

**Third Session - Fortieth Legislature**  
of the  
**Legislative Assembly of Manitoba**  
**DEBATES**  
and  
**PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report**  
**(Hansard)**

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**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Fortieth Legislature**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
ALLAN, Nancy	St. Vital	NDP
ALLUM, James, Hon.	Fort Garry-Riverview	NDP
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	NDP
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	NDP
BJORNSON, Peter, Hon.	Gimli	NDP
BLADY, Sharon, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	NDP
BRAUN, Erna, Hon.	Rossmere	NDP
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DRIEDGER, Myrna	Charleswood	PC
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GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Liberal
GOERTZEN, Kelvin	Steinbach	PC
GRAYDON, Cliff	Emerson	PC
HELWER, Reg	Brandon West	PC
HOWARD, Jennifer, Hon.	Fort Rouge	NDP
IRVIN-ROSS, Kerri, Hon.	Fort Richmond	NDP
JHA, Bidhu	Radisson	NDP
KOSTYSHYN, Ron, Hon.	Swan River	NDP
LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon.	Dawson Trail	NDP
MACKINTOSH, Gord, Hon.	St. Johns	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Flor, Hon.	Logan	NDP
MARCELINO, Ted	Tyndall Park	NDP
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MITCHELSON, Bonnie	River East	PC
NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom	Interlake	NDP
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PALLISTER, Brian	Fort Whyte	PC
PEDERSEN, Blaine	Midland	PC
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REID, Daryl, Hon.	Transcona	NDP
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WHITEHEAD, Frank	The Pas	NDP
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
WIGHT, Melanie	Burrows	NDP
WISHART, Ian	Portage la Prairie	PC
<i>Vacant</i>	Arthur-Virten	
<i>Vacant</i>	Morris	

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, November 22, 2013

*The House met at 10 a.m.*

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

Good morning, everyone. Please be seated.

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

#### PETITIONS

**Mr. Speaker:** We'll move on to petitions.

#### Provincial Sales Tax Increase— Cross-Border Shopping

**Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Riding Mountain):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

And these are the reasons for this petition:

Manitoba has a thriving and competitive retail environment in communities near its borders, including Bowsman, Swan River, Minitonas, Benito, Russell, Binscarth, St-Lazare, Birtle, Elkhorn, Virden, Melita, Waskada, Boissevain, Deloraine, Cartwright, Pilot Mound, Crystal City, Manitou, Morden, Winkler, Plum Coulee, Altona, Gretna, Emerson, Morris, Killarney, Sprague, Vita, Reston, Pierson, Miniota, McAuley, St. Malo, Foxwarren, Roblin and many others.

Both the Saskatchewan PST rate and the North Dakota retail sales tax rate are 5 per cent, and the Minnesota retail sales tax rate is 6 per cent.

The retail sales tax rate is 40 per cent cheaper in North Dakota and Saskatchewan and 25 per cent cheaper in Minnesota as compared to Manitoba.

The differential in tax rates creates a disincentive for Manitoba consumers to shop locally to purchase their goods and services.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To acknowledge that the increase in the PST will significantly encourage cross-border shopping and put additional strain on the retail sector, especially for those businesses located close to Manitoba's provincial borders.

To ensure the provincial government—or to urge the provincial government to reverse its PST increase to ensure Manitoba consumers can afford—or can shop affordably in Manitoba and support local businesses.

This petition's signed by M. Oakley, P. Stainer, D. Cox and many more Manitobans.

**Mr. Speaker:** In keeping with our rule 132(6), when petitions are read they are deemed to have been received by the House.

Further petitions?

#### Provincial Sales Tax Increase—Referendum

**Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside):** Good morning, Mr. Speaker. I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

These are the reasons for this petition:

(1) The provincial government promised not to raise taxes in the last election.

(2) Through Bill 20, the provincial government wants to increase the retail sales tax, known as the PST, by one point without the legally required referendum.

(3) An increase to the PST is excessive taxation that will harm Manitoba families.

(4) Bill 20 strips Manitobans of their democratic right to determine when major tax increases are necessary.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to not raise the PST without holding a provincial referendum.

This petition's submitted on behalf of C. Bergthorson, C. Brunsel, M. Normand and many other fine Manitobans.

### **Provincial Sales Tax Increase— Cross-Border Shopping**

**Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

And these are the reasons for this petition:

(1) Manitoba has a thriving and competitive retail environment in communities near its borders, including Bowsman, Swan River, Minitonas, Benito, Russell, Binscarth, St-Lazare, Birtle, Elkhorn, Virden, Melita, Waskada, Boissevain, Deloraine, Cartwright, Pilot Mound, Crystal City, Manitou, Morden, Winkler, Plum Coulee, Altona, Gretna, Emerson, Morris, Killarney, Sprague, Vita, Reston, Pierson, Miniota, McAuley, St. Malo, Foxwarren, Roblin and many others.

(2) Both the Saskatchewan PST and the North Dakota retail sales tax rate are 5 per cent, and Minnesota retail sales tax rate is 6 per cent.

(3) The retail sales tax rate is 40 per cent cheaper in North Dakota and Saskatchewan and 25 per cent cheaper in Minnesota as compared to Manitoba.

(4) The differential in tax rates—in tax rates creates a disincentive for Manitoba shoppers to shop locally to purchase their goods and services.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To acknowledge that the increase in the PST will significantly encourage cross-border shopping and put additional strain on the retail sector, especially for those businesses located close to Manitoba provincial borders.

To urge the provincial government to reverse its PST increase to ensure Manitoba consumers can shop affordably in Manitoba and support local businesses.

This petition's signed by I. Friesen, J. Wollman, D. Carlson and many, many more fine Manitobans.

**Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson):** Good morning, Mr. Speaker. I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

And these are the reasons for this petition:

(1) Manitoba has a thriving and competitive retail environment in communities near its borders, including Bowsman, Swan River, Minitonas, Benito, Russell, Binscarth, St-Lazare, Birtle, Elkhorn, Virden, Melita, Waskada, Boissevain, Deloraine,

Cartwright, Pilot Mound, Crystal City, Manitou, Morden, Winkler, Plum Coulee, Altona, Gretna, Emerson, Morris, Killarney, Sprague, Vita, Reston, Pierson, Miniota, McAuley, St. Malo, Foxwarren, Roblin and many others.

(2) Both the Saskatchewan PST rate and the North Dakota sales tax rate are 5 per cent, and the Minnesota retail sales tax rate is 6 per cent.

(3) The retail sales tax rate is 40 per cent cheaper in North Dakota and Saskatchewan and 25 per cent cheaper in Minnesota as compared to Manitoba.

(4) The differential in tax rates creates a disincentive for Manitoba consumers to shop locally to purchase their goods and services.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To acknowledge that the increase in the PST will significantly encourage cross-border shopping and put additional strain on the retail sector, especially for those businesses located close to the—Manitoba's provincial borders.

And (2) is to urge the provincial government to reverse its PST increase to ensure Manitoba consumers can shop affordably in Manitoba and support local businesses.

And this petition is signed by M. Martens, R. Braun, J. Braun and many, many more fine Manitobans.

\* (10:10)

### **Municipal Amalgamations—Reversal**

**Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The provincial government recently announced plans to amalgamate any municipalities with fewer than a thousand constituents.

(2) The provincial government did not consult with or notify the affected municipalities of this decision prior to the Throne Speech announcement on November 19th, 2012, and has further imposed unrealistic deadlines.

(3) If the provincial government imposes amalgamations, local democratic representation will be drastically limited while not providing any real improvements to cost savings.

(4) Local governments are further concerned that amalgamation will fail to address the serious issues currently facing municipalities, including an absence of reliable infrastructure funding and timely flood compensation.

(5) Municipalities deserve to be treated with respect. Any amalgamations should be voluntary in nature and led by the municipalities themselves.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the minister of local government afford local governments the respect they deserve and reverse his decision to force municipalities with fewer than a thousand constituents to amalgamate.

This petition is signed by E. Giesbrecht, T. Fehr, J. Kehler and many more fine Manitobans.

### TABLING OF REPORTS

**Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** I'm pleased to table the following reports: the Manitoba Human Rights Commission 2012 Annual Report; and the Manitoba Justice, Criminal Justice Division, Victim Services Complaints Annual Report for 2012-2013.

**Mr. Speaker:** Any further tabling of reports?

Seeing none, ministerial statements.

I have no guests to introduce currently, so we'll proceed directly to oral questions.

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### NDP Platform Federal Election

**Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Let's try a little integrity quiz for the Premier (Mr. Selinger) today, Mr. Speaker.

Federal leader Thomas Mulcair was recently campaigning in the Brandon by-election and said to the press that he would promise to do for Canada what this government was doing for Manitoba.

Which of the following platform items can we count on seeing in the next federal election: (a) eliminate free trade among the provinces; (b) budget balanced, probably; (c) GST up to 8 per cent; or (d) all of the above?

**Hon. Jennifer Howard (Acting Premier):** Well, they must be in much more trouble in Brandon-Souris than I thought if the Leader of the Opposition feels like he needs to use his first question to take a

stab at campaigning in Brandon-Souris, but he's welcome to it, I suppose.

I would say that, you know, some of the things that Manitobans have achieved together—and I know from travelling around the country there are many people in many parts of this country that look to us for some of the things we've achieved together.

Recently I was at a gathering of people who work with agricultural workers, who work with some of the most vulnerable workers in our provinces. I had the chance to talk to a woman from Alberta who lost her husband in a grain silo accident in that province, has been lobbying premiers, successive premiers, to get workers' compensation, workplace safe and health coverage—safety and health coverage for agricultural workers, has not been able to do that. In Manitoba, we did that, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The minister's time has expired.

**Mr. Pallister:** A lot of other things that hurt Manitobans, Mr. Speaker, have been done by this government, but I understand the petulance of the member opposite. I get that, with the Dexter democrat demise in Atlantic Canada, I understand this is the last of a vanishing breed.

But it makes no sense for a federal leader of Thomas Mulcair's stature to actually associate himself with the worst government in Canada, the lowest ranked government in Canada. Why would he do that? Why would he do that, indeed?

Is it because (a) like this government, he puts an emphasis on communication ahead of research? Would it be (b) that he's given up on Brandon and is trying to push his voters to the Liberal Party? Or (c) is it that he's as out of touch with Canada as this Premier is with Manitoba?

**Ms. Howard:** Well, Mr. Speaker, you know, if the Leader of the Opposition leaves right after question period, he'd probably make it to Brandon to do some canvassing this afternoon if he's that concerned about the future success in Brandon-Souris for his party. Maybe his time would be better spent there and he could do his best to make sure that his friend Mr. Maguire is successful in that election.

But what I will say, you know, one of the things that I saw in the paper today was a report from the Bank of Montreal that shows that Winnipeg is in the top six of cities that are most attractive to workers—most attractive. It's one of the top six destinations for

attracting workers, above cities like Vancouver and Toronto, and what are the things that they looked at in that report? They looked at things like housing affordability. They looked at tax burden, and they looked at where you can get a good job, and Winnipeg ranks very well.

