The honourable member for Concordia, on a supplementary.

**Mr. Wiebe:** Like all Manitobans, the people of Dauphin are tired of this government's cuts and broken promises.

Eighty people lost their jobs thanks to the PCs closing the Dauphin jail in 2020. After pressure from the community and this NDP team in the House, the PCs then acquiesced and said that they would expand the Dauphin courthouse at a cost of \$15 million. Yet, these documents that I just tabled for the minister to take a look at show that they haven't even spent 25 per cent of that amount.

Can the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) just explain why she's underspending on her government's own promises?

**Mr. Goertzen:** There was a commitment to, of course, renovate the Dauphin courthouse; that commitment is being kept, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

There are other renovations that are happening with—throughout the justice system. We're putting in a healing lodge—youth healing lodge in Thompson. There's an RFP that's going out for a healing lodge in The Pas. I believe that the RFP for the healing lodge in the Brandon Correctional Centre is also being issued, either now or this week.

These are all commitments that were made. They're all commitments that are kept. And they're all things that weren't done under the former NDP government.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The honourable member for Concordia, with a final supplementary.

**Mr. Wiebe:** Reality is, the last thing that the people of Dauphin need is more broken promises and more empty promises from this government after they went in and closed their jail without any consultation or prior notice.

Unfortunately, that's exactly what the PC government continues to give them every day in this House: more broken promises and now a broken promise to even expand the courthouse in Dauphin. They have underspent by 75 per cent the budget that they set out for themselves.

So the question for the Premier is simple: Will she apologize to the people of Dauphin, and will she explain why they should trust this government and its broken promises?

**Mr. Goertzen:** Well, many years ago, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a younger version of myself, when I was the Justice critic, toured the Dauphin courthouse, and it was clear that it needed renovations at that time. In fact, the member who's asking the question was in government at the time. I may have even asked him whether or not they would do the renovations, but year

after year, five years, 10 years, 15 years, the NDP wouldn't renovate the courthouse.

We got into government. We committed to renovating. We then renovated the courthouse. He tabled the documents to show that the renovations are happening, and now he's critical of the things that we're doing that he refused to do when he sat on the government benches, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

\* (14:20)

### **Silica Sand Mine Extraction Project Water Supply Contamination Concerns**

**Mr. Mark Wasyliw (Fort Garry):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, Manitobans know this government is failing our current and future generations and has no plan for how to protect our environment.

Public hearings at the Clean Environment Commission continue again this week into the proposed Sio Silica mine, and has heard from more than 100 people. This site, near Vivian, Manitoba, has local community members worried about the risks that the mine could have on the environment, especially the contamination of their supply of clean and safe water.

What is this minister and his PC government doing to ensure that their water will not be contaminated?

**Hon. Kevin E. Klein (Minister of Environment and Climate):** Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to thank the member opposite for highlighting the fact that we, indeed, are listening to Manitobans—in fact, hundreds of Manitobans. So I appreciate that lob-ball question, because we have taken the initiative, and we, as this government, will listen to the Clean Environment Commission.

And I might remind those across the floor that, in 2003, the NDP ignored the recommendation of the clean environment committee to build a new North End treatment plant, which is the oldest in North America, and they continued to kick the can down the road when it would have only cost \$300,000.

This government is committed to listening to the people of Manitoba and listening to the experts.  
*[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mr. Wasyliw:** You know, how far we've fallen in Manitoba when you have a Minister of Environment and Climate that will not commit to the people of eastern Manitoba that they will have a safe and drinkable water.

You know, Carolyn Whyte, who has called—  
[interjection]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Wasyliw:** —Springfield municipality home for 39 years, was among those who voiced concerns if the project is greenlit by this provincial government. Residents are worried that thousands of proposed wells will increase the risk of contaminating the enviable supply of pristine, quality water from their local 'aquifers' that they rely on.

But this government has been more focused on trying to distract Manitobans from their dysfunction and their past seven years of failures.

What concrete steps is this minister taking to protect the—

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

**MLA Klein:** Thank you again to the member opposite for, again, pointing out that this government took auction.

It was this government and this Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) that said, when the application first came forward, we need an independent body to review it. We're taking that action. We're listening to—as the member said—hundreds of people. We're considering all of the facts before it gets even to the point where regulation would make a decision.

So I want to thank the member again for highlighting that this government listens to the people of Manitoba. We're going to the experts, unlike they did in 2014, when Lake Winnipeg was listed as one of the world's most endangered freshwater lakes and started to dump potash into harbours—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The honourable minister's time has expired. [interjection] Order. Order.

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

**Mr. Wasyliw:** If this minister was listening to the residents of eastern Manitoba, he would rise in his seat today and commit to a safe drinking supply in that part of the 'provin,' but he can't.

Tangi Bell is worried about the risks that this project could create: I think that it's an error of good judgment; that's just not right, she said. This PC government has been making errors constantly for the past seven years, and Manitobans have no trust or confidence that they'll do anything but their own political futures.

What concrete steps is this minister taking to protect the water supply of eastern Manitoba residents?

**MLA Klein:** I want to thank my friend, again, for allowing me the opportunity to stand up and tell Manitobans exactly what we're doing.

We implemented the Clean Environment Commission to do a hearing and listen to all Manitobans. We're not ignoring the Clean Environment Commission, like the members opposite did in 2003; they have us in a very desperation situation today.

But let me remind you of a couple of other things that we've been told that never happened. In 2011, it was the members opposite that promised to eliminate the education property tax for seniors. They didn't—didn't happen, did not happen.

And let's remember the fact that we had the opportunity to address orphan mines. They didn't. We're taking care of that.

So I'm happy to answer the members opposite—

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

#### **Grace Hospital Staffing Levels Patient Safety Concerns**

**Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface):** There's no question that our health-care system is in crisis. The worst sign of it is always when nurses and doctors suddenly have to go public with writing letters.

There's a full-blown crisis at grate—Grace Hospital, where 45 doctors signed a letter, which I table. And they wrote, I quote: The situation has become so severe that some of our section members no longer feel comfortable working at Grace Hospital, recognizing the lack of patient safety which occurs after hours in that building. If—end quote.

If a patient dies because of understaffing, cuts and incompetence at the top, it's nurses and doctors who have to face losing their licences. We'll lose doctors and nurses because this government is ignoring basic safety. This was raised in November.

Why was this critical warning about patient safety ignored?

**Hon. Audrey Gordon (Minister of Health):** It is my understanding that, two weeks ago, the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority approved the hiring of additional physician resources for the Grace Hospital. These additional resources include physician assistants

and a hospital medical officer for the overnight shift, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Our government continues to make record investments in the Grace Hospital, including in the area of staffing. I'm pleased to report that today we've been advised that 60 undergraduate nurse employees have been filled at the Grace Hospital. We are doing our part to bring more physicians into the system; 46 new physicians have been hired—

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

The honourable member for St. Boniface, on a follow-up question.

**Mr. Lamont:** We have to ask again: Why does this government, the WRHA and Shared Health only respond to a crisis once people go public or threaten to? We hear this over and over again. Complaints to supervisors, managers, the WRHA, Shared Health, MLAs, the minister and the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) are all ignored until it makes headlines.

This, again, is from the letter, quote: Patient safety remains severely compromised at the Grace Hospital because of the current inadequate response and commitment to properly fund a position.

This went on for months. This is below the standard of medical care that Manitobans deserve.

After the NDP—there have been dozens of NDP and PC closures, and this is one of the few hospitals with an ER still left open in Manitoba.

Who is responsible for ignoring this request for months?

**Ms. Gordon:** It is my understanding that the authority was given over two weeks ago, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We have a health system governance and leadership that is responsible for working with the various facilities. In the case of Grace Hospital, it's the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority. These discussions happen many times over a number of weeks.

We are pleased that authority has now been given to add these additional physician resources, and we are going to continue to support our health system leaders as they serve the various facilities they are responsible for.

### Grace Hospital Staffing Levels Patient Safety Concerns

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Yes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is not just doctors who say that care at Grace Hospital has been severely compromised.

I table a description from a recent patient: The staffing shortage and overall conditions at Grace Hospital are such that the patient experience has dramatically deteriorated since the NDP WRHA takeover of Grace Hospital from the Salvation Army. And further, the patient experience under PCs' revamping of health care can only be characterized as dismal.

\* (14:30)

This patient's experience was so bad, she says, and I quote: Everyone, don't go here for any reason.

How could this government have let conditions at Grace Hospital reach such a low level?

**Hon. Audrey Gordon (Minister of Health):** I want to pause to thank the health professionals on the front line at the Grace Hospital: the physicians, the nurses, the allied health team, the support workers.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, their—the hospital and facility where they work in has received a lot of negative comments today, but I want them to know that our government is listening. That's why I went right to the front line—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Ms. Gordon:** —to listen to nurses. We are taking steps to support them, we value and appreciate them and we will continue to do what needs to be done to ensure the hospital is properly supported.

### Child Abuse and Exploitation Funding for Initiatives to Combat

**Mr. Len Isleifson (Brandon East):** Crimes against children are the most horrendous crimes imaginable.

Manitobans and police agencies across our province have noticed that child abuse has been more prevalent in recent years. They have called for more resources and changes to how these cases are handled.

On Sunday, the Premier and the Minister of Justice made an announcement addressing calls for this changes.

Can the Justice Minister please tell us about the positive initiatives being brought forward by this announcement?

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** I want to thank my friend from Brandon East for that important question.

Child abuse is one of the darkest, most heinous crimes imaginable, but our Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) and members of our PC team shone a little bit of light into a very dark place with the announcement yesterday of \$2.1 million which will be supporting RCMP, Winnipeg Police Service, Brandon Police Service, First Nations policing, to be at the Toba Centre—the newly developed Toba Centre—to provide wraparound support to ensure that every child in Manitoba who might face that horrible 'trime'—crime gets the support that they need.

This is part of our overall violent crime strategy, contained in the budget. I hope that all members will support this very, very important initiative.

#### **Changes to Agricultural Crown Land Leasing Impact on Small Producers**

**Mr. Diljeet Brar (Burrows):** Manitobans know that this PC government consistently prioritizes themselves and their wealthy friends, whether it's millions in tax rebates sent out to province-out-of-province landowners, selling off social housing units to the highest bidder or contracting out and privatizing the delivery of health services.

Now we hear, from rural Manitobans, that small- and medium-sized ranchers are being squeezed out by this government's failed approach to Crown land leasing.

What is the minister going to do to ensure that large agribusinesses are not able to buy up all the best Crown land leases?

**Hon. Derek Johnson (Minister of Agriculture):** This government is keyed in to what Manitobans want and need. We're balanced in competing our needs and priorities. *[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Johnson:** Under the NDP government, young producers could hardly access Crown lands. This last auction, young—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Johnson:** —bidders took 36 per cent of the units allocated. This government is ensuring access to First Nations where, under the NDP, First Nations groups were not allowed to bid on agricultural land.

We are ensuring that Manitobans are getting what they need, Mr. Deputy Speaker, including ag Crown land. *[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order. Order. Order.

**An Honourable Member:** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Hang on a second. Wait, I have to acknowledge you. Just waiting for it to quiet down.

The honourable member for Burrows.

**Mr. Brar:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, let's talk about young farmers here.

The PCs' approach to Crown lands has failed. They raised rents on Crown lands and stopped unit transfers, which has made it harder for young ranchers to get ahead. And Manitoba's beef herd has declined since 2016. We have heard from beef producers that younger producers are being outbid in the new system, and the fee increases are preventing people from staying in industry.

Will the minister do the right thing and reverse his government's terrible changes to Crown lands?

**Mr. Johnson:** Our government and myself, we have daily consultations with producers and stakeholders.

As a matter of fact, I would like the member to read the article that I tabled the other day, and I'll just refer to it again: It appears that the minister's actually listening to producers and we are hopeful that the consultation process will 'sult' in more positive changes to come.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, under our government, Manitoba producers are getting \$54.8 million back under the education property tax rebate. I hope that member will stand up and vote in favour of this budget.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The time for oral questions has expired.

Petitions? Are there any petitions? I do not see any petitions. Okay.

#### **ORDERS OF THE DAY**

#### **GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader):** Resume debate on the budget, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**BUDGET DEBATE**  
**(Fifth Day of Debate)**

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Okay, to resume debate on the budget motion, the amendment and subamendment, standing in the name of the honourable member for Point Douglas, who has 10 minutes remaining.

And if I can just admonish—*[interjection]*

Order, please. Order, please.