**Mr. Pallister:** Think of where we'd rank with a good government, Mr. Speaker.

You know, we'll determine on Monday, with the results of the by-election, more accurately the positive effects that the NDP may have had in terms of the results, but the fact remains that Thomas Mulcair did campaign on a promise to do for Canada what he'd do for Manitoba, so Monday might give us an indication if Manitobans buy that as a legitimate reason to vote NDP.

Now, why would the sole surviving socialist government be used as a model? Makes no sense.

Let's anticipate that if, in fact, Thomas Mulcair did succeed in becoming Prime Minister, what would be the first headline? Would it be (a) provinces forced to amalgamate? Would that be it? (b) Mulcair promises to double national debt? Or would it be (c) Mulcair breaks multiple promises? Which of those three would it be?

**Ms. Howard:** Well, I—Mr. Speaker, I think we are witnessing the kickoff to the Leader of the Opposition's campaign for a seat in the Senate here today. That's what we must be seeing. I'm sorry that he's so worried about Brandon-Souris, which I know has been a stronghold for his party for many, many years and may still be. We'll see on Monday night.

But what I will say about how things are going here in Manitoba, that Manitobans are proud of the things that we have achieved by working together. And what are some of those things? A steady economy, an economy that weathers, better than many other economies in this country, challenges. What are the things that we've accomplished together? We continue to make critical investments in health care and education. We have classrooms. We have good teachers teaching our kids. We're investing in making sure that class sizes are at a place where children can learn together. We're investing in health care—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The minister's time has expired.

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

### Manitoba Families Government Commitment

**Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition):** So, you know, it's in—it's with no small amount of irony that the government puts forward a bill which claims it will protect Manitobans, Manitoba consumers specifically. And here's a quote from the new minister: Clear and up front with no surprises after being locked in. That was the quote. That's interesting. That's really interesting.

So after being locked into a four-year contract with a government that promised not to hike taxes, which of the following would Manitobans be most surprised by after being locked into that contract? Would it be (a) hikes on home insurance; (b) tax hikes on car registration; (c) tax hikes on gas; (d) all of the above? Which would it be?

**Hon. Jennifer Howard (Acting Premier):** Perhaps I was wrong. Perhaps it's not a seat in the Senate that he's angling for. Perhaps it's game show host that he's angling for.

I will say for the member opposite that we have made a commitment, continue to make a commitment to Manitoba families to keep Manitoba among the most affordable places in the country to raise a family, to make sure that those costs that are associated with running a household, things like electricity and home heating rates, things like insuring your car, remain among the lowest in the country.

I know from personal experience, Mr. Speaker. I have relatives in Toronto. They have kids in child care; I have a child in child care. Their bill per month, \$2,500; mine, \$400.

\*(10:20)

**Mr. Pallister:** This government's not protecting Manitoba families. They're using them as props in an advertising campaign.

The NDP is the master of press releases, so let's talk about this press release from the former minister of irritating every local government who's now trying to irritate every consumer and family in Manitoba. He says this, quote: NDP seeking public input to ensure families are treated fairly. Okay, good.

Which of the following is the best example of the NDP true commitment, genuine commitment to treating families fairly? Would it be (a) the highest tax and fee increases in Canada; (b) the highest PST increase in Canada, the only one, in fact;

(c) eliminating Manitoba families' rights to participate in a vote; or (d) all of the above?

**Ms. Howard:** We continue to work with families to help them build a better life here in Manitoba. Part of what we've heard and part of what we know today the Premier (Mr. Selinger) and the Prime Minister will announce is an investment in our future, continued investment to make Manitoba a strong economy where there are good jobs for people's kids, where people's grandkids can stay here and build a life. That is what we're focused on.

I'll let the member opposite continue to live in his fantasy world of being the best game show host in the Manitoba Legislature. I know he thinks he's very cute. We will stay focused on the things that matter most to Manitobans.

**Mr. Pallister:** They'll stay focused on the things that matter to yesterday's NDP, Mr. Speaker, but they will never focus on what matters to Manitoba families.

Now, I understand the petulance of the unicorn party. I do. The last of a vanishing breed, I get that. But the fact of the matter is these are serious questions that deserve a serious answer, and here's the last one and the last chance for the Premier to stand up for a change and answer honestly.

Now, it says—the government says in a press release—again, in a press release, the press release party—sometimes special offers aren't clear and rates jump up after a few months without notice. Now, this is the party that ran on a promise not to raise rates, not to raise them, then they did. So it, you know, raised hydro rates. That impacts Manitoba families. How about MPI? What about beer and wine? What about haircuts? What about birth certificates, death certificates? What about home insurance? Don't those impact on Manitoba families, Mr. Speaker? I submit they all do.

So who's the greatest danger to Manitoba families? Is it (a) cable companies; (b) autobody shops; or (c) yesterday's tired-out, corrupt, lying NDP?

**Ms. Howard:** It is clear to me that the greatest threat to Manitoba families is the Leader of the Opposition. It is clear to me that a man who has promised to cut deeply into every service that matters to families, health care to education, is a great threat to Manitoba families. It's clear to me that a man who has said a two-tier health-care system is worthwhile, is something we need in Manitoba, a health-care

system that would charge families to get to the front of the line, that is a great threat to Manitoba families. And a man who was involved in selling the telephone system when he said he wouldn't and a man who was involved in the greatest challenge to democracy in our time, the vote-rigging scandal of '95, that's a great threat to Manitoba families.

#### **PST Increase Economic Impact**

**Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood):** Mr. Speaker, the Premier (Mr. Selinger) of Manitoba loses more and more credibility every time he opens his mouth because he's putting forward false and misleading comments.

He's now trying to convince Manitobans the other day that the illegal hike of the PST is going to lead to an economic renaissance.

I'd like to ask the Minister of Finance to tell us: When a hundred million dollars has been taken out of the pockets and purses of Manitobans in just four months, can the minister tell us how that is an economic renaissance?

**Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Finance):** There is no question that the decision to raise the PST by one point on the dollar, by 1 cent on the dollar was an extremely difficult decision for us to make. It was a decision that we made with a vision of the future for Manitoba, a vision that means that people's kids can go to school here, can stay here, can get a good job here.

And today we're seeing another part of that vision play out with the Premier and the Prime Minister announcing the opening of CentrePort way. We know that one thing that Manitoba has going for it, among many others, is our geographic location. We're going to build on that with the investments to build the future.

That's why we made that difficult decision to continue to build the economy, so it can grow the economy, so we can afford to invest in health care and education and so that our kids can have good jobs, stay in Manitoba, build a good life here.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Mr. Speaker, the only time we're going to see an economic renaissance under an NDP government is when pigs fly.

Mr. Speaker, there's a hair salon and spa in Charleswood—I would ask the members to listen. There's a hair salon and spa in Charleswood that has lost 35 per cent of their business since the NDP

brought in a PST to their services and then jacked it up illegally. And now they have lost 35 per cent of their business.

I would like this NDP government to tell these women business owners: How in the world is that an economic renaissance?

**Ms. Howard:** We know how important it is that businesses are able to be competitive. I understand the issues that the member is raising in respect to small businesses trying to make a go of it. That's why we have in Manitoba the only province in the country that charges no corporate income tax to small businesses, zero per cent. No other province has that.

I am more optimistic than the member opposite about the future of Manitoba. I am as optimistic as the chief economist of the Bank of Montreal that recently lauded our placing in the top six of cities that are attracting new workers. That is a great indicator of a growing economy, a place that people want to come and build a life, raise their kids, have a family, get a good job. We want that for all Manitobans.

#### **Economic Management Government Record**

**Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood):** Mr. Speaker, all we really get from the government is a lot of spin. I guess this must be the NDP definition of an economic renaissance: highest income tax west of Quebec, highest inflation rate of Canada because of the PST and highest dependency on federal handouts in Canada.

So I would like to ask this government: How in the world is that an economic renaissance in Manitoba?

**Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Finance):** Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure the senior economist with the Bank of Montreal will be surprised that he's now an NDP spin doctor.

But what he has said is that Winnipeg should be pleased that we're in the top six of cities that are attracting growth, that are attracting new people coming here, new workers. Why do people come here? They come here because they can get a good job. They come here because they can afford a house to live in. They come here because this is a good place to live.

We know that about our city and our province and we'll continue to build our city and our province.

We won't go back to the past. We won't go back to the way that the members opposite ran the Province when they were in charge: cutting nurses, firing people, freezing every new hospital and personal-care home construction in the province, making short-sighted decisions that have had ramifications for years to come.

We'll continue to invest in a growing economy, invest in Manitobans' future, make sure this a good place for our kids to—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The honourable minister's time has expired.

#### **PST Increase Economic Impact**

**Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson):** And some of the tough decisions that the minister has made is to take the vote tax.

Manitobans deserve to live in an affordable economy, which, for this government, is something they don't understand. Inflation is once again the highest in the nation, three times the national average. And you don't need a degree from the London School of Economics to understand that high inflation is damaging for the economy of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, when will this government take Manitoba economy out of the bottom of the barrel and reverse the PST increase that is hurting Manitobans?

**Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Jobs and the Economy):** I note with interest that in the member opposite's selection of economic indicators, narrow as it ever is, he did neglect to mention, of course, that our retail sales have gone up over \$24 million, so 1.7 per cent, since July. That's the second highest growth among provinces in the nation, which is a little beguiling when you consider that they've been whinging and whining every day with their petitions about retail sales.

\* (10:30)

**Mr. Graydon:** Well, Mr. Speaker, when you're at the bottom, there's only one way to go is up. But still being the worst one out of 10 out of 10 is bad.

In the minister's first 30 days on the job, she's lost 4,300 jobs. That's 143 jobs a day; don't work so hard. The participation rate is down, inflation that is three times the national average, we have the lowest growth in retail sales in the west, taxes are the highest levels in a generation. The Minister for Jobs



and Economy has no experience in either of these fields, and so it's no wonder that the economy is failing.

Mr. Speaker, when will this government reverse the number that matters, the 14 per cent PST increase?

**Ms. Oswald:** Well, I thank the member for the question, certainly, Mr. Speaker, and I'm learning to understand that the member opposite does have his favourite economic indicators.

I have my favourites too, Mr. Speaker: 22 out of 29, Manitoba ranks at or, indeed, well above the national average. My personal favourites: private sector employment, great; GDP growth, awesome; urban housing starts, terrific; exports to US, very, very good; manufacturing capital investment, awesome; manufacturing employment, terrific.

Mr. Speaker, I listen to the member opposite and I'm reminded of Eeyore from Winnie the Pooh: Manitoba's terrible. But, no, it isn't. We're doing well and the RBC and the BMO agree.

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

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

**Mr. Graydon:** Not only is the minister happy to be at the bottom of the barrel, she's got 35 guests there with her.

Mr. Speaker, in the minister's first month on the job, she lost 4,300 jobs. Inflation three times the national average, our retail sales are the lowest in the country, our economy is suffering through some of the biggest tax increases in a generation.