No problem with conversation. The volume needs to be such that I can hear the member who has the floor, so I would just ask that we respect whichever member has the floor. And if there's a conversation that needs to go on or be particularly exciting, maybe take it into the hallway.

The honourable member for Point Douglas has 10 minutes remaining.

**Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas):** The PCs can't be trusted. Manitobans know that, and when it comes to anything related to health care, people are waiting, they are—they've lost their lives. We're talking about Manitobans.

I've raised the alarm on the addictions crisis, which, you know, families have come to us. We know that there's probably going to be higher numbers this year. This government's not being transparent with those numbers.

We know that this government is putting kids into the care of families without giving them proper supports and taking those numbers out of the system. I receive calls every day, emails every day, from families who take in family members but don't have the resources to care for them. And then, you know, call the minister's office, ask for extra support and they don't get it. We're setting families up for failure. So, shame on this government.

Manitobans have lost confidence in this government, and so has their own caucus. One in three of their members are quitting. What does that tell Manitobans? Even their own members don't have confidence in their Premier (Mrs. Stefanson).

So, Deputy Speaker, this budget we will not be voting in favour of. We don't have confidence that this Premier can—or this caucus can, you know, run our province.

So, I want to thank Manitobans for standing up, for raising their voice, for having confidence in our caucus. We will do the right thing, we will make sure

that folks get health care when they need it, where they need it, close to home and not have to pay for it.

Miigwech.

**Hon. Eileen Clarke (Minister of Indigenous Reconciliation and Northern Relations):** If I call you Madam Speaker, please forgive me. I'll ask forgiveness now.

It's an—pleasure to have this opportunity to speak to this '23-24 budget because it is, without a doubt, historic. I've been involved in the political world for a few years now, having done budgets not only in my own business, but municipally and now within this government. And this is a budget like we have never seen before, something we can be very proud of.

\* (14:40)

And I also want to state that, as Minister of Indigenous Reconciliation and Northern Relations, I am happy with the highlight, the amazing opportunities that have occurred within this budget, and they are many.

I met just last week with the group from the Northern Affairs community and shared all these numbers with them, and to say they were excited is an understatement.

They listened attentively as they listened to capital funding as well as special projects, and they asked when these funds would be available to them. It was difficult for me to tell them that it would not occur until the opposition would allow this budget to pass. And they asked what could they do about that, and I said, they can be very vocal within their communities and urge anyone to ensure that they realize how vital it is for this budget to pass.

We hear them loosely say it is an election budget. This is a budget for the people of Manitoba. It is designed after a very worldwide pandemic, when funds were very scarce, and also a previous debt that caused this government a lot of grief. So, in order to get Manitoba up on its wheels and going again, this budget is vital.

Our government also recognizes the north part of this province that was totally ignored previously. We know that the North is going to help grow our economy, and this government is going to do this while working with our Indigenous communities, not in spite of them being there.

Our government is giving \$147.6 million over two years to the Hudson Bay rail line, to the Port of



Churchill. We know the Port of Churchill is key in helping this government grow. And I'm proud to say I was a member of the Hudson Bay roundtable, which goes back to my years in a municipal government. I believed in a Port of Churchill then. I believed in the economy that it would bring to the people of northern Manitoba.

And if the people of northern Manitoba are doing well, all of Manitoba is doing well. I look forward to what's coming in the future with partnerships with the people of the North, which the Indigenous communities are full partners.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have increased investments in mining activities, and for members of this government and the mining community for Manitoba that attended PDAC last week, the response to Manitoba was beyond overwhelming.

I had the opportunity to attend that convention in 2020, just before the pandemic hit. I was, I believe, the minister from—pardon me, the member from Midland and myself were actually quarantined the day after we got back because that was the first that we'd heard that there had been an outbreak of COVID. There was one member, possibly, out of 20,000 people. This year, they boasted, I believe, an attendance of almost 35,000, and Manitoba was a huge highlight there. So we look forward to that.

This government and this—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Ms. Clarke:**—caucus is working with our Indigenous leaders, and they are very good partners. They're working with their elders, knowledge keepers, families and community members to advance shared goals.

Our government's collaborating with the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs to offer non-traditional lending options through First Peoples Economic Growth Fund, and using Indigenous reconciliation initiatives to develop initiatives and advance progress on reconciliation.

And listening to the members opposite, the one thing that I have learned from Indigenous people is, they do not interrupt, they do not speak loudly, they are very respectful—something we do not see from the members opposite.

I also want to take this opportunity to say—thank some very important individuals who were instrumental in working on this historic budget. We are very blessed in this government to have people that take

their work very seriously and do the best they can do for the province of Manitoba.

I'll start with the Treasury Board Secretariat. They're an amazing bunch of people, including the secretary to the Treasury Board. As well as all of the analysts for each department who spend absolutely endless hours researching and working on all the aspects of the information including the projects, special funding and ensuring that we achieve the absolute best balance in spending in all departments for all Manitobans.

I also want to acknowledge the ministers and their departments for the work that they did to bring their Estimates forward. There were lengthy questions, discussions and offer of requests for clarification and additional information. All requests were respectfully and promptly returned to Treasury Board so the 'deshisim'—decisions could be made with the utmost confidence and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they were.

I also want to thank Treasury Board colleagues for the collaboration and sharing of information to reach final decisions for this budget. We can all be very proud, and under the direction of a former MLA colleague, even after a—very long, endless meetings of information and decisions, we always left on a positive feeling that we were doing our best job for the residents of Manitoba. I look forward this budget being passed so that we can continue to improve on health care and see Manitobans grow and prosper.

I'm even more excited, Mr. Deputy Minister, about the future of this province. As a young business owner, I look back to the early days when my husband and I were in business. We started with basically nothing, and we went through lots of hardships. We went through a recession in the '80s. We went through really tough times when we didn't know if we would succeed either.

But hard work and perseverance got us through it. And I'm happy to say we're—we still are business owners today, because my husband has decided to put extra years into his profession as a funeral director, something that he's very committed to.

And although we hear from the members opposite that those of us who are not seeking re-election are tired and—I forget all the names we were called, which is absolutely not true, because if they think that—I know for myself and many of my colleagues, when we are retired, we are not going to be sitting back doing nothing. And they want to be very careful, because you just don't know where we're going to pop up.

But we are not tired; we're far from tired. And we will certainly find our place here in Manitoba, because we've got a lot of experience and—in the Indigenous words, we are the knowledge keepers of this province, and we are going to ensure that the younger generation—which we are very excited to welcome into this House and onto this side of the House—they are also coming with knowledge. They're coming with new knowledge; they're coming with new skills. And I'm personally, just, over-the-top excited about that, because they are going to be a fierce to be dealt with. So, we look forward to that in the days ahead.

So, as I've said, you know, with a background in expenses with businesses et cetera, I think this budget—I can clearly say with a wee bit of authority—that it was well done, and it is a balanced budget for all Manitobans. Nobody has been left out.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, 2016 I was—when I came into this government, there was a very 'spekcific' reason why I agreed to come to this government. And it was because of the almost \$1-billion debt, because the one thing I knew was how to go from a very serious debt, or no money at all—

**An Honourable Member:** Deficit.

**Ms. Clarke:** —deficit, thank you. Yes. To get things back on track.

And that's what this government has done, only seven years later. If it wasn't for COVID, my goodness, I can't even imagine where we be, because we would be soaring.

But anyways, we have turned this province around, and it's going in a great direction. I think if you listen to honest Manitobans who are in business or even those who are less fortunate, there's a lot happening for them, and especially in this budget. And after 17 years of a mismanaged government, three years of COVID, it brought unprecedented decisions from this government. But I'm also proud to be a part of that.

It was difficult. I don't think anybody'll say it wasn't difficult. But we did it, and we addressed it. And a lot of those decisions had to be made quickly. But, COVID is over by most respects, and Manitoba is open for business. I know a good budget when I see one. I know this province in all four directions. We have listened to the people, and we have responded.

Members opposite may call us tired, toxic, cynical—those are the word I heard last week. Well, let me tell you, we're wide awake and ready to move on.

And we will. We've always—in ways that you've never seen before. Some days I actually wish I wasn't retiring because I know the potential of Manitoba and Manitobans. Our stars are aligned, and the negative thoughts that we hear across the way here will not stop us; not for a minute.

Every critic who stands up in QP is angry, and that's not a great waylay to live. We see no team over there; we see no plan.

\* (14:50)

This side of this government is ready to executive this budget. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I encourage the members opposite to think very clearly about what they are denying to the people of this province if they do not support this upcoming budget. They are taking the life out of people and their well-being if they do not support this budget. Manitobans need this financial support.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Jamie Moses (St. Vital):** I want to take this opportunity to put a few words on the record with respect to the budget that we've seen now for a week and had a chance to actually look into a little bit, look into this budget and look into its impacts and the implications of the budget on the people of Manitoba.

And I think when I think about the budget and I think what it'll do, I also go back to, obviously, my constituents. I go back to the conversations I've had with dozens of people and in dozens of community meetings through—over the last few weeks in St. Vital, with seniors, with residents who live in St. Vital, who—many of them are retired and looking for a budget that will meet their needs. You know, a budget that will improve the services that they rely on.

You know, and many of them who are no longer directly attached to the education system are still concerned about the future of the province and looking to ensure that we have a good education system to ensure the well-being of our community into the future.

And so, when I have these conversations, the topic always leads off with their No. 1 concern is—that is the state of our health care and the state of disarray that they seem to see the health-care system in when they experience it personally, or when they see that on the TV or in the news.

They see and are worried about staff shortages, nursing 'sortages', health-care aides and doctors that they, you know, don't see, able to provide service in our province. They're concerned about what that

impact of shortages has on wait times in our emergency rooms, in our ICUs and what that means for the surgical backlog that we're still going through right now, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Manitobans tell me this directly and talk to me about how this government let our health-care system get that bad.

You know, oftentimes, folks think that it's just directly due to the pandemic that we all went through. But that's not the case. It's due directly to the poor decisions and the cuts that were made by this government to our health-care system before the pandemic even began. And those cuts are directly leading to where we are today. Because, as we know, when we starve our system, over time, it will eventually put so much stress on the health-care system that we'll see the cracks that we're seeing right now.

And that is due to no fault of the actual health-care workers who try their best and work with their— with due diligence to ensure the health of Manitobans. Sadly, they have to work in a system that hasn't supported them. That has had mandatory overtime placed on many health-care workers. That has had health-care workers work without a contract for years and years and has had a system that has allowed doctors to work in our system without the proper supports that they would want to see in Manitoba.

And as a result of all of these issues that we're now seeing, we have a health-care system—government that responds. And how do they respond? By trying to fix our problems? No. They're trying to now move the problems over and have Manitobans get their health care out of province or even out of country. That's not going to solve the health-care system—the health-care crisis we're facing in our system here in Manitoba. It's not.

We need to re-invest in our province and build capacity. And even though this government has had seven years to address some of these challenges, they've failed to do so.

And those issues in the health-care system reverberate out into our long-term-care system, as well as to our home-care system. Patients and people in St. Vital and southeast Winnipeg who are trying to get bloodwork done or diagnostic tests now have to go through a private system, travel longer at their own expense just to get bloodwork done when they used to be able to just walk around the corner, get it done at their local doctor's office.

Now these are the specific changes. The lack of access to local health care has a huge impact on the

lives of people in St. Vital, particularly seniors, who may not have the extra money for a cab ride down to a supersite for privatized bloodwork to get done. They might not have the time to wait in line, in any type of weather that we may be facing in Manitoba, just to get their bloodwork done, in a system that did—that wasn't always this way and, quite frankly, didn't have to be this way, and is only this way because of the poor decisions by this government.

And often seniors are worried about the long-term care facility and the issues that we see with home care and how those home-care workers are often pushed to their limit and oftentimes cannot fill in the gaps between shifts and assignments and patients that they are trying to meet the needs of.

And it's because this government hasn't invested in a system which would allow them to be successful in that role. Through no fault of their own they're put in situations where the system, under this government, has set them up for failure.

And who's suffering? Not only are they suffering through their inability to do their jobs to their hearts content, but also the people of Manitoba who rely on these services are now suffering because this government has failed them.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think many people in our province—I know the folks in southeast Winnipeg and the people specifically in St. Vital—are looking for an education system that would support the young people, the students, who are learning and are going to be prepared to be the workers of the next generation here in Manitoba.

But, again, cuts to our education system, despite what the minister might say, has a real impact on the classroom. It means that divisions are looking very seriously at whether they have to cut teaching positions. They've already stripped the cupboard bare when it comes to reducing support staff and administrative staff, EAs, and other services, like mental health supports and co-ordinators. All of these services are getting stripped down and taken away.

And now they're coming to the teachers because the budget is so bare for education and, as a result, it has an impact on students' ability to learn in the classroom. And what we find—what we see—is—what happened is that classrooms get bigger, teachers' workloads get larger year in and year out. The ability for students who might have additional needs or challenges to have their opportunity to get an education and get ahead, as education, after all, is supposed

to be the great equalizer; those folks don't have those opportunities because this PC government is not giving them those opportunities.

And so, after seven years of cuts to health care and education, we have this budget, which does not address—can you believe it, Mr. Deputy Speaker? This budget does not address these main two concerns. It doesn't solve any of those problems in any meaningful or significant way.

And on top of that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Manitobans should know that this budget fails to address child poverty. This budget fails to address the climate crisis. It fails to make life more affordable for renters in Manitoba and, quite frankly, it fails to provide any meaningful supports to fix our health-care system and make Manitoba better.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to just close by also stating that the very important role that immigration plays in our province, and specifically international students who come and study at Manitoba's universities and colleges. And international students have told me that one of the greatest struggles that they have is being able to afford their health care and the toll that paying for private health-care coverage has on them, not just financially but on their ability to access health care.

\* (15:00)

Service providers look at a health—a private health care—care coverage, and say, is this really something that is—that I can look at? They question it and, as a result, many times they ask international students to pay out of pocket up front for health-care services that other Manitobans don't have to pay for. This system right now is not fair for international students.

International students play a huge role in our province. They come and study here with the hopes of making Manitoba a home. And when this government puts in place policies like removing health care for international students not only does it want them to look out of Manitoba for a place to stay and call home, it makes us the opposite of what our slogan is, of friendly Manitoba.

*Mr. Dennis Smook, Acting Speaker, in the Chair*

And apparently, this is what this government has in mind. Apparently, it's their goal to drive international students out of province by policies like this. This is absolutely wrong, and it does not do a service to international students. It does not welcome them into our province. And that is exactly what we need to

be doing to promote international students coming to Manitoba to make our province a better place, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think it's important to note that the Manitoba NDP, the folks on this side of the House, will continue to work hard each and every day for the people of Manitoba. From every corner of this province, we will fight for them. We will fight for all the people who are not represented in this budget. We'll fight for all the people who want to have a say, to want to have better services in the province, to want to be respected, who want to be welcomed into this province.

We will stand up for them, we will fight for them and we will do it all the way 'til the election and beyond.

**Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield-Ritchot):** I would like to first of all to take this opportunity to thank the good people of Springfield-Ritchot for their love and for their support that they have shown myself and my family over the last four years. We have attended parades and dinners and sports events and fundraisers and all kinds of activities in between, whether it's reading in schools or meeting with farm groups and having great conversations.

I'd like to thank the communities of Cooks Creek, Oakbank, Dugald, Grande Pointe, Ile des Chênes, St. Adolphe, Ste. Agathe and, yes, Niverville, the fastest growing community in Manitoba; in fact, the fifth fastest growing in Canada.

All the communities that I've mentioned are growing, they're vibrant and dynamic and they take a lot of time. It's a good thing that, as members of the Legislature, we have 29 days—29 hours in the day and that there are nine days in the week because that's about how much time it takes to get to all these activities. It's very exciting when you represent dynamic communities like I do, and I'm very pleased to represent them.

I would also like to thank two individuals in particular: Joan Golebioski, who is currently out in Oakbank working hard in the constituency, and Cyrus Reimer, also from the constituency office, who happens to be here in the gallery today. I'd like to thank him.

We, of course, have to forgive him; he comes from that downtrodden and economically depressed area called Steinbach but, you know, he comes to

Niverville; he comes to Springfield-Ritchot, for employment where there is a booming economy and vibrant and dynamic communities.

So, we welcome all of those individuals from Steinbach who have to come to Niverville and Ritchot and Springfield for employment, and I thank him for all the work that he and Joan Golebioski do for myself and for the good people of Springfield-Ritchot.

I would like to just highlight that this budget does a lot for Manitobans. To go through it all would take far more than the time that has been allotted to myself so I would like to highlight three things.

Over the years that I've been a member of the Legislature, I've heard a lot about hearing aids and supports for hearing aids for seniors, and our government delivers on that. That is a really, really substantial point that we've made with this budget, and I'm very pleased that is something we are going to deliver on.

I'd also—and this is one of these that is, I think, personal to everybody, because everybody knows someone who is struggling with diabetes. And the diabetes, the insulin pumps for diabetics is huge. And over the years, we've seen a lot of lobbying take place here in this building and on the grounds, and they've been asking for this. And this has been a long march for individuals who struggle with diabetes, and we are pleased to be partnering with them and delivering on the insulin pumps for diabetics, and no age requirement. We think that it was time for this to take place.

The third point I wish to highlight, and again there are hundreds—I've only chosen three—is the \$15,000 basic deduction, which has been something that I have felt has been a real problem here in Manitoba and across Canada. Because really, why should somebody who earns \$15,000 or less, why should they be paying taxes? Those are usually students, part-time workers, single parents, individuals just starting in the economy. Truly, the first \$15,000 you earn should be yours. You should keep it. And it's only right, so we are getting ourselves in line with where the federal government is.

This is a huge benefit for individuals, and those of us who have students in our families. They work hard, they don't earn a lot of money and the fact that they still have to pay some tax, this mitigates it. It's a big step for Manitobans.

So again, hearing aids, diabetic pumps and the basic deduction, I think, are fantastic and it crosses all lines across society.

And I guess the question then is, and I would close with this: Who could possibly vote against seniors, diabetic pumps and working men and women? Who could vote against that? I know the NDP has kind of sat on the fence. They've been on the fence, back and forth, whether or not they will actually support this or not. We are suggesting that there's a very good chance that this NDP will do what the Gary Doer NDP—although, I would argue they're not exactly the Gary Doer NDP—but they will actually vote for this budget like Gary Doer did in '99 for the Gary Filmon budget. We will see.

This is a fantastic budget. It speaks to what is needed there for working men and women. It gives relief where it's necessary.

Once again, thank you Springfield-Ritchot for all the support and for all the love that you've given me. Look forward to seeing you at the doors this fall in the upcoming election.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MLA Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon):** It doesn't give me a lot of pleasure to stand up and talk about this government's budget, because what we've seen from them for the last seven years is talk about how much money they're going to spend, and then hide the fact that they didn't really spend it.

So, we know that they're desperate. We know that everything says they're going to lose—and we're not going to take that for granted, for sure—but this government is so desperate now that the members opposite that haven't said they're quitting, or haven't already quit, are throwing money around in a hope that they'll trick Manitobans. Manitobans aren't going to see through that. They'll take their money, but they know what damage this government has done in the seven years they've been in power.

We know that they can't be trusted. And very specifically, I look at the health facility—or, former health facility—in Lynn Lake that shut the health facility down, basically; sent all the long-term patients hundreds of miles away, away from their family, away from their friends, away from the community that they built. And the excuse that this government gave was, well, it's a staffing issue; we don't have enough nurses.

And as I introduced in the House the other day, a letter from the Lynn Lake health authority, from the

Lynn Lake volunteer group that does things to make sure their hospital is acceptable, they clearly point out that there's a full complement of nurses there. So then the question is, well, if that's the case, why doesn't the government reopen the facility so that long-term-care patients, sick people, can be close to their friends and family. And it comes down to, very clearly, that this government cannot be trusted. They cannot be trusted when they're telling you why they've shut things down. They cannot be trusted when they're telling you that they're going to spend money, because they clearly don't.

We know that that facility should be open. We know that some of those patients who've been shipped away from their home community died alone, away from family.

\* (15:10)

We know that this government, with those decisions, are forcing people to abandon their homes that they've spent 40, 50 years at in Lynn Lake so that they can find a place somewhere where they can be close to their family member, which is just shameful. It's heartbreaking to listen to people, and I've talked to those people personally, and they know that they can't trust this government. Some of them are lifelong Conservative voters that, trust me, won't be voting that way anymore because they know that they've been misled.

Let's talk a little bit about infrastructure budgets that all of sudden the government is running around pretending to throw money around. We know that for the last seven years, they've underspent their infrastructure budget every year. We know that they've gotten rid of people that worked for highways maintenance. We know that they are, like, 30, 40 per cent short of snowplow operators in the North.

And the best that this government could come up to was to say, well, maybe we'll hire back some retired snowplow operators, because they don't want to pay anybody enough money to actually attract new people to those occupations. So the only people that can afford to do those jobs are now people that have a pension already from their 30 years of service.

So, once again, we see that the government can't be trusted to do the right thing. While they say they've started re-staffing, those are temporary moves because people have already retired. They're not long-term positions that they're filling.

We know that when it comes to education, their failed bill 64 was a thing that galvanized a lot of

support against this government because people in those communities, when they looked at what the government was proposing, to create a school division that covered an area from almost the US border to the Nunavut border, that the Frontier School Division was going to be so big and so unruly and lose any kind of local say. So, they finally admitted and had to back-track on that because they realized that was going to be the anchor around their neck come the next election.

But that's only one anchor around this government's neck because health care is the biggest one. We know that, in Flin Flon, for example, thanks to this government, thanks to situations that they engineered, you can't give birth in Flin Flon anymore. You can't have surgery in Flin Flon anymore. Flin Flon hospital is basically a holding facility now where they ship patients from other hospitals that they've shut the services down, while they're waiting to get somewhere else that may or may not exist for them. We know that this government did those things very deliberately.

One of the things that comes about because of those loss of services, particularly in the North, is ambulances that have got, like, 400,000 kilometres on them. But because of this government's cutbacks—budgetary cutbacks—those ambulances don't get the service that they require. Some of them have actually had their safety certification removed. Some of them that are still in use are in such bad shape that they should have their safety certificate removed.

Talking to the people that represent ambulance drivers, we know that a lot of those vehicles don't get the tires changed. So they put snow tires on for the winter and then never get around to changing them next summer because there's nobody left to change them. The VEMA garage in Thompson doesn't have any government workers left in it. If your ambulance needs service now, there's a small facility left in The Pas, or else it goes to Winnipeg.

They have what's called a boneyard in The Pas, where they go and rob parts off an ambulance to try and fix the next one to keep it running. They park that one because it's in such bad shape and pick out the best of the junk that's left sitting there—*[interjection]* Yes. It's a shameful lack of resources that this government has put into those facilities.

Now, we know that the M-H-A-C-P members that work in the labs and are the emergency medical technicians, they haven't had a contract for six years.

They haven't had a raise at—I spoke to the guy in charge at Shared Health one day and said, so, they got all these people that need ambulance trips and yet we don't have enough ambulances. Well, he said, we could train as many people as we wanted but as soon as they get trained, they leave. I said, well, why is that? Well, because, he said, they can make so much more money somewhere else.

Well, wait a minute, who has the ability to fix that? Shared Health and the Manitoba government. They could negotiate proper wage scales for workers so that they stayed in this province, so that they don't abandon this province.

So, while this government is talking about how wonderful they are, all of a sudden, we know that they still haven't addressed those kind of staffing issues that leave us scrambling to find workers for those jobs.

One of the announcements they make in the budget is that they're going to hire some workers to work in the mine permitting offices. Well, the question is, what happened to all the workers that used to be there? Well, quite clearly, this government got rid of them either through retirements, attrition, so that they could save money. They didn't care about actually permitting mines in a reasonable time period.

Now, all of a sudden, there's an election; oh, we better hire some people back there and look like heroes that people can actually get permits when they need them. But we all know that's not what's been done all along.

So, we know home care is a unmitigated disaster under this government. There's a shortage of workers, people are going without care, we've heard of people at—the care finally shows up after the one needing it died.

And what is this government's answer to that? Well, let's privatize home care. We'll put it under self-managed care, which leaves people that are least able to manage that now being in charge of being accountants and tax people and all the rest of it because this government is abandoning the people of Manitoba. The people that need the care the most, they're abandoning with their old mantra of privatization.

So, Manitobans, like I say, aren't going to be fooled. People that have had those cuts affect them aren't going to be fooled into thinking that this is the government that's going to save the day. They're merely aware that this is the government that destroyed most things. Education, health care, they've

destroyed it in this province. Now, it's up to us to try and fix what they've broken.

And we're committed to doing that. We're committed to doing our level best to fix a lot of those things.

So, with those few words, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will—

**Some Honourable Members:** More, more.

**MLA Lindsey:** Well, I'd like to go on and put more but—

**An Honourable Member:** Shortest speech you've ever made.

**MLA Lindsey:** It is the shortest speech I've ever made but—thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

\* (15:20)

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** What an amazing budget, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I think the Speaker—I think the budget that's been tabled is unlike any budget in Manitoba history.