What this government doesn't understand is that these numbers are hurting Manitobans. They get up every day and pretend that everything is fine, but, in reality, our economy is in deep trouble.

Mr. Speaker, when will this NDP government admit their lies have failed Manitobans and the Manitoba economy? Will they now reverse the illegal PST increase?

**Ms. Oswald:** Yes, well, and the doom and gloom prevails over from members opposite.

The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, that we have seen 8,300 more private sector jobs—the very ones that they've been asking for—over the same period last year. We've seen that to be in the top five in the country.

Mr. Speaker, when members opposite had their hands on the whale—on the wheel, the unemployment rate was 7.6 per cent, skyrocketing at times to 10.3. Now we have the third lowest unemployment rate in the country at 5.3 per cent. People are working. The economy is growing steadily.

And I can say to the member opposite, I would advise you, if you could, maybe he could just cheer up.

### **Emergency Medical Services Ambulance Response Time**

**Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie):** Mr. Speaker, on October 23rd, Mrs. Marilyn Penner returned to her home in the Sanford area after heart surgery. On October 25th, she experiences chest pains, dizziness, irregular heartbeat and decides to call 911. An ambulance is dispatched from Oak Bluff, 12 kilometres away. It takes 45 minutes to arrive despite the whole area having civic addressing.

Mr. Speaker, what is wrong with the system if even local calls cannot be handled safely?

**Hon. Erin Selby (Minister of Health):** I appreciate the member bringing this concern to my attention, and I would ask him, of course, if he could bring me some more details if my office isn't looking into it already. Of course, they would be doing that.

Mr. Speaker, I do want to explain to both sides of the House that there are national protocols and standards in place for all cardiac or suspected cardiac patients and how they should be treated. I know that our front-line professionals, of course, are always on the ground making those decisions, making the best judgment on those decisions as well, and those protocols, of course, being designed by them.

Mr. Speaker, we know that in rural Manitoba we have seen that emergency call numbers have gone up. Our response times are going down. But we do make sure that we have options to choose from; there's land, there's air and, of course, there's the STARS helicopter, of course, as well.

### **Ambulance GPS Systems**

**Mr. Wishart:** Mr. Speaker, I'm pretty sure 45 minutes is not within the protocols.

Mrs. Penner's heartbeat went back into rhythm because she has medical training and she knew how to handle emergencies, and she is now fine. The system, however, is not.

Her emergency was listed as a level 4 instead of the level 1 it should have been. The drivers were also unfamiliar with the area and had driven by the proper road several times before finding it.

Why are all ambulances not equipped with GPS system to help drivers find proper locations in a timely manner?

**Ms. Selby:** Mr. Speaker, I can tell you what all our ambulances are equipped with and that's trained medical professionals. We now have over 700 fully trained primary-care paramedics plus 300 emergency responders in rural Manitoba.

That's a far cry from the service that people were getting in the '90s under them when they were in government. They slashed health-care training, they cancelled health construction, and they allowed the emergency measures to completely stagnate.

Mr. Speaker, people can know that there are trained professionals on the ground, they know national standard protocols and they make those judgements. Politicians don't make those judgements, medical professionals do.

#### Reporting Mechanisms

**Mr. Wishart:** Mr. Speaker, I hate to have to remind the minister, but the staff, the well-trained staff, actually have to find the patient before they can be of any use.

Mr. Speaker, we are reporting this and other problems with EMS to the minister, who seems totally unaware of these problems that exist within her department.

Is there no reporting mechanism in the massive health-care system to flag problems such as this so that solutions can be found before someone else's life is put at risk?

And, by the way, Mr. Premier (Mr. Selinger), Mrs. Penner would like a by-election so she can have her own MLA.

**Ms. Selby:** And I can tell you that we believe that patients and families have the right to ask questions, they have the right to information, and if they have questions about their medical care or a loved one's, we would encourage them to ask those questions.

Mr. Speaker, there was a time back in the 1990s when they were in government when there was no openness, when people kept secrets, when things were hidden, when no one learned and didn't talk about how we could do better. Well, that's not what

we do here. In fact, what we do is talk about things, make them better and continue to invest.

It's why we've invested one—we've invested in a Portage hospital. Of course, what happened when they were in government? They cut \$1.6 million from the Portage hospital. They cut \$1.1 million from personal-care homes in Portage.

Mr. Speaker, I would say to the people in Portage they have to figure out why do their MLAs keep quitting.

#### PRCO Meetings Private Medical Clinics

**Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler):** Mr. Speaker, the physician—

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. We're wasting precious time in question period, folks.

**Mr. Friesen:** Mr. Speaker, the Physician Resource Coordination Office, or the PRCO, hosts stakeholder meetings where RHAs and other potential employers like private clinics in rural Manitoba can participate and recruit international medical graduates. It's like a meet-and-greet between employers and prospective employees, and they have the opportunity to meet and talk about their areas and try to attract a commitment from those doctors to practise in those communities.

Those meetings took place this time around on November 18th, 19th and 20, but the difference is this time around those other employers like private clinics weren't invited. They were shut out from those stakeholder meetings with IMGs, or international medical doctors. Only the RHA was at the table this time around. They weren't invited. As a matter of fact, they were uninvited.

\* (10:40)

I ask the minister: Is she aware that these private employers have been shut out, and what's the rationale behind that move?

**Hon. Erin Selby (Minister of Health):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for drawing attention to the fact that we are doing a lot of recruiting in rural Manitoba of doctors and of nurses.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you, just last month, actually, because of recruitment efforts in Portage la Prairie, we have been able to reinstate full-time obstetrics in that community.

I know that the closing of the Virden ER was troubling for people, considering the size of it and its location close to the No. 1 Highway. But, of course, we rolled up our sleeves, we got to work, and recruitment efforts worked. With the local RHA, the local community, we were able to recruit 'nore' doctors. The Virden ER is open.

I guess we could probably do 40 minutes in here just on recruitment because I know the opposition doesn't understand how that works. They don't understand that when you cut medical training spots, when you fire nurses and when doctors are fleeing—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The minister's time has expired.

**Mr. Friesen:** A lot of recruiting, and yet 19 ERs either closed or reduced services; not very good progress so far.

Mr. Speaker, the minister kind of misses the point here. We're talking about doctors who are very concerned by a move to shut private medical clinics out of a key way they use to connect with international medical graduates. Now, like the RHAs, private clinics work hard to get those commitments from local medical graduates and other Canadian medical graduates completing their residencies. But we know that's not enough, and international medical graduates are needed in many areas of our province, as the minister knows. And many, many communities are suffering with doctor shortages, as the minister knows. And what we have here is a move to cut out private clinics from talking to prospective doctors.

What does the minister know? What's going on?

**Ms. Selby:** Mr. Speaker, there are 136 medical residency seats available each year. This is the most first-time resident seats ever available in Manitoba, in fact. This past spring we invested \$4.3 million to create 15 new medical residency seats. These are specialists, emergency medicine, various ones.

Mr. Speaker, my question is: When we're doing this, when we're recruiting more doctors, when we're hiring 'nore' nurses, but particularly we're investing in training rural doctors in rural settings, why do they keep voting against it?

**Mr. Friesen:** Mr. Speaker, I invite that minister to focus. She's completely missing the point.

Now, these clinics rely on the PRCO IMG programs. They use these programs to meet with prospective recruits. There was no notice provided to

private clinics of a move by PRCO and RHAs to shut them out. When stakeholders questioned, officials dragged their feet. Finally, the answer came back that said, you are not invited.

Now, what about all the medical clinics employing doctors, looking for doctors to meet their patient needs? No consultation, no notice, heavy-handed, disrespectful: it's déjà vu all over again with them.

The minister says every Manitoban should have access to a family doctor. Does she realize that this bad move threatens her big plan?

**Ms. Selby:** So here's a little idea of what our big plan is. In 2001, we increased medical seats by 15, from 70 to 85; 2005, we increased medical seats by eight more, we went from 85 to 93; 2006, we added another seven seats, from 93 to 100; and in 2008 and '9, we added 10, so we went from a hundred to 110. Mr. Speaker, that was our big plan was. Theirs was to cut medical seats.

Their new plan is to cut \$500 million from the budget right across the board. I can assure you we won't be training more doctors when we cut a half a billion dollars from the budget.

#### **Water Management Strategy Government Timeline**

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, when it comes to recovering from the 2011 floods and preventing future floods, this government is in a go-slow mode. We still have about 2,000 people out of their homes following the flood of 2011.

**Mr. Speaker:** One moment, please. I regret to interrupt the honourable member, but there seems to be something on your microphone there. It's making it difficult for me to hear what the honourable member is saying when he's posing his question.

The honourable member for River Heights, I'm going to start your question over, sir.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Mr. Speaker, when it comes to recovering from the 2011 flood and preventing future floods, this government is in a go-slow mode. We still have about 2,000 people out of their homes after the flood of 2011.

We've a government which has been talking about bringing forth a water management plan but then omitted any mention of it in the Throne Speech. The Premier (Mr. Selinger) talked and talked and talked but has failed to act to get people back in their

homes and failed to bring in a new water management plan.

I ask the government: What is their plan to stop failing the people of Manitoba time and time again?

**Hon. Stan Struthers (Acting Minister responsible for Emergency Measures):** Mr. Speaker, investing \$250 million in making permanent the emergency channel is not failing anybody. Announcing and then following through on compensation plans for people who were impacted by the flood of 2011, announcing and following up on mitigation programs, that's not failing Manitobans. That's standing with Manitoba families in their time of need.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Mr. Speaker, the government has announced the \$250 million 250 times, but it still haven't spent any, still hasn't built the flood infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, flood protection can involve water retention in a variety of ways to reduce the flow of water off the land. Such water retention is vital if we're to decrease flooding and destruction of our lakes in the future. The Premier has pursued a policy of drain, drain, drain as much as possible. It's been recognized for years, however, that we need to change and start a major effort in water retention.

Will such an effort be part of the government's core infrastructure spending, and if so, where's the proposal to do so?

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship):** That's some thunderous applause I hear.

Yes, I'm very pleased to confirm to the House that, in fact, this government, along with the municipal governments of Manitoba and, most recently, the federal government, has joined forces to make sure that our Conservation Districts are on the landscape, are working with local farmers and producers. And, in fact, under way or recently completed are 107 water retention projects in Manitoba—*[interjection]* Yes, Mr. Speaker, and of these about 82 of them are constructed works and many others are projects to restore the wetlands of Manitoba.

We know that we have to move towards a greater emphasis on sustainable drainage for Manitoba, Mr. Speaker. We have to continue to be the breadbasket of the world. At the same time, we have to do better in terms of water management.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased after 14 years that the government finally knows what a Conservation District is.

You know, the problem is that there's a hundred water retention projects and thousands and thousands of drainage projects. Look, numerous times over the last year the government has said that it plans a new water management strategy, reflecting the fact that the government recognizes that its ongoing water management strategy has been completely hopeless. After a failing water management strategy and not investing adequately in water retention for 14 years, we've now lost three full fall seasons since the flood of 2011 to have a change in water management really implemented.