It provides record tax relief for Manitobans at a time when they probably need it most. Everybody knows about high inflation—

**An Honourable Member:** And health care.

**Mr. Goertzen:** —and high interest rates—I'll get to that yet, sir. And, so, absolutely the relief that it provides Manitobans is actually something that the NDP party called for. They said we want to see relief, and this provides record relief.

But, of course, my friend across the way asks about funding for other things. Historic funding for health care, for education, for other social services, new schools—new schools around the province that this budget is providing for.

Of course, when it comes to justice—and sometimes we hear questions—although not very often when it comes to justice from members on the opposite side—and there are concerns and challenges when it comes to community safety.

These investments in this budget won't solve every problem when it comes to community safety, but it goes a long way. We know we need partnerships with the federal government, something we were talking with them about last week, and we saw some movement when it comes to the issue of bail.

Of course, the member for Fort Garry (Mr. Wasyliv) said there's not a reason to change bail, because bail

got tougher under the Liberal government. Of course, even the Liberal government didn't agree with that and they changed their mind last week.

So, we saw the federal Liberal government say there needed to be changes, we saw the provincial NDP governments say there needed to be changes, we saw Conservative governments, we saw other governments and provincial parties say there needed to be—the only party in Canada that didn't believe, and, I suppose, still doesn't believe that there should be tougher bail restrictions are the NDP party in Manitoba.

The only political entity who put it on the record. Of course, the member for Fort Garry (Mr. Wasyliw) has a unique position in the caucus, because he says things publicly that the NDP only think privately, and so we're glad, we're thankful for him for putting those things on the public record.

But \$51 million for protection of communities, child protection—we talked a bit about that today. A warrant unit, downtown community safety program—the individuals you see walking downtown and helping individuals who are in need of support. The Bear Clan in Winnipeg and other parts of Manitoba receiving support. *[interjection]* Well, I think that my friend from Point Douglas is now echoing support for the Bear Clan. We'll see if that translates into support for the budget.

And so, we know that there needs to be a holistic approach. We're providing that holistic approach. Support for police officers, support for those who are on the front lines providing other support—all contained in this budget.

So, historic tax relief, historic support for things like health and education, responding to the needs when it comes to community safety.

But I'm sure the members opposite might say, if they cared, well, then you must be increasing the deficit. If you're doing all these amazing things—if you're reducing taxes, if you're increasing spending in these priority areas in historic amounts—you must be increasing the deficit. But when you look at the documents, in fact the deficit is lower and lower than what was actually projected—lower than what was actually projected.

A historic budget that provides tax relief at a time when Manitobans need it perhaps more than ever, provides support for—historic support for health, education, things like justice more than ever before, and also lowers the deficit. I'm not sure that I've ever seen a

budget in Manitoba history that does all of those things. That has the ability to lower taxes, to invest historic amounts into these key areas and also to reduce the deficit.

Now, there was a leader once of the NDP who understood sometimes that you didn't have to oppose everything. That when you saw something that was so good, you didn't always have to oppose everything. His name was Gary Doer, and he led the NDP for a very long time. I sat on that side and often admired his political skills even though we disagreed on a lot of different policy issues. But in 1999, he actually voted for a Conservative budget.

And if there was ever a budget that this NDP caucus or party should consider voting for—because—and put aside some of the politics, of course, that they would have had on every other budget, because I understand the politics that go into these decisions—but, when you look at a budget that provides Manitobans the tax relief that they need and, in fact, that the NDP were demanding, provides targeted and important investments in health care and education and in justice that Manitobans need and the NDP and others were demanding, and also reduces the deficit, Mr. Acting Speaker. If there was ever a budget that the NDP should support, it would be this one.

And Gary Doer understood that. But this Leader of the Opposition is no Gary Doer, so I'm sure he'll vote against it, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Mintu Sandhu (The Maples):** It's an honour to rise in this House in behalf of my constituents, The Maples, and they have always helped me in all the decisions that I make.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we talk about the budget, budget means—it's a trust vote. Manitobans don't have trust in this government. We have seen this for the last seven years: cuts after cuts after cuts. We can start from health care, education, infrastructure.

What I will start with, actually—I'm sure probably the other side might want to applause this—astronomical plus historical equals election year. Astronomical plus historical equals election year.

So, this is what this PC government is doing. They have never listened to Manitobans. They have completely ignored Manitobans. Even in the 2019 elections, Madam—Mr. Deputy Speaker, they never announced that they will be closing—before the election, they never announced that they will be closing the Dauphin jail. That was their—they just closed that jail after the elections.



And even if you think about the education, or the health care—I'll start with health care. Seven Oaks Hospital ER is closed; 12 ICU bed positions are cut. And during the pandemic, they closed CancerCare outpatient.

And also, we have—even in the question period today about the blood services: Dynacare. We—in the Maples, actually, we don't have a Dynacare for the blood services done in The Maples. We have to go next door in the McPhillips riding. And it is—the seniors standing outside, be it -35°, 45° or plus 45°, and just waiting for their number to be called. This is the legacy of this PC government.

And if you think about education, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I recently attended Seven Oaks School Division's budget consultation. In previous years, because the underspending of the health care, the—Seven Oaks already cut 25 non-teaching positions, 12 educational assistants, summer programming and even the—for the kids, the kids who used to get the bus service within 1.2 kilometres, and now they've increased that to 1.6 kilometres.

And in The Maples, or the Seven Oaks School Division, we have a really, really good programming. We have heritage language classes: Ukrainian, Ojibwe and Filipino bilingual programs. Punjabi bilingual programming is just starting, and on the 14th of March, we will have an open house at the Amber Trails School.

\* (15:30)

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's not just, like—how much the average—if houses average around \$400,000, in the Seven Oaks School Division, we pay around \$2,916 education tax, compared to, let's say, St. James, \$2,322. And if we average the province, it's \$2,376.

So this year's budget, education-wise, the Seven Oaks only got 2.1 per cent increase. Our enrolment is around 3 per cent. So when we talk about this PC government, this is their legacy: underfunding the education, cutting the health care.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I want to quote few of other people who think—especially the voters—what they think about this budget, though. We all know this is an election year budget, and they want to highlight that they care about people, but actually, they really don't care about people. They care about only their jobs, about their friends—rich friends.

I want to quote, Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Manitoba government is attempting to bribe voters using federal money with its latest budget revealed Tuesday. This is in the Winnipeg Sun, and Ryan Stelter is quoted.

And we have a record number of transfers from the federal government this year, 2023—\$1.05 billion extra money, which is a 17 per cent increase. This PC government couldn't even balance the budget with these kinds of transfers from the federal government.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd also like to highlight a few of the previous—actually, last year's budget, where—what they announced and what they really spent on that money.

In Agriculture, they underspent \$94 million; Advanced Education and Training, they underspent \$8 million; Environment and Climate, they underspent \$31 million.

So it doesn't matter what they announce, come—is—actually depends how much money they will be spending after the election, if they are in the power.

But Manitobans are smart. They can see through it. They understand this shell game, that they are—they—the Manitobans cannot be bribed.

And at the end, Mr. Deputy Speaker, once again, I'd like to thank my constituents. They have been helpful all the way around.

And a few of the organizations that work in The Maples, I'd like to thank them too. Seven Oaks Immigrant Services has been really helpful for the people in The Maples, and Seven Oaks Filipino Employees Association, who just recently celebrated their 10th anniversary. Once again, I want to congratulate them on their 10th anniversary.

And also, Manitoba Association of Filipino Teachers Inc., which is in short called MAFTI. They recently—actually on Saturday—had the path to teaching certificates in Manitoba. They are doing really, really good jobs in our neighbourhood, in The Maples, Tyndall Park area. And Khalsa Aid, who is also providing help for those who need it. Recently, they are out in—even though they are around the world, recently you might have seen their videos in Turkey helping people out there.

So, once again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we don't have trust in this government, and Manitobans don't have trust in this government, either. Once again, astronomical plus historical equals election year.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Hon. Obby Khan (Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage):** It is an honour today to rise in the House and speak to Budget 2023.

Plain and simple, this is a historic budget. That's exactly what it is—historic. Investments into making Manitoba better, nobody can deny that.

Now, a vote against this simply says you don't want to make Manitoba better. Is that what member opposite is saying? Plain and simple: historic investments.

The budget addresses needs of affordability, crime, making Manitoba safer, making Winnipeg safer, downtown safer. No one can deny this is needed. Education, arts, culture and sports in our community, and so much more.

Mr. Assistant Deputy Speaker, my colleagues have done a great job talking about the historic investments we're making, but I want to spend a few minutes and talk about how this budget directly affects my constituents of Fort Whyte—all of my constituents of Fort Whyte.

One story that stands out to me is when a family came to me at one of my coffee meet-ups on Friday at McDonalds, where I encourage all constituents to come out and talk if they have any concerns. We get actually a really large turn. It's fantastic. I get to connect with people in Fort Whyte.

And one of them was the concern for low wages, the government-funded community living, disability services and children's services programs. And that's contributed to high turnover, staff burnout and it's a critically important sector that we have to support.

Our government listened, and we have acted. Budget 2023 provides \$81 million to establish an average funded wage of \$19 per hour for all disability government service workers funded by the government.

Now, this family expressed to me how much this affected their family, that it's a tough job, that workers deserve to be paid more. As their MLA in government we listened; we acted.

As soon as that announcement was made I got a phone call that very same day with the mother crying over the phone, saying how grateful she is that this increase in wage will directly make the life of her son better.

That is what this government is doing. We are listening; we are acting.

Additionally, Fort Whyte is home to many seniors. I also do coffees with myself—I don't know if I'm allowed to say my own name or not in the House—I know other people can't—you can't—okay. And, so, I do coffees with myself and other people, and in Fort Whyte, in many senior homes. And almost every day these residents have expressed to me that they do not feel safe in Winnipeg. They do not feel safe leaving.

And this is in Fort Whyte. They don't come downtown. They do not feel safe walking around Winnipeg. Everyone in this Chamber has heard that concern over and over again, and yet on this side of the House we're acting; on that side of the House they're voting against it. That should tell Manitobans where their priorities are.

We have invested more than \$100 million to address the challenges of violent crime, homelessness, across Manitoba. This includes our violent crime strategy—\$51.8 million over the last two years, with \$34.6 million this year.

Our homelessness strategy: \$51.1 million in support of the province; Downtown Community Safety Partnership—an investment of \$3.6 million. I can go on and on and on, on how this budget reflects the needs and desires of Manitobans, and we are acting on it.

Mr. Assistant Deputy Speaker, the budget's also going to affect the children of Fort Whyte and throughout Manitoba. Through investments in education, Manitoba will continue to build stronger communities and provide the necessary building blocks of success.

Budget 2023 includes—everyone listen, because members opposite have a hard time with math sometimes—\$268.5 million in capital expenditures to build, renovate, and expand more schools.

Are they against that? Sounds like they might be. Hopefully, by the end of this, they won't.

Mr. Assistant Deputy Speaker, \$100 million in new funding for school divisions. Manitoba ranks as one of the highest per pupil funding in Canada, and Budget 2023 will ensure that we maintain that position.

\* (15:40)

School divisions will be receiving a 6.1 increase. That's an increase; not a decrease, an increase. That means more money, not less money. Simple mathematics. This investment helps divisions deal with unforeseen cost pressures. This investment is higher than the projected rate of inflation of '23-24 and builds on the historic investment made over the last two years.

A system, Mr. Deputy—I can't make it up; it's so good, it's in—it's literally tabled. It's literally tabled; you can read it. I could present you with a document. You can take it home and read it. If you want, I can read it with you. We could sit down together. Please, I would love to.

It'd be great to engage with members opposite because that's what we're here for. We're here to listen to each other, talk to each other, hear our concerns, like I have the honour of doing in Fort Whyte, and bringing those concerns forward and getting them addressed, like crime, like homelessness, like more-increased wages for our support workers, like immigration. These are all things our government is acting on, and to be honoured to be an MLA on this side we can do those things.

Madam Speaker—sorry, Assistant Mister—Assistant Deputy Speaker, over \$86.2 million—this is great for Fort Whyte—will be going to the Pembina school division in '23-24, \$86.2 million. Our government has always placed a high value on education. Member opposite being a teacher would greatly appreciate this. I really enjoy his questions every day to get on the record all the good things we are doing.

Now, as we've seen in Budget 2023, how this will positively affect Fort Whyte, and I want to talk about, you know, the greater scope of Manitoba and having the honour and privilege of standing up here as the Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage. Mr. Assistant Deputy Speaker, participating in arts, culture, heritage and sport 'activity' enhances the quality of life; no one can deny it. Playing sports, being involved in arts, culture, your community, doesn't matter where you're from, what group you're from, all of these things improve the quality of life, and on this side of the House, we are happy, it's an honour to announce the \$100 million for ACSE funding arts, culture and sport and community fun.

Now, budget '22 committed to this investment of \$100 million. This fund was created to ensure that non-profit community organizations can access the funding to help enhance their facilities' programs. This was desperately needed during the pandemic—coming out of the pandemic, and I am proud that our government acted on that.

Just in November of 2022, we awarded \$260,000 for community celebrations, which bring communities together. Why is that so bad for members opposite? We bring people together—*[interjection]*

I hear the member from St. Johns has the—*[interjection]* I hear the member from St. Johns has some real problems. If the member from St. Johns has a real problem—*[interjection]*

**The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook):** Order.

**Mr. Khan:** —for Manitoba—guys, if that member—if the—*[interjection]*

**The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook):** Order.

**Mr. Khan:** —member from St. Johns has a real—*[interjection]*

**The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook):** Order.

**Mr. Khan:** —problem, I'm sure—if the member from St. Johns has problems, I'm sure that her MLA would be more than happy to sit down and meet with her and discuss any issues she may have.

Assistant Mr. Deputy Speaker, I mean, that's what MLAs are for, right? MLAs are for. Many MLAs host gatherings.

One more minute. I got to go, I got to go.

There was a desperate need for this funding, something that the NDP, for 17 years, neglected. This sector, arts, sport and culture, \$100 million. Our government is acting, so much so that we had set—over 758 applications for over \$200 million. That money is needed now.

So, what does our government do? We act. We support the community. We increased our funding to \$50 million, and we increased it to \$50 million for this year to support our communities. And that's what this budget is about: supporting our community.

I know on this side of the House, we're going to support it. Let's see what the members opposite do on that side of the House.

Thank you very much.

**Ms. Lisa Naylor (Wolseley):** Thank you to my ever-supportive colleagues from the Legislature.

I am so glad to be able to rise today to put some words on the record on this pre-election budget because—and, as always, it is such an honour to represent the people of Wolseley and to be able to speak on their behalf when I stand in this House.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, let's be clear. This is a pre-election budget and it is an attempt to gaslight Manitobans. This government has cut and cut and cut and cut and cut and cut from health care. They've cut public sector jobs. They've cut low-cost housing.

They've cut personal-care-home beds. They've sent big cheques to their rich friends over the past few years while so many other Manitobans are suffering.

They think they can starve the health-care system, starve social services, starve the education system, starve municipalities, ignore the environment and climate change and then, a few months out from an election, they can make a bunch of promises and they think Manitobans will forget. I don't know if they think that Manitobans aren't as smart as they are or have short memories or just aren't paying attention, but I know that's not true.

We all remember the seven years of cuts under Brian Pallister that have continued under this Premier (Mrs. Stefanson). So many members of the Wolseley constituency have a painful story to tell about how they have been failed by the broken health-care system, failed by the government, and they will remember. Families will remember the loved ones who died in personal-care homes needlessly. They will remember waiting for years and years to get a knee surgery.

There's a young girl in my constituency who has been waiting for years to see an eye specialist for a condition that is actually time-sensitive. She and her family will remember how callously they were treated by this government.

The folks who live in tents and bus shelters in my community today who did not live there seven years ago will remember how little this government thought of them.

A government can't just show up at election time and act like Oprah—you get a rebate, you get a rebate, you get a rebate—and then think they can buy back Manitoba's trust. It just doesn't work like that, although I know that's what this government is hoping for.

They're also hoping that folks who are really struggling will be so grateful for the few extra dollars coming their way, they won't notice that the bulk of tax cuts and savings are actually going to the wealthiest Manitobans.

The Canadian centre for policy analysis did an analysis of the provincial income tax changes and found that, quote, the top 10 per cent are slated to get 26 per cent of the total tax savings, equivalent to an average tax cut of \$1,322 for everyone in that top decile in 2024. The average savings of all tax filers will be \$502 a person, while the average savings for the bottom 20 per cent of tax filers will be \$37 per

person. So, the Premier thinks she can buy the vote of the working people of Manitoba at the cost of \$37 for the average Manitoban.

Fortunately, Manitobans are smarter than that and they won't forget what has been taken from them over the past seven years. The Premier and Finance Minister want to run away from the legacy of their predecessors, but the problem, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that they have been here the entire time, implementing Brian Pallister's cuts to health, education and housing. Manitobans will not be fooled or bought by this Premier.

The media coverage on the budget has been pretty clear. Reporters have said there's a lack of plausibility, it's a fairy tale and the Free Press has reported that the PC government is, quote, spending recklessly to paper over the cracks in health care, education and social services caused by years of below-inflation funding increases.

Even the Winnipeg Sun has been clear that this budget is, quote, exactly what one would expect from a party fighting for its political life seven months before a scheduled election.

I was reading with interest a recent critique of this government's lack of investments in housing. Doug Smith is a Wolseley constituent and he has a book forthcoming this spring called property wrongs: the seventy-year fight to public housing in Manitoba. He published an article on this very issue last week, and I'd like to share an excerpt from it.

\* (15:50)

In the article, he reviews the important change that the NDP Schreyer government made in 1970 so that municipalities' costs for housing were greatly reduced. According to Mr. Smith, in 1970, the Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation committed itself to building between 900 and 1,000 units of public housing in the coming year, almost double what had been built in the previous decade. The following year, 2,409 units of public housing were put into construction. These included seniors and family housing. Public housing was built in Selkirk, Carman, Brandon, Morris, The Pas, Flin Flon, Winkler, Killarney and Swan River, as well as Winnipeg. The scale of increase in the investment in construction is staggering. From an investment of \$3,273 in 1969 to \$31,499,744 three years later in 1972.

The funds to pay for this expansion came in part from the federal government. And, as Mr. Smith noted, federal funding had been available since 1949,

but it took an activist provincial government to enable the construction of public housing, just like it's going to take an activist provincial government to truly enable the construction of public housing this time around.

Mr. Smith went on to say that those who believe that the private sector or the 'non-profit' sector on its own can provide affordable housing for all are captives of their own ideologies. What is required is the borrowing power of the 'compined' federal and provincial governments to leverage the money to build housing and Rent Assist to allow low-income people to pay affordable rents and capable management to keep the buildings in good shape.

On at least two occasions in the past, government in Canada has demonstrated it has the capacity to create affordable housing on a scale that has meaningful impacts. The politics of austerity have blinkered our vision. Demands for the construction of 1,000 units a year are not unrealistic. Indeed, there is no reason why the governments of today cannot do what the governments of 50 years ago accomplished.

But, instead of making life more affordable and helping the homeless folks in our communities, this government sold almost 1,000 Manitoba Housing units to the private sector and transferred another 800 units for private management. Until this pre-election budget, they had not committed to any affordable housing.

I guess it remains to be seen if they will follow through on this budget's housing commitment, or if it will be like the 1,200 promised personal-care-home beds: just another broken promise from this government.

Manitobans have long ago stopped believing this Health Minister or the previous, failed Health minister. Despite a windfall of transfers and health dollars from the feds, this PC government's budget won't make up for seven years of cuts and the costs of high inflation. This government underspent by tens of millions of dollars on seniors care and mental health. Funding for home care, long-term care and community care is below inflation. That's less money for seniors, families and community health clinics, like Women's Health Clinic and Nine Circles.

We cannot forget that one of their very first moves of this government was to kill hundreds of millions of necessary investments in our hospitals, health centres and community clinics, and now they're

asking Manitobans to trust them to fix the system that they broke.

Budgets for health care, infrastructure, for hospitals and health facilities has been underspent a combined \$816 million since 2016. That's \$816 million less than what they themselves pledge to spend.

You know, they closed Misericordia urgent care in Wolseley. This is an urgent—this was an urgent-care facility in a neighbourhood where almost everyone walks or takes the bus. While folks came to Misericordia from other communities, it was an essential service for the low-income and primarily rental neighbourhood in which it was located. Now, for urgent-care services, people must travel at least 20 kilometres round trip, spending \$40 or more on taxi costs.

Is it any wonder that some folks end up at the closer ER instead? This government broke the system, and now they have ads blaming people for going to the wrong place, which is just another way they do continue to gaslight Manitobans.

This PC government has also ignored rural and northern health care for years and cut so many programs they've run rural health care into the ground. Forcing emergency room closures at Glenboro and Eriksdale; there's a new closure coming from Carberry; and after six years of PC government, rural residents still fear for their ER's future.

Just last year, the PCs were still forcing cuts on hospitals, even during a pandemic. Prairie region, Northern and Southern Health each had over \$2 million worth of cuts. In the face of a physician shortage, a nursing shortage and a shortage of allied health workers, this government continued to cut, cut and cut. They have disrespected health-care workers from their first year in government, and thousands of allied health-care workers have been without a contract for five years, and some of them for seven years.

That's working through a pandemic, and some of them for the entire time that this government has been in power have been working without a contract. But paring—paying fair wages is not more important to this government. And recruiting and retention—as I'm losing my train of thought, but paying for where—fair wages is not important to this government, and neither is recruiting and retention.

In addition to health care, the PC government cannot be trusted with our children's education. Just last year they were still cutting education funding. The Winnipeg School Division and Pembina Trails were

forced to cut programs such as all-day kindergarten. Seven Oaks announced a cut recently for 28 educators, and Brandon is having to cut 11. The result continues to be that there are fewer supports for students. We need a completely different approach focused on what kids need in the classroom.

By cutting education property taxes and cutting provincial funding, they have been cutting school divisions off at the knees for the past seven years. They think that one-time funding for innovative ideas or a small amount of money invested in improving absences will make a difference, but they refuse to actually listen to educators and they refuse to feed children, both things that would go a long way to make a difference in children's education.

And school boards aren't the only level of government that has had to do more with less, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The government just committed more money to municipalities after a seven-year funding freeze. The current Winnipeg mayor, Scott Gillingham, stated that long term, the City of Winnipeg really needs a new funding formula, one that is based on growth, is predictable and incentivizes the City of Winnipeg to invest in our economy.

Sadly, municipalities know they can't count on this government. Sudden election-year windfalls can't make up for the damage they have caused with the seven-year freeze and their refusal to listen to municipalities. Cuts to municipalities have also slowed down adoption of things like electric transit or comprehensive food-waste programs. The environment has never been a priority to the PC government, but in addition to doing nothing meaningful on climate change, they've actually stood in the way of municipalities doing their part as well.

Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, this budget will benefit wealthy Manitobans and corporations. It will not fix the public systems that this government has broken. It will not guarantee someone will get the health care they need when they need it. Manitobans want a bigger investment in public services; they want our health-care system to be fixed. They want us to address climate change, and they want ministers that will answer to them and not run away when asked tough questions.

\* (16:00)

Manitobans want a change of government, and Budget 2023 will not distract them from this goal.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Hon. Jon Reyes (Minister of Labour and Immigration):** Earlier this year, I was appointed by the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) as the Minister of Labour and Immigration. Throughout 2022, I served as minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Immigration, and I want to thank those department officials and staff for their hard work, all of 2022, for the betterment of all Manitobans.

*Mr. Andrew Micklefield, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair*

I look forward to working with new and current department officials and staff in the Labour and Immigration and to accomplish great things throughout 2023.

Our government's 2023 budget is providing historic help as well as making historic investments for all Manitobans, including workers, families, businesses and newcomers. We're helping them make ends meet. Budget 2023 is delivering on our government's commitment to make constituencies like Waverley strong and vibrant.

Budget 2023 will benefit my constituency of Waverley. I'm so honoured to be your representative for the past seven years and hopefully for many years to come. We have a diverse newcomer and immigrant population, growing numbers of small businesses and entrepreneurs; new, affordable housing; new K-to-12 schools being built, including the new Bison Run School, which opened on January 30th, to over 800 students in K-to-8 in Waverley West and increasing the number of international students.

I'm proud of my Waverley constituents. Individuals such as Yan Jiang of the Winnipeg Chinese Senior Association; Marney Campbell, a community leader helping Ukraine families; Jose Tomas, a Filipino trailblazer involved with basketball and youth sports in the past; Divya Sharma and Vaibhav Varma, two young leaders in their communities; and Glenn Nanka and his work with special needs individuals through sport; and many, many others.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, before I talk about Budget 2023 and what our government is doing for hard-working workers, families and newcomers, I want to remind Manitobans and put on record what the members opposite, the NDP, did during their 17 years.