When will the government present its new water management strategy?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Mr. Speaker, in the weeks ahead we'll be announcing an initiative that was put together in a unique and, indeed, historic partnership in Manitoba with the Surface Water Management Strategy and a proposal for—towards—to move towards sustainable drainage in Manitoba. But in the meantime—we're not waiting for that—we've already restored 2,400 acres of wetland in Manitoba through Conservation Districts alone.

The member, though, just last week had a little argument with me. I noticed, when it comes to his interest in water—and I'll just remind the members of the House and the member in particular that he was there at the table, the hands on the steering wheel when he cut Environment Canada by 30 per cent, Natural Resources by 50 per cent, half a billion from DFO. He helped cut half a billion dollars from DFO and cut freshwater research by 55 per cent while representing Lake Winnipeg communities. So much for his record.

\*(10:50)

### **Mining and Minerals Industry Annual Convention**

**Mr. Clarence Pettersen (Flin Flon):** Mr. Speaker, being a northerner and former miner, the past three days at the mining conference have been very important.

But before I, you know, go on more about this, I just have to say that again there was more sightings of sasquatches than there was Conservatives at the mining day. They keep on talking about jobs and they never talk about jobs in the North. And being,

like I say, a northern miner, this conference was very important, and yet I hear nothing from them there.

The mining industry is an integral to Manitoba's thriving economy. This week was an exciting time for those involved in this growing profession. I wished you were there.

Can the minister please inform the House what exciting event has been taking place the last few days?

**Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Mineral Resources):** Mr. Speaker, I'm very happy to have been at a mining convention and saw a thousand people come out, one of the largest conventions ever and where we talked about the largest mine in Manitoba history, the Lalor Lake mine that's going to employ 500 people. And, at the same time, we heard about the largest oil production in Manitoba history, 50,000 barrels a day, double what it was a few years ago, employing thousands of people and they're going to employ thousands more.

And you know why, Mr. Speaker? We have a mining strategy and a building strategy that sees doubling of the MEAP grants that will provide for more exploration and a jobs plan and a minister's advisory council sitting down with 10 chiefs and the mining companies to work on the future of building jobs and the economy in Manitoba.

In rural Manitoba, in the North, they'll boom just like Winnipeg's booming, Mr. Speaker, even though the members opposite deny it every single day.

#### **Heritage Services Provision Changes**

**Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet):** Due to a lack of respect for Manitoba's heritage, many meaningful cultural and historical treasures in Manitoba have been forced to limit their services. The new minister in charge of the department of tourism, culture, sport and consumer affairs attempted to destroy Manitoba's heritage by forcing unique municipalities to amalgamate.

Mr. Speaker, why does this government feel it necessary to fund 192 communicators to spin the present while this minister continues his assault on Manitoba's past?

**Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Tourism, Culture, Sport and Consumer Protection):** I appreciate the question. I do look forward to the new portfolio.

And it's—you know, Mr. Speaker, members opposite—I'll give you an example of what they believe heritage is all about. They believed in tying their yellow ribbon around the old Eaton's building, a rat trap, and what we did—that old Eaton's building was falling apart and members opposite wanted to save the old Eaton's building.

When we put forward a proposal of building a new MTS Centre, all the members opposite voted against it, and now we have the Winnipeg Jets back in Manitoba, something to be proud about. What did they do? They supported an old Eaton's building that was falling apart. That's what they think of heritage.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. Time for oral questions has expired.

#### **MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**

**Mr. Speaker:** It's time for members' statements.

#### **Osteoporosis Month**

**Mr. Dave Gaudreau (St. Norbert):** Mr. Speaker, November marks Osteoporosis Month in Canada. With approximately two million Canadians who live with this debilitating disease, I have the privilege of—to recognize members of the Manitoba Chapter of Osteoporosis Canada, who have joined us here in the gallery today. These individuals truly make a difference in the lives of people who suffer from osteoporosis and their advocacy is admired.

I'm happy to report that in Manitoba osteoporosis is less prevalent now than it has been in the past, but we know there's still more work to do. Our government is committed to making sure that every Manitoban has access to a family doctor by 2015. Primary care is an important part of overall health. We're hiring more doctors and expanding clinics because we want every family to get the care they need, when they need it.

The Manitoba Chapter of Osteoporosis Canada is always hard at work hosting events. This September, their fall—annual fall forum brought in guest speakers to address the latest on osteoporosis risk factors, diagnosis, nutrition, exercise and treatment.

With this year's awareness month, Osteoporosis Canada is working to Capture the Fracture and help make a person—patient's first break their last.

The Capture the Fracture campaign encourages individuals over the age of 50 to start asking their doctors to measure their height once a year to catch

early symptoms of osteoporosis. Height loss is a normal occurrence as we age, but it can also be a sign that osteoporosis is affecting our spine.

Mr. Speaker, osteoporosis is the—often referred to as the silent thief, because bone loss occurs with few noticeable symptoms. I want to thank Osteoporosis Canada and their volunteers for raising awareness about this debilitating disease that is silent no more.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

#### **Penner International Inc.**

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach):** Mr. Speaker, it's an honour today to recognize in the Manitoba Legislature a tremendous business and family company, Penner International of Steinbach.

Recently, Penner International was awarded two important distinctions symbolic of the strength of their company and the values by which it is governed. Penner International has been awarded both the Business of the Year award by the Steinbach Chamber of Commerce, along with the Distinguished Member Award granted by the Manitoba Trucking Association.

From its humble roots, beginning 90 years ago in 1923 that began with a single Ford Model T truck, Penner International has grown into a transporter shipping company with a fleet of more than 400 trucks and terminals across North America and Toronto, Winnipeg, Edmonton, Calgary and Surrey.

The Penner family is well known for the positive way it treats its employees and its owner-operators. I've personally had a number of family members work for the Penner family as drivers, including several uncles, my stepfather and my father. The Penner family are generous contributors to the community, the province and to our country. They believe in giving back both to their employees and its corporate citizens.

I want to especially recognize Milton Penner and Allan Penner, who, together with their staff and drivers, have made Penner International a true Manitoba success story, and we can all be proud of them.

Together with my colleagues and every member of this Assembly, we wish Penner International many more years of success, along with wishing

each of the drivers many miles of safe trucking. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

#### **Dimitry Melman—Artists in Schools**

**Ms. Deanne Crothers (St. James):** Visual art is an important skill being taught in schools across Manitoba. It allows students to explore their creativity, develop technical skills and express themselves in new ways.

Today, I want to recognize Dimitry Melman, a local artist in my constituency, who is sharing his passion for art with students around the province, through the Artists in the Schools program.

This is Dimitry's second year participating in the program, which is organized by the Manitoba Arts Council and creates partnerships between professional local artists and students from kindergarten to grade 12. Professional artists travel to schools all over Manitoba, working with teachers and students to enrich art classes.

Dimitry's primary medium is mosaics, a style he was exposed to while visiting Italy, Spain and Morocco. He has created works for many local businesses and schools, in addition to a beautiful piece on display at Winnipeg City Hall. Through Artists in the Schools, he shares his enthusiasm and knowledge with students, helping them create their own works of art.

Dimitry starts with a simple theme, asking students to discuss what it means to them and to provide their own sketches that express their idea. He gathers their work and combines them into one large sketch which class—which the class then creates into a mosaic with small pieces of tile. The end result is a beautiful collaboration that each student has had a hand in creating.

Dimitry will be teaching his art to eight different schools this year. He recently spent time at Carpathia School and Stonewall Collegiate, and in January will be teaching for three weeks at École Robert-Browning school.

Mr. Speaker, it is great to see professionals sharing their life's passion with young students, inspiring them to find their own calling. I would like to thank Dimitry for providing an opportunity for children in our schools to meet and work with an artist, and to experience the great joy of creativity.

Thank you very much.

**Humanitarian Award Jaron Johnston**

**Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Midland):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring the attention of the House to a tremendous young man from my constituency by the name of Jaron Johnston. Jaron, who as a kindergarten student at Carman Elementary, won the Manitoba Teachers' Society Young Humanitarian Award this past spring for his campaign to collect blankets for the homeless. This award recognizes children and youth with caring hearts. A 5-year-old who worries about whether homeless people are cold is certainly a person with a huge, caring heart. Jaron—Jaron started his campaign in March, collecting 100 blankets from his closet, from his church, from the school and from the community. The blankets were then donated to Siloam Mission and devoted to youth street ministries.

Jaron was one of five award recipients from across the province and, at 5 years old, he is one of the youngest recipients ever. Jaron was nominated for this award by Marcy Platt, the school secretary who said she admired his creative thinking and leadership on the project. The 16th Annual MTS Young Humanitarian Awards ceremony took place this past spring, May 22nd, at the Fairmont hotel in Winnipeg. Jaron spoke about his project and received a medal, a framed certificate and a \$1,000 prize.

\* (11:00)

On June 12th, Jaron got to recreate his part of the ceremony for his school, complete with a speech he remembered by drawing pictures on cue cards. He received a standing ovation, which he said he was happy about. The Manitoba Teachers' Society also presented his school with a certificate for the school's part in Jaron's campaign.

Jaron plans to use his award money to buy sunscreen, deodorant and backpacks for the homeless, and he remains committed to making sure they are warm enough. His new goal is to collect 200 blankets. When asked why he cares so much about helping the homeless, Jaron said because they're people just like us.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of all members of the Legislative Assembly, I wish—I express my admiration and thanks to Jaron for his leadership abilities and tremendous altruism. Manitoba leads the country for volunteerism, and Jaron is a shining example of this. Congratulations, Jaron, on a job well done.

**Eleanor Kidd Gardens Restoration**

**Mr. Drew Caldwell (Brandon East):** Mr. Speaker, the Assiniboine River flood of 2011 was a devastating event in Brandon, the largest flood in the recorded history of my community, a natural disaster in which catastrophe was only averted by the extraordinary work of ordinary citizens, first responders, firefighters and police service personnel, dedicated provincial and civic employees, the Canadian Armed Forces and fully engaged elected officials. Evacuations in flooding, citizens and businesses dislocated from their neighbourhoods, a valley ripped of its natural environment were all nonetheless features of the catastrophe averted.

Brandon's Assiniboine riverbank park system bore the full brunt of the historic 2011 flood and the renowned Eleanor Kidd park and gardens were virtually erased by the Assiniboine River. Since the 1970s, the people of Brandon have been experiencing pivotal moments in their lives in Eleanor Kidd park and gardens.

The park and gardens have played host to events like weddings, concerts, community gatherings and skating. Named after Eleanor Maude Kidd, a local animal rights activist, the park and gardens have grown into a jewel of Brandon's natural environment.