They were the tax-and-spend NDP 16 of 17 years, raising taxes on hard-working individuals and businesses. They raised the PST, but they said they would not. They left our government with a financial mess during the early days of our tenure in government. We are fixing the finances, repairing the services and

rebuilding the economy. We are now at a point where our government has turned the corner despite two years of the COVID pandemic.

They wasted so much of taxpayers' dollars, including a bipole line that added \$1 billion to its cost, running down the longer and more expensive west side of the province; paying \$700,000 severance to NDP staffers who rebelled against Greg Selinger and wasting \$50 million on a student aid software system that students could not even log into.

We cannot trust the NDP and do not want to return to the dark days of the NDP. They have no plans, no vision for our province moving forward.

Our government's Budget 2023 is putting more money in the pockets of hard-working Manitobans. Unlike the tax-and-spend NDP and the out-of-touch NDP-Liberal federal coalition, our government is lowering taxes, reducing the tax burden, have lowered the PST from 8 to 7 per cent, giving 50 per cent of the education property tax rebate to hard-working Manitobans, and reached a balanced budget after many years of the NDP not being able to accomplish that feat.

Budget 2023 is providing historic help for Manitobans. We're helping them make ends meet. Total tax and affordability measures to more than \$1.8 billion between 2022 and 2024, with about \$5,500 in total savings for the average two-income family by 2024; increasing the school tax rebate to 50 per cent on farm and residential properties, saving the average homeowner \$774 this year.

Changes to the personal income tax and basic personal amount will save 12,000—oh, sorry—\$1,250 for an average two-income family; increasing the minimum wage in April, and by October it will be \$15.30 per hour.

We are saving money for hard-working Manitobans, not wasting it like the NDP did during their 17 years.

Our government continues to listen to Manitobans. We are taking actions on many fronts, including standing up for workers, employers and management. That is why the minimum wage will go up to \$14.15 per hour on April 1st, 2023, and to \$15.30 on October 1st, 2023.

We recognize that, because of high inflation in recent months, it is increasingly difficult for Manitobans to make ends meet. We are making life more affordable, and increasing in minimum wage will help relieve some of the economic pressures on workers, help lessen the impact on small business. We are here to support

hard-working people while providing stability for Manitoba businesses. We are working for the workers, unlike the NDP did in their 17 years.

Manitoba is a home of hope. Immigration is key component of our economy and our labour supply plan. And immigration is key priority of our government under the leadership of our Premier (Mrs. Stefanson). Throughout our history as a province, Manitoba has been a destination for those fleeing conflicts around the world, seeking peace and the opting for a better life for their families.

Manitoba continues to welcome and support newcomers to our province. Last year, we welcomed more than 16,000 newcomers to our province, and we had a record 6,367 nominations in 2022 coming to Manitoba under our Provincial Nominee Program.

Recently, after months and months of advocacy with the federal government, Manitoba will be receiving a 50 per cent increase, totalling 9,500 nominations for 2023. This is a great victory for Manitoba, which means more newcomers can come to friendly Manitoba. And I am proud of the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program, a flagship program that was created back in 1998 by a PC government. A generation later, our PC government is improving and enhancing the program, something the NDP could not do in their 17 years.

The final report of the Manitoba Immigration Advisory Council was released on February 14th and had a total of 70 recommendations to improve and enhance the Provincial Nominee Program. I can share some of the high-level recommendations of the report, but I encourage you to read the final report at [immigratemanitoba.com](http://immigratemanitoba.com).

One was work with the federal government to increase MPNP allocation to 1 per cent of Manitoba's population per year and ensure that Manitoba has sufficient immigration staff to maintain processing times of six months or less. We received 9,500 allocations—check.

Conduct, both regular and special expression of interest, draws based on regional labour market needs and adaptability factors—well, I can tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the last three draws we have done are normal draws on top of special draws based on sectors that require that specialized skilled labour.

And expand the provincial funding for newcomer community and to region supports—I can tell you that funding has doubled; \$7.1 million is now going into newcomer settlement support.

Our government is taking action on the immigration file and modernizing the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program on two occasions; something, again, the NDP took no interest in doing—their 17 years in office.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, our government, under the leadership of our Premier (Mrs. Stefanson), continued to take proactive steps to recruit and retain internationally trained nurses and health-care providers to relocate to Manitoba. And I recently participated in the recruitment mission trip last month alongside a delegation from Shared Health, the regional health authorities, including immigration staff and recruiters. I am pleased that the recruitment sessions were successful, and well attended and the hard-working staff at Health and immigration made it all possible.

Over 350, who are either nurses, licensed practical nurses or health-care aides, were offered letters of intent to come to friendly Manitoba. And through our government's health human resource action plan, it will contribute to the 2,000 health-care providers and over \$200 million of investment to retain, train and recruit health-care staff across the province.

At the recruitment sessions, there were hundreds that drove several hours and many kilometres, sometimes even right after work shift, to attend the sessions to hear about what steps they can take to bring nursing skills they have gained in the Philippines and apply to Manitoba.

Those who attended the sessions have made the choice to seek a better option to Manitoba and to work and prosper in our great province. The message I gathered from the Philippines recruitment missions was clear: that Manitoba is a destination of choice for trained health-care providers from around the world.

That is why for immigration we are doubling the amount of newcomer support, which I mentioned, from \$2 million to \$4 million this year, for a total of \$7.1 million so that more organizations can receive project-based funding to help settle newcomers to the province.

The newcomer support funding is one of the key recommendations in the final report of the Immigration Advisory Council, and I am proud that our immigration partners and service providers are taking proactive steps to ensure that all newcomers coming to Manitoba receive provincially funded settlement programs and services. It is organizations such as Manitoba Start, under the leadership of executive

director, Judith Hayes, and her team that continue to put newcomers first.

Stay tuned for the list of funding groups and organizations later this month. We are taking action and providing hope for newcomers coming to Manitoba.

In closing, I'm proud of Budget 2023 and our government's efforts to provide historic help to all Manitobans.

\* (16:10)

Will the members opposite vote against historic investments that help workers, families, businesses and newcomers throughout Manitoba? I hope the members opposite stand with our government and pass Budget 2023.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Ian Bushie (Keewatinook):** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for an opportunity to say a few words on the 2023 budget.

Before I begin, I do want to acknowledge some comments that were made a little earlier in the day from the minister for Indigenous and northern-reconciliation, northern development. When she referenced Indigenous compliments in this House and referred to Indigenous members on this side of the Chamber and was telling us how to act and telling us how we should act and telling us how we should be and telling us the things that we should say and not say in this Chamber. And that was very disrespectful from a minister—in particular, a minister of that department—to be able to say that and talk down.

But that's kind of the norm; that's the normal thing that's been said time and time again. But I did want to clarify that that talk-down approach from that minister in regards to things said, the way Indigenous members on this side of the Chamber are in this Chamber and how they say—how they react and how they talk and how they bring themselves forward. So that was very disrespectful on behalf of that minister to be able to do that.

But in regards to the budget, Mr. Acting-Mr. Deputy Speaker, nobody believes this government. And it's just the reality.

Nobody believes it and nobody trusts it. You know what one thing that, through this whole process and through the selection of the Premier and through that whole process they went about—and I will point out, the Premier is not selected by the people of



Manitoba. Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) was selected by their inner circle, inner caucus and inner Cabinet and they're kind of—they dictated how that was going to go. So that never went to the people of Manitoba.

And also, one thing you'll never hear from the Premier: you'll never hear the Premier get out there and say, do you know when I was the Health minister, we did this great thing. Because there was no great things done when the Premier was the Health minister. It was cut, cut, cut. And Manitobans suffered. Manitobans suffered at the bedside. Manitobans suffered all over Manitoba.

And again, here they are today, now trying to fool the people of Manitoba into believing they've turned over a new leaf, this is a brand new caucus, this is a brand new Cabinet, this is a brand new—we've turned a page from Brian Pallister, whose name they never say, by the way. They never say that name. Why is that? They sat here in 2016 and touted Brian Pallister as the best thing this province has ever seen. They tout him out again in 2019, say he's the best thing that Manitoba has ever had.

But it's almost like—I believe the movie is Beetlejuice; don't say his name three times or he's going to show up here. But don't do that, don't do that. You know, and it's probably on the wall in the caucus room: Do not say this. Make sure you promise this before you leave the room: Do not say the word Brian Pallister, do not say the word Scott Fielding, do not say the word Cameron Friesen. That's another name they don't want to say in this Chamber, they never want to talk about Cameron Friesen.

But the fact of the matter is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, through this budget process and leading up to this budget process, Cameron Friesen was the Finance minister. Cameron Friesen was a failed Health minister, failed Justice minister and a failed Finance minister. And you get to the point, then, if he was part of this process and he's the bluest of the blue Conservatives, and Cameron Friesen did not even believe in this budget. Cameron Friesen says, you know what, I—we can't do this. We—Manitobans will not believe us. And caucus and the Cabinet are saying, no, no, no, we're going to do it. What does Cameron Friesen do? Can't do it, I'm out of here. See you later.

And that's great. That's great for all of us, that's great for the people of Manitoba because we all know, as the failed Health minister, Cameron Friesen, what he did to the health-care system. The cuts he made to Justice that they're—they think they're going to try and get over now and tell people, oh, no, no, now we're the

justice government of the day. Well, no, you had failed Justice minister in Cameron Friesen as well. Again, a name they won't say, time and time again.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the reality is Manitobans are not going to be fooled here. Manitobans in 2016 came—this government was knocking on their door saying, oh, we're the government of the—we're going to fix everything. So what did they—they gave them an opportunity. You know, what did they do? You know, they get in the—election day, you know, they voted for this PC government. And then what happened? Cut, cut, cut.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, 2019, again, PCs are knocking on the door, get voted in: cut, cut, cut, cut, cut.

So that thousand dollars that those Manitobans may have had in their pocket in 2016 was nickel-and-dimed away: \$10 here, \$20 here, \$50 here. And all of a sudden, here we are in 2023, that thousand dollars they had is maybe a hundred bucks. And now this government is going to come back and say, oh, we're going to put 500 more dollars in your pocket. The reality is, that's half of what I had when this government took over.

And the reality is, Manitobans are smart. Manitobans will understand exactly what that is. Trying to go about—trying to buy Manitobans' votes—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Bushie:** Trying to buy Manitobans' votes with their own money.

And what are they doing? They're going hat in hand to Ottawa, saying: We don't have enough money. We're struggling here in Manitoba. Give us more so we can give it away.

They're not taking that money to fix the health-care system, fix the justice system, to fix education. They're using that to try and buy themselves back into government.

So all those members and Manitobans that received \$225, \$275, what are they going to do with that? They're going to sign it over, because they have to pay an increased hydro bill. It doesn't mean anything for them when they go to the grocery store, when they go out there to try and buy clothing for their kids, when they go out there and try and get around Manitoba and now have to pay for health care. You hear time and time again that Manitobans now are having to trade in their Manitoba Health card for a credit card because of this government, and they now

have to pay for things that they should be entitled to from this government. And it's unfortunate.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this government does not even believe in themselves. They're running to the hills. They're running to—as the Finance Minister pointed out—come join me at Spruce Woods while we sit here and retire, because I don't—the Finance Minister does not even believe in his budget. He does not even say, I'm going to—for the 12 months of this budget, I'm going to be a part of this. No. And he's not the only one. There's members opposite that are saying we don't believe in this, because we're not going to be here. We don't have to account for what we're doing. We don't have to answer for these empty promises, because we know we're not going to be here. And that's just shameful, for them to be able to try and fool Manitobans into thinking this is a great thing, when you don't even believe it yourself.

So they'll sit there and they'll try wedge issues and say, oh, the members opposite should vote for this, because of whatever reason they try and spin.

But the reality is Manitobans do not believe them. Manitobans, when they come to this Chamber and this building, they don't even get their phone calls answered. They don't get their emails answered. The doors are locked. This open-door policy that this government claims to have, it's only to a select few.

And Mr. Deputy Speaker that—the reality is, these things that come out there—*[interjection]*—and I notice that the Education Minister is chirping from his seat, and he had the opportunity to speak, right. While he tried to fool \$10-a-day daycare to Manitobans, and that's not the reality. If a Manitoban went to the daycare with their \$10 bill and they said, here, I'm going to come every day and this is exactly what I'm going to pay, what are they going to be told? I'm sorry, the minister did not tell you the fine print. That doesn't count every day. That's not the—that's not exactly what that means. It doesn't mean \$10-a-day daycare all day, every day, 365 days a year. It means exactly what the minister wants it to believe—and wants them to mean.

So he comes forward, and—keep in mind, this was also the minister that touted bill 64 as the best thing ever. Including the current Finance 'minner,' who was out there saying, oh, the—bill 64 is the best thing for Manitobans. Well, there came a day where Manitobans said, no, that—enough is enough. The so-called vocal minority on that issue.

Well that same vocal minority is also saying this budget is bad for Manitobans. But again, this government is saying no, no, no, this is exactly what we're going to do.

Again, who was that? Who's driving that? This Premier (Mrs. Stefanson), this Premier who was sitting there at the right-hand side of Brian Pallister, pushing all—forward that agenda. That agenda's still here today. Those ministers are still there today. Those minister appointments by Brian Pallister are still there today. But again, they won't recognize that. They won't acknowledge that.

They try to say, we've turned a page from Brian Pallister. That's not happening. It's reflective in every day. You see, legislation come from this government every single day and that's exactly those fingerprints and that agenda of Brian Pallister and that government. They don't talk about that. They don't talk about these ministers that are—these ministers and these MLAs from the PC caucus that are running for the hills because they don't believe in what's going on there.

**An Honourable Member:** It's called retirement.

**Mr. Bushie:** When they sit there, they talk about—well, if they're in retirement, then they're off working somewhere else already.

The minister talks about we're going to move on, we're going to move forward. And I believe the minister said earlier: but watch out, you never know where we'll pop up. And it's clear, it's like Whac-A-Mole then, it's exactly what's going to happen when these ministers keep popping up other places because they don't believe in what's happening here.

\* (16:20)

They can't even convince their own caucus what's happening here, and that's exactly what happens—from that Finance minister, who was part of the budget process—and they tried to spin it to say it was a great thing, he was going to leave anyway, he was going to do whatever.

But in the middle of that process, Cameron Friesen did not believe in the spin that was going on here. He did not believe what was going to happen. He did not believe that this PC government was going to be able to fool Manitobans, and he was right.

They're not going to be able to fool Manitobans because Manitobans know exactly what's going on here. They know exactly what's happening. They know exactly what this government is trying to do.

They're trying to spend, spend, spent to buy their way back into government. And they know that if they ever, ever, ever get re-elected, they're going to sit there, cut, cut, cut, cut again. And they're going to go over and over and say, you know what, that was something we did just to get—to achieve what we want to be able to do.

So they talk about exactly—oh, we're the greatest thing, we're going to do the—all this stuff, we're going to be the best thing that ever happened to Manitoba. But the reality is, Manitobans know. The Manitobans know exactly what this budget is about. They know these so-called tax advantages in here are not going to help most Manitobans. They're going to help their friends. They're going to help exactly who they decided to help. Again, in the fine print—just like \$10-a-day daycare—in the fine print. We'll look in the fine print.

And I know the members opposite—I know there are some there. *[interjection]* Swan River is chirping from his seat, probably wondering who has to quit before I become a minister, and the short answer is probably everybody—but the reality, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the fact that—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Bushie:** —they're sitting there chirping away because they don't believe in themselves—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Bushie:** —so they're trying to shout us down for saying exactly what this is going to be. For exactly what this is—attempt to do, and its attempt to buy Manitobans, its attempt to buy their vote.

So they're not doing everything they can. And I would actually respect this budget if this government was doing all they can with the money that they have, but they're not. They're going hat in had to Ottawa, saying, we need more money for health care, we need more money for education. Then, when it comes here, they're not even spending it on health care. They're not spending it on education. They're spending it on themselves, trying to get themselves elected. Trying to say we need four more years or three more years or whatever it may be whenever they may call an election. And trying to say this is what we need, but the reality is they're tired. And Manitobans are tired of this government as well.

And the reality, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is this budget is about confidence and trust, and Manitobans

have no confidence and have zero trust in this government. And with that being said, there is no way we can support this budget, because it is a matter of trust and it is a matter confidence, and I have zero trust and zero confidence in this government.

Miigwech.

**Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River):** Budget 2023 reflects the priorities of every Manitoban. This is truly an historic budget, and we listened to Manitobans and our PC government delivered.

Manitobans have faced unprecedented challenges over the last three years, challenges that required unprecedented action. Manitoba's recovered faster and has emerged stronger than ever. Budget 2020—or, '23 invests nearly \$2 billion in new funding to provide historic help for Manitobans. These investments will make our streets safer, heal our health-care system, make our communities stronger and create opportunities ahead for every Manitoban.

Budget 2023 is not a band-aid solution like our—like the members opposite would put in place, but it provides historic help for Manitobans that will shape the future of the province for generations to come. And it'll keep our children and grandchildren in this beautiful province that they will be proud to call home for the generations to come.

The new and enhanced tax measures will better align personal income taxes with the Canadian average. And I know the member from Keewatinook was referring to—for the rich friends and stuff like that.

No, when somebody in a \$30,000 bracket will pay 23 per cent less taxes under this new alignment, which is going to put substantial money into their pockets and make living much more affordable. The tax measures will allow average families to keep more of their income and will—or attract interprovincial migration to grow the economy.

Bringing a balanced approach that addresses the root causes of crime while cracking down on violent crime, funding to implement \$51.8 million in violent-crime strategy over two years, providing support for police services as well as resources and funding for protection services to create additional capacity to address crime.

Fifty million dollars in homelessness strategy, \$17.3 million in year 2 of 5 towards the mental health road map. And, again, it's addressing the problems.

We want to help these people get off of their addictions; it's important to do it. It's not important to enhance it, like the members opposite would do.

Nine point four million for 1,000 new addiction treatment spaces. This is really important. Investing \$7.9 billion in health-care services in Manitoba, \$664 million more than last year, a 9 per cent increase.

And I know that the member from Keewatinook, the member from Thompson, the member from The Pas-Kameesak, we in the North, we know that there's, you know, diabetes is quite prevalent, like all over Manitoba. And what would their constituents say if they knew that they were denying the opportunity for them to regulate their insulin levels?

You know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I get emotional talking about that and thinking about how they're denying that people because I had an uncle who passed away who I saw have his toes amputated, and then he had to have both his legs amputated, and it was because he could not regulate his blood sugar levels. So this is so important for those people. And, you know, they do not want to support this budget, and I just find that absolutely appalling.

A hundred and—

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

**Mr. Wowchuk:** A hundred and thirty million dollars through diagnostic 'surjil'—or surgical recovery task force; \$15.9 million to advance seniors strategy; on track to creating 2,600 affordable child-care spaces; \$76 million to make \$10-per-day child care a reality to this year. And we know that all those young couples that have to pay five and six and up to \$700 prior in child care per month, that did not leave a lot of money on the table, and this is going to make it affordable.

And when they talk about the rich, that's false. My constituents keep on saying to me, they said, how can they keep lying in the House about that? And I said, well, I said it's putting false information on the record, and that's what that's all about, and that—we hear it every day in this House from the members opposite.

Providing \$81 million to establish a funded wage of \$19 per hour for all disability service workers funded by government. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the list goes on and on. Investments into the growth, mining and natural resources sector. Over \$65 million more in post-secondary institutions and caps to university tuition increases at 2.75 per cent for Manitoban students.

Once physical—or fiscal balance is achieved, the government will direct its efforts to gradually reducing

provincial debt. Between 2016 and 2024, we will see health-care spending increase by 22 per cent, or \$1.4 billion; education spending by 23 per cent, \$1 billion; family spending by 25 per cent, to \$0.5 billion.

A huge thing in Manitoba is the BPA will be increased to \$15,000 for this tax year. And as I said, 23 per cent less taxes for that middle-class \$30,000-a-year earning. They are ecstatic about this, and those members opposite want to hold that and they want to deprive Manitobans of this money so they can grow this province.

Also, three—or up to \$524 saving per taxpayer compared to 2022. Manitoba jumped—or vaulted, basically—from the third lowest to the fourth highest by this change. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we're getting the job done. We're providing tax relief to Manitobans.

I hear members opposite talk about trust. Well, I just want to share something about trust. There's a couple things. I trust the NDP to continue to raise taxes like they raised the PST and 14 tax hikes in the 17 years in power. I trust the NDP to close ERs in rural hospitals like they did 18 times in rural Manitoba hospitals. Shame.

\* (16:30)

I trust the NDP to not push this province towards being a leader in the future, because their leader has signed a Leap Manifesto that says he's going to leave it in the ground. I don't trust the NDP and neither do Manitobans, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

This historic budget by our PC government is what Manitobas at—Manitobans asked for and what our PC government delivered: making streets safer, healing health care, increasing funding for education, stronger communities, tax relief and opportunities ahead, and all while maintaining fiscal responsibility, unlike the spendP.

Thank you.

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood):** I'm very pleased to speak to this last budget of this government.

And I think probably they've spent a lot of time trying to figure out why it is they're so unpopular with the public. And I have to say that it's pretty obvious, because all you've got to do is look at when they first got elected back in 2016, and the premier of the day was totally tone deaf, especially in northeast Winnipeg, when he announced that we were going to close the ER at Concordia Hospital.

And that didn't make any sense, really, to the—anybody up there, because the population had doubled over the last, you know, 25 years or so and, if anything, we should be looking at an expansion. That was the kind of understanding that we had. So when we started to campaign against the closure, in the first year, he didn't back down at all, and after the first year, he announced that there was going to be a clinic; they were going to turn the whole ER into one big clinic. And after we put up many hundreds of signs in the area and caused them a lot of grief, I would think, they backed off.

And just couple of months before the election, they backed off and they made the announcement that it was going to be an urgent care. So the issue really boils down to—and, you know, governments do this all the time. If you knew in advance how much pain you were going to put yourself and your party through, you wouldn't probably embark on a lot of the decisions you made.

And I've been around long enough where I've seen governments, you know, including my own, basically reduce their polling numbers down to single digit over certain issues, and then at the end of the day, retreat and back off. And, you know, I've—they've been successful, actually, doing that, once or twice, but sometimes not so. But the first impression of this government actually goes back to the previous premier, Brian Pallister, and how he acted regarding those ER closures not only in northeast Winnipeg, but other parts of Winnipeg as well.

And they are now—even though he's happily sitting in the sun in Costa Rica probably, at this point—they are the ones that are suffering because of his legacy. So, now, what are they doing? They've run into a situation where they've found themselves with a good economy, good employment numbers, but even so, we're looking at what, 3.6 per cent growth this year, but a projection next year of only, like, 0.6—or half a per cent. So they know they got a very limited time frame here.

All this money is rolling in from Ottawa, coming out of nowhere, and they got to be really happy that they've got one, you know, last chance.

But you know, they have this lingering problem: people's memories. You know, it hasn't been long enough for people to forget what they're really all about. And people—and I can tell you, I've talked to quite a number of people—have had these free cheques and they're happy with their cheques, by and large. Some of them are still waiting for their cheques. And

I don't know that any of them are going to be voting for them, but nevertheless, it's an interesting approach to politics, and time will tell whether it was successful.

But they're trying to buy back some popularity that they haven't been able to get back. You know, the Filmon government, for the 11 years that it was in government, actually polled 10 points ahead of us for, like, almost the whole time. Like, we just couldn't—you know, we tried, but we just couldn't seem to figure a way to change those numbers.

But you know what happened at the end of the day, even with them, if you want to look back to 1999, where, in that election, we voted for their budget, they—their mistake they made that time—and they were polling 10 points ahead anyway, which all governments do when they call elections. At the end of the day, the budget vote was around this time, little bit later, but they should've gone for an election right then. But what they did was they decided the Pan Am Games were here in August and they figured that would be a beautiful time to launch their campaign.

Well, guess what? By the time August came around, everyone forgot about all the happiness down here and the Pan Am Games were over and everything went south for them and they lost the election and Gary Doer won. And it took us, like—that was our fourth try to do it.

But the point of all of this is governments have an expiry date. You know, and their expiry date, well, is probably now, because of what happened back in the beginning in 2016. And they—and they're trying to get rid of that, they're trying to pretend that that didn't happen. Brian Pallister, they don't even know who he was. Like, who was that masked man? And we have nothing to do with this.

So, you know, they can—[interjection]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Maloway:** —generate—and, you know, and I understand, too, they don't want to give us any money to govern with, right. And, you know, all governments try to do that, spend all the money before new government comes in, right. So they've lined it all up right now where they're just going to blow everything through in this budget and presumably call an election and hope for the best, because next year things probably are not going to be looking that good for them based on just the projections that are made.