Thousands of trees and flowers along with much of the park's green space were seriously damaged or destroyed in 2011 because of flooding and dike construction. Brandon Riverbank Inc., the non-profit charitable organization that develops and maintains parks along the Assiniboine River corridor, has taken leadership of the park's renewal. Lois MacDonald of Brandon Riverbank Inc., the Riverbank board, citizen volunteers, and more recently businesses like Alternative Landscaping have gathered together with the City of Brandon and other businesses to move forward with the park's remediation. I am proud that provincial funds are also contributing towards this very important work.

Mr. Speaker, the citizen leadership, generosity, perseverance and dedication evident in the Eleanor Kidd Gardens restoration is exemplary and inspirational. Working together with pride and goodwill, people are making a positive difference in Brandon, preserving the health and diversity of the Assiniboine River's ecosystem, connecting people with nature.

Mr. Speaker, I am very proud of my community.

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

**Mr. Speaker:** To resume the adjourned debate on the proposed motion of the honourable member for Burrows (Ms. Wight), and the debate is open.

**Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo):** I'm pleased to rise and put a few words on the record today with respect to the main motion of the Throne Speech delivered last week, and I just want to, first of all, start off, Mr. Speaker, and welcome you back to the Chamber after a long summer break. We trust you enjoyed your break.

And I also want to welcome the new pages who are here with us today and those that are going to be working with us over the course of this part of the session and in the spring. So welcome, you, to your roles here. I also want to, of course, welcome the table officers back and the Chamber staff and Hansard staff and all of those who help our—what we do in this Chamber on a day-to-day basis, help us to be able to do our jobs. So I want to thank them for everything that they do and welcome them back to this session.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to thank the people of Tuxedo who have—who have given me this incredible honour of being able to stand here in the Manitoba Legislature and represent them and their issues and concerns in the Manitoba Legislature. And each and every day all of us bring forward our issues and concerns in this Chamber, and we ask questions and we do the best of our ability to represent those constituents who voted for us to be here in this Chamber to represent them in the last election.

Mr. Speaker, I've yesterday marked the 13th year that I was elected to the Manitoba Legislature, and I just want to say what an honour it's been to have been given this incredible position in the Manitoba Legislature. And I know from time to time, debate will be—will get heated in the Chamber, but we know, and we have a certain amount of respect for each other, that we do represent our constituents in this Chamber. And that is our job here, and so I thank all members of this House for doing what they do to represent their constituents. But it has been an honour for the past 13 years to do this.

But I have to say that yesterday was also another anniversary in our household. And it marks the

12th year since my daughter was born, and so we had a great celebration yesterday. It seems like yesterday, and I remember people saying to me how quickly time goes by in our lives, and it was hard to believe that it's been 12 years since she was born. So I want to wish Victoria a happy birthday, and we had a great celebration as a family yesterday.

And it was just—it's great to see that, and every year it's a reminder to her as well because on her birthday, she knows it's also my anniversary of being elected, and it reminds her each and every year that she gets older and she's come to the Chamber and she's sat through various debates here over the years. She's come with her class from school, as has Tommy, my son, who will be turning 10, by the way, in January. We probably won't be in session then. Well, we never know, but just in case, I'll wish him a happy birthday too.

But I know my kids have had the incredible privilege of coming into this building and they really feel at home here, and it's something that when they take away, they talk to their friends about what democracy is all about. And it's—every year, she's reminded on her birthday about the incredible privilege we have to live in a free and democratic society, and so she thinks about that.

And I hope, as she gets older, she learns more and more about the importance of having that freedom and that right to vote for the people that we choose to represent us in the Manitoba Legislature, to represent us in Parliament in Canada, to represent us in our respective municipalities, Mr. Speaker.

And so she and I had a great talk about this yesterday, and she really has a lot of respect. Of course, also on—it's, I believe, 11 days since we celebrated those that fought for us in various in—fought for our way of life, Mr. Speaker. We remembered all of those people who have done that for us on Remembrance Day, and that's something that my children—you know, we all want to ensure that our children understand what we are remembering.

And I know my children have said to me, you know, this is a very important day, and it's a day for us to remember about the freedoms that we are able to live by in this free and democratic society that we have the privilege to live in. And so I'm glad that they, as they get older, are starting to understand about what this is all about. And I think it's important for all of us to celebrate those who have put us in



these positions but always remember those that have fought for our way of life.

I know when I was first elected, some of the issues that I remember asking questions on in this Chamber, and primarily it had to do with keeping young people in Manitoba, and I remember asking questions about, do we really want to be falling behind Saskatchewan, because that's where we were. We were still slightly ahead of Saskatchewan at the time, and there was that fear that we could fall behind and continue to fall behind. And, unfortunately, what we've seen over the course of the last 14 years that this government has been in power is that we've continued to slide further and further behind our neighbours in western Canada, and in particular, our neighbour to the west of us, Saskatchewan.

\* (11:10)

And so that was always a big concern of mine, because I was 30 at the time and I saw a lot of my friends who were starting to have children and starting to move their families to other provinces. And that was of grave concern to me, because I was—I started to think about what is the future going to look like for our children here in Manitoba. And, if we don't put together the policies in our province to encourage young people to stay here in our province, what's going to happen is that there won't be much of a future for them here. And so those were some of things that I really focused on when I was first elected, and I've continued—those are issues that I feel very passionate about and issues that I think we all need to respect and understand, that if we don't encourage and put forward these policies to keep people here they will continue to move to other provinces. And essentially what's happening is that we're educating the workforce of Saskatchewan, Alberta, BC, other provinces, because we know our net interprovincial out-migration numbers. There is a net interprovincial out-migration in this province, and that means that we are losing more people to other provinces than we are gaining from other provinces. And there's a reason for that. It's because we don't have the kind of economic environment in this province that is conducive to keeping people in our province.

Of course, we know that in the last election, Mr. Speaker, the NDP went door to door and they campaigned on no new taxes, not increasing taxes, and they went door to door in their respective ridings and they sold that to the public. They said that they

would not raise taxes, and, of course, their first available opportunity they raised the taxes. In the first budget, what they did is they expanded the scope of the taxes of the things that would be taxed in this province for the PST. And that affected and had a negative impact on Manitobans and, of course, Manitobans were upset about that. But it wasn't as bad—although it is very bad—as what they did the following year, when they increased the PST to 8 per cent, a 14 per cent increase in taxation. And one of the things that is so egregious about that is that we had a piece—we—and we continue to have, still, because Bill 20 has not passed through this Manitoba Legislature yet—but we continue to have laws in our province that should be respected by all members of the Chamber and all Manitobans.

But, unfortunately, we have a government here that does not respect the laws of our province, and what they choose to do instead is when they can't abide by those laws, when they don't do what is in their best political interest, they choose to change those laws. And so what they did by doing that, by introducing Bill 20 and stripping away the democratic right for people to vote on a tax increase, a major tax increase, they took away—they have—they did this for their own political interest. And I think it's incredibly unfortunate that during an election they'll go out and say one thing, but once elected we have no idea what we're going to do. And that eats away at credibility, it eats away at integrity, it eats away at the very fundamental democratic society that we are so privileged to live in. And what this NDP government is doing with Bill 20 is stripping away the rights, the democratic rights, of each and every person in our province.

Manitobans know and knew that they had the right to vote on a PST increase, and the NDP government has taken away their right to vote on that. And I think especially when we're 11 days after remembering on Remembrance Day those people who fought so hard for our democratic way of life, that here we are, unfortunately, in this Manitoba Legislature, debating what is one of the most egregious debates, is stripping away the rights of Manitobans, their democratic rights. You know, bad enough that it was a promise that was made before the last election, a promise that each and every member of the NDP went door to door and they campaigned on that.

And, yes, you know what, they did have an NDP Cabinet in mind—or, sorry, an NDP candidate in my area in Tuxedo. And I know that that candidate went

door to door and campaigned on not raising taxes, but the question is—and what really is unfortunate, is could people really trust that they weren't going to raise taxes. And some people really realized that, no, I think they're saying this, but I don't believe that they're going to follow through in the next election. And so some of those people didn't make it into this Chamber, but some did. Many did, based on the promise that they made in the last election, and a promise that they broke in this province.

So bad enough is it that this NDP government broke their promise in the last election. But what's really egregious about this is that they have stripped away, or they are attempting to strip away—because, again, Bill 20 hasn't passed yet—they've attempted to strip away the rights of—the democratic rights of Manitobans to vote on the PST increase. And I think that is really unfortunate and it strips away at, I believe, their own integrity, their own value system. Whatever you want to call it, Mr. Speaker, it's unfortunate that, when an NDP government doesn't get politically what they want, they just simply change the laws of our province and they break the laws of our province.

So, Mr. Speaker, and I know, you know, the Premier (Mr. Selinger) went around and called the fact that we did call them at the time in the election. We called them out on this, you know, when they said it was simply nonsense that they were going to raise the PS—or that we were going to raise—or that the NDP was going to raise the ND—the PST. But, you know, we've called them on that. Manitobans have called them on that. They've now increased, or they're attempting to increase—well, they have increased the PST. People are already paying it. Over a hundred million dollars has already gone into an increase in the PST, and the clock—and—the—it keeps ticking and it continues to rise each and every day that more and more people are paying that increase in the PST.

And it's unfortunate that Manitobans are being forced to pay for this NDP government's inability to manage the finances of our province, which gets me into talking about the deficits that this NDP government continues to run. And really, you know, they say they're going to balance the budget by 2016, but how can we really believe that they will, Mr. Speaker? I believe that, I think, past behaviour is indicative of future behaviour. And what we've seen is that this, the past behaviour of this government has been one to not—to flip-flop on issues, and so they

say one thing and they do another. Actions speak louder than words.

And I would encourage all members—we'll probably be voting on this Throne Speech today—but I would encourage all members to take at heart that the—one of the biggest issues out there is that they're stripping away the democratic right for Manitobans to vote. And today is a day that each and every member can stand up and vote against that, Mr. Speaker.

So I thank you very much for the opportunity to put a few words on the record today.

**Hon. Erin Selby (Minister of Health):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to be able to rise in the House to speak about our Throne Speech and, of course, to talk a little bit about all the exciting things that are happening around Manitoba. I do also want to take the chance, the time, to thank the people of Southdale for their ongoing commitment to our community, always working to improve things in Southdale, and it's a—really, a pleasure to represent such engaged people who are always informed of what's going on and are really committed to seeing the best for both those of us in Southdale and around the province.

*Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair*

I had the opportunity last night to meet with the folks from the Sage Creek Residents' Association. We had a great meeting. We had a lot of things to talk about. It's a growing community, and I do have to commend the folks in Sage Creek for really organizing and coming together and finding ways to make what is a very new community start to feel like a very active community by hosting events for children. And they have a Christmas event coming up, a holiday event, and they've just had a Halloween one. And they're doing great work, and I know they're looking to other mentors of other residents associations in the area that have done a lot in Island Lakes and across the Southdale constituency to make Southdale—I'll be a bit biased—the best place to live in Manitoba.