Now, the question is, are people going to actually buy the argument? And that's something that, at this

point, we don't actually know because we've seen this movie in the—you know, go out in the past. And it kind of can work both ways.

Just look at Sterling Lyon, for example. When he was elected in '77, he went—after four years, the NDP had a split here where Sid Green had left the NDP and formed his own party, Howard Pawley was the new leader and Sterling Lyon thought he was just going to win easy because, hey, it was only—nobody loses on a one-term government. I think Sterling was the first premier to lose in, like, maybe ever in one term.

The Conservatives figured they were going to win. They had a smell—aluminum smelter they were setting up. They had all these, like, you know, development ideas, but they never understood that Sterling Lyon didn't—wasn't really a likeable personality. You know, the—he didn't really—he didn't—he didn't really poll that well, I guess.

And at the end of the day, the government of the day never saw this coming. And look back to your ads back in 1977, the famous don't stop us now. You better get some of those ready. Take a look at some of those.

But when things went south in that campaign, let me tell you, they were the most surprised—the Sterling government was most—Sterling Lyon government was the most surprised that all had to change their entire strategy to campaign ads that said don't stop us now. And they got stopped. They got thrown out.

So, you know, just because things are going good for you today, you know, don't expect that you're going to see a happy result out of all of this, right, you know.

\* (16:40)

And we've just seen—and you know, back in 1973—just so you know, guys—back in 1973, the Schreyer government was in its—finishing its first term, that's 50 years ago, and the Conservative opposition of—voted with the NDP budget in 1973. Went out into an election, and NDP was riding high. We won Emerson for gosh sakes—that was the first and only time—we won Emerson. We were going to win Portage la Prairie. We were going to win Steinbach. And everything was going really good.

Until premier Schreyer made an announcement—a matter of fact, you know what would happen. The campaign bus would come out and the Conservative MLA would run up and put his arm around the

premier for a picture and push the NDP candidate out of the way.

But eventually what happened is the premier made a mistake and made a comment about not building roads in constituencies that didn't vote for us—among a couple of other faux pas—and our whole campaign deflated somewhat. We won; we did pick up a couple of seats.

But, you know, the point is, you know, there's so much here that you don't control as a government. You think you're trying to put all this together now with this money that you have and so on and you're open to—you don't even know who your candidates are going to be in all of the seats yet, right?

So this is a—now, I want to talk about something that you are really messing up on, and that is the Louise Bridge. You know, the—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Maloway:** And remember—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Okay, order please.

There are sounds resembling animal sounds coming from some of the benches. I'd just—would ask members please to tone it down and let the member speak. Occasional heckles are one thing, but I think we passed that a couple of minutes ago.

The honourable member for Elmwood does have the floor.

**Mr. Maloway:** I want to remind the members that this is a 112-year-old bridge. It was built at the time of the shootout at the O.K. Corral.

And just so you know, we've actually almost had this bridge built a couple of times. When we had Sam Katz as the mayor and Thomas Steen as the councillor, the City actually bought property. They bought houses on the river. They had it all lined up as to where this was going to be built. Unfortunately for the bridge, they—the civic—the mayor changed, and now we start with a new mayor and new people.

And then lately, we've had this thing all lined up where, just last year, the government spent \$6 million in upgrading the roads up to the bridge, and we've got a bridge design and the whole bridge is ready to go. Then all of a sudden, guess what happens? New mayor again, right? Well now, the thing is being held off for another probably 10 years.

You are the government that can make this happen, and this can be part of your infrastructure upgrades and

you should be doing it. And, you know, whether you do or you're not, we will be watching and think—and acting accordingly, I would say.

So, I want to thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for the opportunity to speak.

**Some Honourable Members:** More, more.

**Mr. Maloway:** I know the members want to hear more, but, you know, in the interests of time and getting everyone in to be able to speak to the budget, I am very happy to conclude my remarks at this point.

Thank you.

**Hon. Sarah Guillemard (Minister of Advanced Education and Training):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm happy to rise and share a few words on an amazing and historic budget.

Let's begin with a little bit of a recent history for some context here. The bond rating agency said about the previous NDP budgets that they don't have a revenue problem; they have a spending problem. Instead of becoming more responsible with taxpayer dollars, the NDP became even more reckless and drove the deficit to a billion dollars—a deficit that adds to their ballooning debt year after year.

Manitobans voted in the PC government to clean up the NDP mess. And here we are, seven years later, and Manitobans were correct in doing so.

I was appointed to a new portfolio of Advanced Education and Training recently, and just in time for some really great news—and you'll find a whole bunch of good news in this budget. But specifically pertaining to my department, we've seen a healthy boost to the levels of investments in our post-secondary education and furthers our government's commitment to promoting success, access and affordability for all Manitoba students.

Our government is providing \$784.2 million to our post-secondary institutions in the '23-24 year to help support operational needs. This is an historic funding announcement and represents a 12 per cent increase overall from last year.

We're also investing an additional \$36 million in capital supports to help maintain and enhance existing spaces at post-secondary institutions. This represents a 260 per cent increase over last year.

These significant investments in our post-secondary institutions will help to build an accessible and high quality and sustainable post-secondary education system for all students.

We saw the neglect that the previous NDP government placed on post-secondary institutions, and our government is committed to the future of Manitoba. That is why we're making these massive investments into post-secondary institutions today.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the new investments are going to ensure that Manitoba has skilled and diverse workforce in order to fill our current and future labour market needs. The Skills, Talent and Knowledge Strategy provides the post-secondary industry and immigration partners with a road map for creating such a workforce.

To date, our government has committed over \$410 million in activities to support the Skills, Talent and Knowledge Strategy, and our investments and planned activities for the '23-24 year in post-secondary education, Manitoba Student Aid and adult literacy and learning continue to advance the key strategy objectives by strengthening alignment between post-secondary institutions, immigration, training and employment services and labour market needs.

Our government has publicly committed to considering all program proposals from post-secondary institutions that will help to develop the skills of Manitobans, address labour shortages and foster economic growth.

We are proud to share that significant work is under way on many of the strategies' actions to fill labour market needs, including a system-wide expansion to train thousands of new health professionals and early childhood educators.

The government is committed to expanding our nursing education seats, and Budget 2023 is reflective of this method. And, to date, we have expanded our nursing seats to 314.

Mirroring this success with the Skills, Talent and Knowledge Strategy, strategic work is also under way to develop adult education, as well as plans, because we recognize the importance of having a diverse and accessible education system.

We'll continue to work with partners, including advanced educational institutions, businesses and communities, to ensure programs align with local labour needs and that students are able to gain the right skills and competencies that they need to succeed right here in Manitoba.

In order for Manitoban students to thrive we must ensure that affordability does not become a barrier when accessing quality education and training.

Over the past year, my department has been developing a new tuition fees and student-fee policy to ensure that quality post-secondary education remains accessible and affordable.

\* (16:50)

We know that affordable tuition break helps to break down barriers to accessibility and attract students from across the country to our colleges and universities. We also know it allows families to contribute to the cost of their children's education, ensuring that they get a good start as they leave their homes. It's why our government is with our post-secondary partners to keep tuition affordable for Manitoban students.

For the '23-24 academic year, our government has reduced the maximum allowable tuition-increase ceiling from 3.75 per cent to 2.75 per cent—a full percentage decrease for the university programs—as well as from \$250 to \$133 per college program. These limits on tuition increases mean more Manitobans will be able to access the many world-class education and training opportunities available right here in our province.

Supporting student success and affordability has long been a government priority, which is why my department provides significant financial support directly to students. This financial support includes Manitoba Student Aid, which provides interest-free loans, the Manitoba Bursary Program, which provides up-front bursaries to Indigenous students and low-income students, and the Manitoba Scholarship and Bursary Initiative, which leverages institutional—or, yes—institutional fundraising by matching provincial dollars for student awards.

Budget '23 includes an increase for the Manitoba Bursary Program, bringing the total amount to \$23.7 million. This represents a total increase of \$13 million since the 2017-2018 year, and is expected to provide 12,000 students with non-repayable financial support. Unlike members opposite, we understand the financial pressures placed on students, and our government is standing with students by ensuring that they have access to financial support in order to achieve a higher education.

Students of all ages living with type 1 diabetes will now have their life-saving therapy covered, which will go a long way to making life more affordable. When our PC members formed government, the NDP had us in last place for this coverage. Our investments in 2021 put us middle of the pack, and with the

new 2023 investment we are once again leaders in this life-saving coverage.

We are also raising the basic personal tax amount to \$15,000, removing many more Manitobans from paying taxes altogether, and many of them are students. We've increased the minimum wage and we've also introduced the \$10-a-day daycare fees for regular hours that also provide more options and support for Manitobans who need it and who are seeking post-secondary education.

We strongly believe that building a stronger province where everyone can thrive means advancing reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. We are committed to increasing financial supports for Indigenous students. In the coming year my department will work with the Winnipeg Foundation in order to increase the total amount and number of Manitoba scholarships and bursary-initiative awards dedicated to Indigenous students. This will help to address the barriers that prevent access to education and economic opportunities for Indigenous learners.

All Manitobans deserve access to affordable, high-quality programming and training that helps them build the skills and competencies that they need to successfully enter the workforce, fill our critical labour-force needs and help grow our economy.

While the members opposite try to create division, the PC team is united. We are united in making our streets safer, healing our health-care system, making our communities stronger and creating opportunities ahead for all Manitobans. This team is committed to the priorities of every Manitoban. Budget 2023 provides historic levels of support for Manitobans.

Thank you, and I look forward to the unanimous support for this historic budget. Thank you.

**Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia):** I appreciate the opportunity to put a few words on the record here with regards to budget '23. It's been said that there are three things that you can never get back: time that has passed, words that have been spoken and trust that is broken. I know that this government is starting to realize that, and I think we're up to 13 members on that side of the House—and counting, Mr. Deputy Speaker—who are starting to understand the ramifications of that saying.

They understand that Manitobans have seen through the words that they've said. They understand that the words that have been spoken—not just the ones that are overtly hurtful, divisive and even racist, Mr. Deputy Speaker, by the former premier, but also



words that tear at the fabric of who we are as Manitobans, friendly Manitobans who really are here to look out for each other, stand up for each other and look after those who need it most in our society.

I know that they're definitely looking woefully at the time that has passed because they know that it's been—now been seven years that this government has cut and damaged the social services that Manitobans rely on. And they probably look specifically at the time when this Premier (Mrs. Stefanson), this new Premier, was anointed by the PC Party to be the leader of the province and she said, I will be different, things will be different. She had an opportunity to reset the conversation and she didn't. She failed Manitobans. It was business as usual. It was carrying on the Pallister agenda here in the Legislature.

But, of course, we know the most important part of that saying is that trust that is broken can never be regained. Manitobans do not trust this government, and with good reason. They know when they go to a hospital in their community and services are cut—like in my community, the member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) pointed out—it was this government who proudly went out and said to Manitobans, we're proud to cut the ER in northeast Winnipeg; we're proud to take out the CancerCare facility at Concordia Hospital; we're proud to take diagnostic services out of your community, take the IV clinic out of your community.

That's what they said; they were proud of it; they were proud to go around our city and take out hospital ERs like Victoria, like Seven Oaks. They were proud of that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They were proud to take out the urgent care in the much-needed Misericordia Health Centre. They were happy to go around and speak how proud they were of that.

And yet, Manitobans know when they go for those services now, that they're gone. And no amount of words by this government, no amount of marketing and spin—they've got teams of people working on this, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They've got rooms dedicated here in the Legislature. They hire outside firms to try to spin and try to convince Manitobans, oh, no, no, no, now we're going to be different. Now we're going to be different. And yet, they can't even denounce their own words and the words of their former premier Brian Pallister in this House.

So, time has gone, trust is broken, the words that have been spoken have been said, and Manitobans are remembering this.

So, you know, we give Manitobans a lot of credit on this side of the House. I think the members opposite would be smart to do the same, because if they'd go out and they'd—well, they can join us at any of the wonderful community events or opportunities, forums, discussion forums, debates that are happening right now. They can come knock on doors with us, if they want, because our team is doing that and we're hearing from Manitobans.

And they're telling us their health care has been broken by this government. The education has been—system has been broken by this government. And affordability is worse than it's ever been because of cuts by this government, and nobody trusts them.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order, please.

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe) will have 16 minutes remaining.

The time is 5 p.m. and, as such, this House is adjourned until tomorrow—and stands adjourned until 1:30 tomorrow.

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, March 13, 2023

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