I also thought it was interesting, last night we were talking about all of our children, going around the table talking about how old they were. And there were a number of people with quite small kids, and one of them said, well, my daughter is 3, so I'm past the difficult time. So I thought I could perhaps congratulate the member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson) that her daughter has turned 12, but I

think all of us who are heading into the teen years—myself, with 13-year-olds, with my colleague next to me from Minto who's got two teenagers—I just sort of let them stay in their bliss of thinking that once you get to 3 you're past the tough times and it's all smooth sailing from there.

\* (11:20)

That being said, of course, our families are one of the reasons why we're here, because our families support and believe in what we do, and we do have to take time to thank them because we know there are sacrifices they make, as well, for us to be here.

It is a pleasure to be standing here, new portfolio, a responsibility that I take very seriously to the people of Manitoba. But I have had the great luck to follow some fantastic mentors—mentors who have done so much for Manitoba families, for Manitoba Health. I have been able to have the great pleasure of having the mentorship of the MLA for Seine River, of course, who has always been a great strength for me and is always there with her advice; of course, the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), another former Health minister who is, of course, always a fantastic mentor and someone who—that I know I can turn to for support and guidance whenever I need it; and I should recognize, as well, the former MLA for Fort Rouge, Tim Sale, who was also—stood in this seat before I did and did much for the people of Manitoba in his time in this. So I know I want to continue in the great work that all of them have done, but I have the benefit of having great mentors who have gone before me.

This speech really was about reaffirming the fact that this government is listening to Manitoba families, that we care about what they care about. And we know that, of course, jobs are important, making sure that they see that their children succeed, making sure that everyone in Manitoba has an opportunity to fulfill their potential. But none of those things are possible if one doesn't have one's health. What it comes down to—jobs, opportunity, economy—none of them can be fulfilled if one doesn't have their health, if one is worried about the health care of one of their families to make sure that they're getting what they need, and that's why it remains a top priority for this government.

We know what Manitobans don't want. They don't want the two-tier health-care system that the Leader of the Opposition says that he believes in. They want more doctors, they want more nurses,

modern facilities and care for their aging parents, and that's why we're addressing each of those things.

We recently had some research come out that showed very positively that the investments that we've been making in health care, particularly in improvements in access to health care for Manitobans across this province, are working. We know that Manitobans are getting healthier. We know that they are living longer. Of course, when you fire nurses and go to a two-tier system, all of that is put at risk. But, as it is right now, we see less people are getting diabetes; those who have it are living longer. Now, that does, in itself, present some challenges. As people do tend to live longer now with chronic diseases, we have to do more to make sure that they have the health care that they need close to where they need it. They need to have the right health care at the right time. It's why we have been bringing health care closer to home. It's why we have a commitment for a family doctor for all. We know that one of the best things we can do for families is to make sure that they have information, that they have early access to the information and the support that they need, and, of course, we have an emphasis in this government on prevention so that people get the information and learn how to live a healthy lifestyle so that they don't have to move into those later stages and more serious issues with their health care.

We've got some really exciting things coming up over the next year. Many exciting things have happened over the last decade and more, but next year we're actually going to be celebrating the 40th anniversary of home care for seniors in Manitoba, which, of course, is the oldest and the best home-care system in the country. We're going to talk to Manitobans about what we can do to keep improving on that home-care system. We're going to talk about how we can find more flexibility for families, how we can find support for those people caring for a loved one. We certainly know that that home-care system is there for the people who need it, but, of course, those support workers, the family and friends around the loved who may need a little extra help, it's difficult for them as well. And we know that many of those families are both caring for an aged parent and perhaps children at the same time, and that can be challenge for people who are trying to balance everything. So we're going to talk to folks and hear their ideas of how we can better support them, how we can make sure there's flexibility in the system.

But I can also tell people, and I can say it now and promise Manitobans, we won't go back to the user fees that the Leader of the Opposition brought in when he was in government. That is no way to support Manitoba families.

We're also going to make sure that we continue in our path of developing hundreds of more personal-care home beds because, although we have an excellent home-care system, we know that in some cases, for some people, there is a point when home care is not an option, and they do need a little bit more support.

We'll be, upcoming in the next few weeks, announcing more details on two new a-hundred-bed personal-care homes that'll be built in Winnipeg. And that's just a little bit of what we've been doing over the last 10 years.

Is there more to do? Absolutely, but we will continue to work with communities, with RHAs, with doctors, with nurses, health-care professionals and families to make sure that we are providing the best care possible for Manitobans.

I spoke a little bit about our family-doctor-for-all commitment, to make sure that all Manitobans have access to a family doctor by 2015. Of course, we're well on our way to that already. One of that is, of course, opening new clinics so that people have more access. That's including—we'll be looking at opening Access Winnipeg West, a St. Vital QuickCare clinic, and, of course, the new mobile clinic to serve communities in western Manitoba.

This was a new idea for Manitobans but they have really embraced the idea of QuickCare clinics and nurse practitioners. We know we have now got up to 50,000 visits by Manitobans to our QuickCare clinics, which is remarkable. And, from the patient surveys we've heard, the feedback has been fantastic; people have been really pleased with the care that they're getting.

I have had the opportunity to visit the St. Mary's QuickCare clinic. I got my flu shot there and then, a couple of weeks after that, dragged three reluctant teenagers to get their flu shot as well. I have to say, going into that is always challenging because your children build that up to quite a big deal, but by the time they left they were actually smiling and remembering that flu shots not actually as hard as they remembered and it will make us have a healthier year all season long.

We have a commitment, of course, to open more QuickCare clinics, including in my constituency of Southdale. I'm looking forward to that. I know it'll be a wonderful, additional way to serve the people of my constituency and neighbourhoods around as well.

We are beginning construction on several other new clinics, both in Winnipeg and in rural Manitoba. Manitobans will have choice and they will have access to the right care at the right time.

One of the particularly serious areas in health care that I know the former minister really put a lot of work into is, of course, the Cancer Patient Journey Initiative. This is the initiative that will 'rederth'—reduce the time from when someone suspects they might have cancer, to when treatment begins to 60 days or less. We're doing that by enhancing cancer services around the province.

We know that that time of when you suspect you might have cancer to when you may be getting some tests, until you actually have the plan with your doctor, is a worrisome, difficult time for families. It is sleepless nights, and although getting a diagnosis of cancer is a scary thing to hear, having a plan in place and working with your health-care professionals, and knowing what to expect over the next little while for your treatment, makes it a whole lot easier than those nights when you're wondering what's going to happen and what happens next.

So I'm really proud of this government and the work that the minister before me did to start off this initiative and I'm—really think it's going to make a huge difference in the lives of so many Manitoba families.

We're—also be officially opening the new Cancer QuickCare Clinic at CancerCare Manitoba at the Health Sciences Centre. This is a really important initiative to families who are going through cancer treatment. Occasionally, someone going through treatment may need to see a doctor in an unplanned visit. They're not feeling well; perhaps something doesn't seem right to them. And the fact that we can dedicate their own quick care emergency urgent need area means that cancer patients who are already, we know, not feeling very well, won't have to go to an emergency room. And, of course, often when people are undergoing cancer treatment, their immune system might be down. And, by doing this, it means that they won't have to be exposed to as many of the different things that people may have in an emergency room. I think that's a really exciting

initiative that will really make a difference for people who are undergoing the treatment.

\* (11:30)

I do have to put on the record, because it wouldn't be right for me not to, to just mention that my daughters were the divisional volleyball champions, as of last night—very proud of them. They worked hard as a team. They did very, very well, and I think we have a week before basketball starts, so we're ready to go. I'm not quite sure how I managed to raise these daughters who are so in love with sports. I was more of a ballet dancer myself, but my daughters are obsessed with sports and I have learned how to cheer like any veteran sports fan has. But, being that they have moved from dance class into sports, I do worry a little bit more about some of the injuries that come along, as do so many parents. We know that particularly a head injury can be concerning to parents. One wonders, when is it okay to go back to play, how long should they be off, and, of course, we hear about, in cases where somebody has repeatedly had a concussion, that it can do some long-term damage, and this is something that—we don't want to limit our children from playing, but we want to make sure that they are getting the best help they can.

And that's why in the next couple coming months we will be announcing a new approach to clinical management and research of concussions in children and youth so that we can know what the best practices are for children and know that when it's good to get them back out in the field and how to play safe. Definitely important to Manitoba families, and I know as a parent, it's good to have that extra support. Since the girls have got into sports, it seems that I have visited the Pan Am Clinic more than I expected to, but it has been incredible how—the great service we've had there, the caring service and, of course, very knowledgeable on how to best heal some of the injuries that we have been facing.

I can tell you that we remain committed to Manitoba families. We know that health care is important to them. It's important to us. It's important to our families as well. We will continue to work with people, to listen to what they say. We'll continue to find efficiencies and innovative ways to provide health care in this province, and I can guarantee that we won't make some of the mistakes that we saw in the '90s.

I have to say, and I will just end up with a quote, actually, that I just read on Twitter this morning.

I know that members opposite can be pretty negative about this province and they don't feel the way I do about my home province. I love Manitoba. I have great faith in Manitobans and I'm really glad to hear that there are other people who do as well. The quote that I read on Twitter this morning regarding centre point was, big things are on the way. Prime Minister Stephen Harper says big things are on the way for Manitoba. So, while we remain positive on this side of the House, and I'm glad to hear that our federal government remains positive and excited about Manitoba's future, I sure hope that the folks on the other side of the House will get on board of the good things that are going on in Manitoba and embrace the positive spirit of the people of this province. Thank you.

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach):** I appreciate the opportunity to put a few words on the record. I want to advise the minister it's actually CentrePort, not centre point. If she's positive, she might want to positively get the information correct as well.

*Mr. Speaker in the Chair*

I do want to say, Mr. Speaker, that it is a pleasure for me to be here, of course, representing the wonderful constituency of Steinbach, which makes up the city of Steinbach and a portion of the Rural Municipality of Hanover, and always a pleasure to come to this Chamber to represent the views of the people of that growing and very industrious riding as they continue to do great things for the province of Manitoba, and it's just my good fortune to be able to represent them. It's not something that I often feel that I deserve. They often are the ones who are doing so many great things and I get to go along for the ride often. But I appreciate the opportunity that they allow me to continue to be their voice in the Legislature and to talk about the great things that they are doing.

There was some discussion about anniversaries, and the positive anniversaries. But, unfortunately, this is also an anniversary of a not-so-pleasant event, and that was the assassination of John F. Kennedy. John Fitzgerald Kennedy, 50 years ago, was killed in Dallas, and I want to acknowledge that. I think we're probably getting close to the time, actually, that it happened. I had the opportunity to visit Dealey Plaza in Dallas a couple of years ago, and it's like walking into a time capsule when you see the videos of the assassination, and it looks the same today as it did then, and it's really a somber moment and I know they're having a somber moment there today.

I heard this morning interviews with some of the Secret Service agents who were there at the time, and we remember our friends in the US. It was a seminal moment, obviously, in US history and changed the direction of the 1960s and, in many ways, times after that. So we remember our American friends who are thinking about a sad anniversary today, and we, of course, hope and pray that there's never a repeat of that kind of tragedy and violence.

I want to also—to acknowledge yourself, Mr. Speaker, for your good work, and not just this session but in particularly last session. And since you've become Speaker—it's a difficult job, obviously, and there's always changing environments and changing times, and every session has its own sort of feel and its own certain flow.

And I've appreciated, as House leader, the opportunity to speak to you about issues as they've arisen; sometimes at my request, sometimes at your request, sometimes very suddenly at your request. But I do appreciate that we've had the opportunity to—I think, to work through issues in a reasonably and collegial way and come to a sort of position that makes things in this House not always perfect but at least function in a way that is representative for Manitobans. And where we make mistakes, you correct us, and that is your job and we respect that and appreciate the even way that you do it.

I also want to thank the Clerk's office for the advice that they continue to give me as House leader, and also our staff. And I know and I appreciate the fact that the Clerk's office had a bit of a meeting with some of our staff recently, they took the time to do that and that was very helpful as they sort of went through the rules of the House and the Assembly and gave some of our newer staff a better appreciation about how things work or should work, and where to go when they have questions. And that's often the biggest part of it, is where do you go to get your question answered. And so that was very nice of them to take the time to do that for our staff as well.

I want to welcome the pages here to the Assembly; we appreciate the service you provide us. It's often a service that is—goes unnoticed, but it never goes unappreciated. So we thank you very much for the work that you are doing and for serving this Chamber, and we know that you have great futures ahead of you as well, and this is one step in those great futures.

So this is clearly something, Mr. Speaker, where the government was trying to reset the agenda, trying

to reset things that had happened with this particular Throne Speech. They tried a little bit of that with the Cabinet shuffle, with the break that we had between the adjournment in September and now—try to reset the agenda by resetting their Cabinet.

They have a couple of new faces and removed a couple of the—not old faces, but more veteran ministers, Mr. Speaker, to try to make it seem to Manitobans that there was some sort of change in the government. But the problem is—and we hear it already with the new ministers, is that there's no change in actual philosophy. It's as though the new minister is either new to Cabinet or new to their roles, simply just took the talking points of the exiting ministers and are just repeating them. So it's a different person saying the same thing, but it doesn't actually change the philosophy of government. And I think ultimately that's what Manitobans were looking for. If you truly wanted to have a change, then you can't just simply change the person who's giving the message; you have to change the message itself. And that is what the government, I think, has failed to do.

And there's a reason why most Manitobans don't believe this government, and it's just not me saying that as a partisan politician. When we look at the polling that's happened, we see that the vast majority of Manitobans, the 70 or 80 per cent, don't believe that the government had to raise to PST, don't believe that it was necessary to achieve the goals of government, Mr. Speaker. That is information that is polled in a non-political way by a polling company that doesn't have a particular political bent; it's not paid by a political party. And they've come up with the information that 80 per cent of Manitobans don't believe this government had to raise the PST, which is probably why the government decided not to go to a referendum, the legally required referendum, because they knew if 80 per cent of Manitobans, of course, didn't think it was necessary, they weren't going to win that referendum. And it's no surprise, and we've seen the different messages that have come from government, the mixed messages, the confusing messages that Manitobans wouldn't believe that this is necessary.

You know, we started the whole discussion of the PST when the budget came down, the government tried—the NDP tried to indicate that it was necessary because of this massive flood that was coming, the new flood that was coming in the spring of this year. Now, I took a drive out along the 75 at that time and barely saw any snowpack then. And I know that flooding along the Red River comes from

things other than snowpack, but that is certainly one of the key variations. And so we went along and didn't see that. We looked at the US weather forecasts, Mr. Speaker, and didn't see what the panic was about. In fact, the mayor of Morris came forward and he said that the government was probably causing hysteria for no particular reason.

\* (11:40)

And we found out later on, about two days after all the flood offices opened with some amount of fanfare and media publicity, that all the flood offices closed because there, in fact, wasn't the kind of flood that the government was predicting and trying to sell the PST on.

So they changed their message. We went from the government saying—the NDP saying that they needed the increase to the PST to deal with the flood to a flood of announcements. We saw the announcements on splash parks all over and in various places and the NDP, and the then—the now-former minister of Finance, the member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers), telling people, well, we needed to raise the PST because we wanted to build these splash parks, Mr. Speaker. And he held press conferences and news conferences.

Then we saw that there was announcements about murals, about paintings on the sides of buildings and that's why we needed to raise the PST. Now, I'm all in favour of nice paintings and I've seen some of the murals on the sides of different buildings. There's some in my community. I don't think they were government funded but I—you know, you see some of these—nothing's really government funded, it seems, in our communities—but, you know, you see some of these things and you go, oh, that's nice. That might be, you know, a nice thing to have. There are a lot of nice things to have but do you really want to raise the PST on every Manitoba—Manitoban to pay for these sort of things? And I would suggest that the answer is no, and I think the vast majority of Manitobans would say, no, that isn't necessary.

But they continue to do these announcements about how they needed the PST increase because of the splash parks and because of paintings and I think that they heard back from Manitobans, that they didn't believe that that was a priority. I think many Manitobans came and said, we don't think we should have to pay more for these types of things, not that they aren't good things or things that they might not like, but it's about priorities and how much you want

to pay for certain things. And, so, clearly the government decided that they had to change the message track, they had to come up with some kind of a different message and so that's what we saw in the Throne Speech.

Now they're trying to convince Manitobans well, no, everything is going to go for core infrastructure. Now that raises a lot of questions, Mr. Speaker. You know, we still haven't got a very clear and definitive idea about what core infrastructure actually is, but it also raises the question of all the money that was apparently spent in the spring and summer on the PST that went to the splash parks and the paintings and things that clearly wouldn't be considered core infrastructure. What happened to all that money? Because apparently it was already spent and expended on these particular projects and now their government is saying, oh, no, absolutely not; we're going to just be using it for core infrastructure.

So, in many ways I think they've caused more confusion. We certainly heard from the Association of Manitoba Municipalities and the different councillors involved with AMM, who are already very concerned about forced amalgamation, but who were also concerned and said, well, we understood that some of this would be for municipal infrastructure. But we are not getting any clear indication about what portion of the PST is going to be for municipal infrastructure. They don't have any criteria, in terms of what portion of that is going to go for municipal infrastructure. We've seen the government in the past talk about how the gas tax was all going to go for roads and for bridges, and then we find out that that didn't happen. They underspent their budget in infrastructure which is the only place that they seem to underspend their budget, Mr. Speaker, and that speaks to priority.

So we understand that this Throne Speech was about trying to reset the agenda, to try to have new messengers, although spinning out the same old message, to try to clear up some of the confusion. But, ultimately, it created more confusion than it cleared up. And Manitobans still don't believe, and I suppose we'll perhaps see, you know, different—whether they're surveys or anecdotal sort of things, we'll see that in the future. But I suspect that the vast majority of Manitobans still don't believe that it was necessary to increase the PST, still don't believe that the government couldn't have found savings internally or found ways to have real priorities to ensure that they didn't have to take more tax from Manitobans.

Now I know that they're trying to now suggest that all of these or that this particular tax increase was the result of having to match the federal infrastructure program, a program which I don't think the criteria has even been established yet, at this particular point, Mr. Speaker. But, you know, suggesting that it has to be put in place to match federal infrastructure money, well, I, you know, I've looked across the country and I haven't seen any other province, any other government, regardless of political stripe, who've come out and said they've had to raise their provincial sales tax to match the federal program, a federal program that everybody knew was either coming or was going to be ongoing because they've had a federal infrastructure program, a build Canada fund in the past.

So that excuse hasn't really washed with Manitobans either. Manitobans don't believe that this government couldn't have found another way, couldn't have found a different way, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that they wouldn't have had to pay more. And Manitobans, I think, are feeling a squeeze. Manitobans feel that they are paying not only their fair share in taxes but probably more than their fair share in taxes. And we have many new Canadians and new Manitobans who come to our province who are struggling to get their life going, to build a new home in this wonderful province of ours, to build a new future in Manitoba and that is made harder for them. That is made more difficult for them because of this PST tax increase, and they have been talking to us, and certainly I've talked to them as well and they have expressed those concerns that they are having a more and more difficult time.

I had a great opportunity to meet with a number of Filipino leaders a couple of days ago, and that was one of the concerns that they raised. They said, you know, we are having a tough time. We're struggling because we are feeling that there's more squeeze coming on us tax-wise, and they specifically identified the provincial sales tax, and they wondered why government wasn't able to live with the money that they had and where all this money was going, and my friends in the Filipino community were quite disappointed in this government. And I would suggest that some of them were probably supporters of this government previously, but they have concerns. They have concerns now.

As I move to conclude my comments, Mr. Speaker, I do want to acknowledge our friends in the Filipino community, and many of us have grown to have strong connections within our Filipino

community as they've come to make Manitoba their home. And I know that there's many who are struggling with either the devastation in the Philippines, not knowing where family members are or their friends, or not knowing what the outcome is going to be for them in the future, and I certainly encourage all Manitobans to continue to be generous. I know Manitobans are generous.

There are many in my community and I think throughout Manitoba who have been contributing to the disaster relief. I appreciate the fact that there has been some provincial money that has been put forward for disaster relief in the Philippines and the federal matching contribution plan for all Canadians who want to give to a registered charity in support of helping those in the Philippines. I would encourage them to do that at this time of the year as we remember our friends who have family and who have friends in the Philippines who might not be accounted for or who are simply going to need that support as they rebuild their neighbourhoods or communities, their towns and their cities. So we want to continue to encourage Manitobans to be part of that effort and to help those in the Philippines who are really an extension now of our own community, and we all have strong connections and feel strong friendship and kinship to that community.

So, with those few words, I look forward to the vote on this particular Throne Speech. I hope that I've done enough to convince members of the government to vote against their Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker. I'm not optimistic, but I will try to be optimistic in the next few minutes. But we'll see the outcome.

Thank you very much.

**Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** It is a pleasure to get up and speak about this government's Throne Speech. It's always a pleasure to follow the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen). This was a far more subdued member for Steinbach. I guess he's been too busy on the Ted Falk campaign in Provencher to get into a full flight.

Indeed, a Throne Speech is a statement of where our government's going and what legislation we can expect to see in the course of the session, what policies the government's going to bring in and, most importantly, what choices a government is going to make, and this Throne speech, Mr. Speaker, is a clear statement of the things that matter most to Manitoba families. And in just a few minutes we'll each have



the chance, representing our own communities, to stand in our place and either support this vision for Manitoba or, as members may choose to, fail to support this vision for Manitoba, and everybody is going to make their own choice and I'll be interested to see what happens in just a few minutes.

You know, as a member of the Legislature, there's many events that they were privileged to attend and there was a big one just last week. It was a pleasure to be part of the Santa Claus Parade in my own community here in Winnipeg, and I was very pleased to join the member for St. James (Ms. Crothers) along Portage Avenue, my own community, with 60,000 or 70,000 friends and neighbours in the community. And, of course, I spend a lot of time at street level in my own community on Ellice and Sargent and the other streets in the West End, but it was certainly great to walk along Portage Avenue and it is incredible how many people you recognize as you walk along the streets. Even though we have a large and growing capital city, it is still a place where you can recognize people and talk to people. And at the end of the parade, after being greeted by people pretty much every step of the way, my wife and I walked back to where our car was parked by the West End BIZ on Langside. And it was incredible the people that we were able to meet, the CEO of a major hotel corporation here in Manitoba who continues to invest millions and millions of dollars in Manitoba because he and his company know that this is a growing economy, it's a positive economy, and they're voting with their feet by investing their money, just like so many other businesses across this country.

\* (11:50)

And who else did I meet? I met a financial adviser, fellow who actually came to Manitoba just a few years ago under the Provincial Nominee Program, who is so excited about what's going on in our province, who's so excited about the opportunities and, Mr. Speaker, so grateful for the chance to be able to come to our province and build his life here.

Well, who else did I talk to? Well, I talked to every cadet, every auxiliary police cadet I could find along the way. It was a happy crowd. There wasn't actually a lot for cadets to do, but what a great opportunity thanks to investments from this government to providing more means for keeping Winnipeggers and Manitobans safe. And it was a pleasure to talk to them.

Saw my brother and my sister-in-law, because you never know who you're going to see on the streets. Saw leaders in the union movement, in the business community, from government, from universities and colleges. And what a great community where you can go out and, in the course of an evening, you can talk to people across the spectrum.

And what is the most wonderful was the joy that people have. The joy—not just the wonder of the little ones with the exciting season coming, but the excitement that people have in the renaissance of downtown Winnipeg, the hope that people in this province have, the optimism that the people have and the beauty of our downtown, which has really been a great thing.

And it's a reminder, Mr. Speaker, as you walk along Portage Avenue that, you know, the best answers don't always come within this building. The best answers come from Portage Avenue or Saskatchewan Avenue or Rosser Avenue or the main streets in communities across this province. I'll tell you, all the answers don't come from the corporate board rooms. The answers sure don't come from those dimly lit upper rooms in the Manitoba Club, where I know members of the opposition get their inspiration. And they sure don't come from mansions on Wellington Crescent. No, they come from ordinary homes and ordinary businesses from all across this province who give us the best ideas to govern for all the people of this province.

And certainly, Mr. Speaker, in my role as Justice Minister, we know that people are entitled to be safe in their homes and in their communities. And we know that we can be tough on crime, and that's a big part of what we've done over the past 14 years. But we know that Manitobans expect us to be smart on crime. And that means taking a balanced approach. It means having the right laws in Manitoba. It means continuing to advocate for the federal government to make changes to laws to better protect Canadians, something Manitobans have been incredibly successful at doing over the past 14 years. But it also means preventing crime from happening in the first place.

And, you know, 2013 is not yet over, but I've been getting the reports from the Winnipeg Police Service and the Brandon Police Service, from other municipalities and the RCMP, and 2013 may in fact be a year in which we see—the largest year-to-'dyear' decrease in crime in Manitoba's history. And that is a large measure of the great work that police are doing.

The police are part of it. It's also the benefits the communities are receiving, the work that people are doing to keep people out of the legal system to make sure that young people have an opportunity to get through school, to get their high school, to move on and take whatever it is they want to do after high school and remain on the good side of things.

And I was so proud to be at an event on Selkirk Avenue just a couple of weeks ago. And I was joined by the Premier (Mr. Selinger), by the Minister for Children and Youth Opportunities, the Minister of Family Services (Ms. Irvin-Ross), the mayor of our city, our police chief and his executive team, Diane Roussin of the Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre and many other community partners as we announced Block by Block. And, Mr. Speaker, that's an initiative; it's going to offer intensive, co-ordinated, community-driven, community-based services to people in crisis or at risk of becoming involved with the law, because we've been told, and we know, that when people and families reach a crisis, the lines between government departments, community agencies and other service providers really don't matter. When people are in crisis, they need help, and we're going to continue to find better ways to achieve that. And our goal is to offer seamless integrated service to people in the community where they need it most when they need it most. And the ultimate goal is to improve neighbourhood safety but to also provide important resources for the health and well-being of families and children who may be at risk.

Block by Block will identify barriers to accessing service, and our Province will continue to review program guidelines and rules to see if they can be improved and offer better, more comprehensive services to Manitobans. And this is really a new approach to community safety, with focused, early intervention for people in crisis. And we know this could break the cycle of violence and crime, and we know it can reduce violent crime not just in the area in William Whyte, but we believe it can work across the province.

This program was first pioneered in Glasgow, Scotland, a city which has many challenges of its own. A similar initiative was launched in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, and it's now being rolled out in certain Saskatchewan communities. And in Saskatchewan they've seen violent crime reduced there by more than 30 per cent. We're hoping to do as well as that and even better as we expand this across the province.

And our government is working to tackle violent crime head-on with common sense solutions that will crack down on criminals but, of course, give young people alternatives to being involved in illegal activities. And it's true, Mr. Speaker, we all have a part to play in making our neighbourhood safer and stronger, and with a strong balance of prevention and consequences in place, we are working, as New Democrats, to make our homes, our communities, our neighbourhoods safer for Manitoba families because that's being smart on crime.

And, of course, I was pleased there were other parts of the Throne Speech which dealt with public safety. It's interesting, of course, in the poorly worded motion that the Leader of the Opposition put forward, there actually wasn't a single word about crime or public safety or justice. It didn't even take up a single word in their motion in opposition to the Throne Speech. So I'll take my time to continue talking about some of the things that we're doing to continue building our safer communities.

Of course, we're going to build on the success of the Winnipeg Police Service Auxiliary Cadets. And I know the members are chirping because they don't want people to remember that they voted against the additional resources for police cadets in the city of Winnipeg. We promised, Mr. Speaker, to expand that program outside of the Perimeter Highway, and I'm very pleased we've committed to working with the RCMP and the City of Thompson to find a way to have community safety enhanced in that community, and I'm going to be very excited as we talk about that in the year to come.

And this, I expect, will be a model that other communities in Manitoba may choose to participate in to provide greater community safety and also greater pathways for individuals who may be underrepresented in law enforcement to step up and to join community safety cadets or other programs and find that a pathway to becoming involved in law enforcement in a positive way, Mr. Speaker, and that's exciting.

We know, Mr. Speaker, that being smart on crime means helping our police to be as effective as they can possibly be. And, of course, in the city of Winnipeg we've been involved with the Winnipeg Police Service, outside of Winnipeg with other police services, not just to add the number of police officers, which we've done year after year after year, and again, the opposite side is chirping because they don't want people to know that, despite from time to

time saying they're tough on crime, they are soft when it comes to giving more support to police services in Winnipeg, in Brandon, in every other community of this province, and we'll continue to remind them.

But we're going beyond just putting more boots on the ground. We're also assisting the Winnipeg Police Service and other police services to expand their research in their analytic capacity, and as I've said, Mr. Speaker, this may be a year, but it's the greatest year-over-year decrease in crime, and I want to give a lot of credit to our police services for the work that they're doing to stop crime from happening in the first place.

Now, as well, of course, the Throne Speech talks about The Criminal Property Forfeiture Act, and I know this is another sore point for the members opposite, because there was Hugh McFadyen, with the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) at his hip, and what did Hugh McFadyen say about The Criminal Property Forfeiture Act? It won't do anything to take on organized crime.

Well, the member for Steinbach and the old leader of the opposition, who actually, I'm sure, is looking really good over there right now, for the folks in that caucus—it's their rejuvenation of Hugh McFadyen—but what did he say? He said it wouldn't do anything. He was wrong 5.7 million times over, because The Criminal Property Forfeiture Act is allowing police to work with the provincial unit to hurt organized crime, to hit them where it counts, to take away their property, take away houses, take away vehicles, take away cash, and turn around and give that money to the victims of crime, to give that money to agencies serving victims of crime, and to give that money to police services so they have even better equipment for the protection of their officers and, of course, for the protection of the general public.

Mr. Speaker, that's what being smart on crime is all about, and I guess I'm not surprised we didn't hear a single word in the opposition motion on the Throne Speech, which could be a first for the Progressive Conservative opposition, but—[*interjection*]-well, the Conservative opposition, one of my colleagues points out.

\* (12:00)

You know, whether you're living in the North or you're living in the West End of Winnipeg or any other community, you want your kids to have the

best opportunity to pursue their dreams here in Manitoba, and, more and more, Mr. Speaker, that's been happening in our province, and I am very proud of the other investments that are being made for good jobs, better education and training for families. And I know members opposite only want it to be the richest to have those opportunities. We believe in everybody—

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

The hour being 12 noon, pursuant to rule 45(5), I am interrupting the proceedings in order to put the question on the motion of the honourable member for Burrows (Ms. Wight), that is, the motion for an address in reply to the Speech from the Throne.

Do members wish to have the motion read?

**Some Honourable Members:** No.

**Mr. Speaker:** No? Dispense.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some Honourable Members:** No.

**Some Honourable Members:** Yes.

**Mr. Speaker:** I hear a no.

#### Voice Vote

**Mr. Speaker:** All those in favour of the amendment—the motion, please signify by saying aye.

**Some Honourable Members:** Aye.

**Mr. Speaker:** All those opposed to the motion, please signify by saying nay.

**Some Honourable Members:** Nay.

**Mr. Speaker:** Opinion of the Chair, the Ayes have it.

#### Recorded Vote

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader):** Recorded vote, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Recorded vote having been requested, call in the members.

\* (12:10)

Order, please.

The question before the House is the motion of the honourable member for Burrows, that is, the motion for an address in reply to the Speech from the Throne.

**Division**

*A RECORDED VOTE* was taken, the result being as follows:

**Yeas**

*Allan, Allum, Altemeyer, Ashton, Bjornson, Blady, Braun, Caldwell, Chief, Chomiak, Crothers, Dewar, Gaudreau, Howard, Irvin-Ross, Kostyshyn, Lemieux, Mackintosh, Maloway, Marcelino (Logan), Marcelino (Tyndall Park), Melnick, Nevakshonoff, Oswald, Pettersen, Robinson, Rondeau, Saran, Selby, Selinger, Struthers, Swan, Whitehead, Wiebe, Wight.*

**Nays**

*Briese, Driedger, Eichler, Ewasko, Friesen, Gerrard, Goertzen, Graydon, Helwer, Mitchelson, Pallister,*

*Pedersen, Rowat, Schuler, Smook, Stefanson, Wishart.*

**Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk):** Yeas 35, Nays 17.

**Mr. Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

\* \* \*

**Hon. Andrew Swan (Government House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, would you canvass the House to see if there's leave to call it 12:30 p.m.

**Mr. Speaker:** Is there leave of the House to call it 12:30 p.m.? *[Agreed]*

The hour being 12:30 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. on Monday.

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, November 22, 2013

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