

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

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

Vol. LXIX No. 3 - 1:30 p.m., Wednesday, May 18, 2016

ISSN 0542-5492

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-First Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALLUM, James	Fort Garry-Riverview	NDP
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	NDP
BINDLE, Kelly	Thompson	PC
CHIEF, Kevin	Point Douglas	NDP
CLARKE, Eileen, Hon.	Agassiz	PC
COX, Cathy, Hon.	River East	PC
CULLEN, Cliff, Hon.	Spruce Woods	PC
CURRY, Nic	Kildonan	PC
DRIEDGER, Myrna, Hon.	Charleswood	PC
EICHLER, Ralph, Hon.	Lakeside	PC
EWASKO, Wayne	Lac du Bonnet	PC
FIELDING, Scott, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
FLETCHER, Steven, Hon.	Assiniboia	PC
FONTAINE, Nahanni	St. Johns	NDP
FRIESEN, Cameron, Hon.	Morden-Winkler	PC
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GOERTZEN, Kelvin, Hon.	Steinbach	PC
GRAYDON, Clifford	Emerson	PC
GUILLEMARD, Sarah	Fort Richmond	PC
HELWER, Reg	Brandon West	PC
ISLEIFSON, Len	Brandon East	PC
JOHNSON, Derek	Interlake	PC
JOHNSTON, Scott	St. James	PC
KINEW, Wab	Fort Rouge	NDP
KLASSEN, Judy	Kewatinook	Lib.
LAGASSÉ, Bob	Dawson Trail	PC
LAGIMODIERE, Alan	Selkirk	PC
LAMOUREUX, Cindy	Burrows	Lib.
LATHLIN, Amanda	The Pas	NDP
LINDSEY, Tom	Flin Flon	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Flor	Logan	NDP
MARCELINO, Ted	Tyndall Park	NDP
MARTIN, Shannon	Morris	PC
MAYER, Colleen	St. Vital	PC
MICHALESKI, Brad	Dauphin	PC
MICKLEFIELD, Andrew	Rossmere	PC
MORLEY-LECOMTE, Janice	Seine River	PC
NESBITT, Greg	Riding Mountain	PC
PALLISTER, Brian, Hon.	Fort Whyte	PC
PEDERSEN, Blaine, Hon.	Midland	PC
PIWNIUK, Doyle	Arthur-Virden	PC
REYES, Jon	St. Norbert	PC
SARAN, Mohinder	The Maples	NDP
SCHULER, Ron, Hon.	St. Paul	PC
SELINGER, Greg	St. Boniface	NDP
SMITH, Andrew	Southdale	PC
SMOOK, Dennis	La Verendrye	PC
SQUIRES, Rochelle, Hon.	Riel	PC
STEFANSON, Heather, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
SWAN, Andrew	Minto	NDP
TEITSMA, James	Radisson	PC
WHARTON, Jeff	Gimli	PC
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
WISHART, Ian, Hon.	Portage la Prairie	PC
WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC
YAKIMOSKI, Blair	Transcona	PC

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, May 18, 2016

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Madam Speaker: Introduction of bills? Committee reports? Tabling of reports? Ministerial statements?

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Bear Clan Patrol—First Anniversary

Mr. Kevin Chief (Point Douglas): Madam Speaker, when I walk through my neighbourhood, I am reminded of the many people who have shown me anything is possible.

It's been one year since the Bear Clan resumed its patrols, and the results have been incredible. Not only are people coming together from all walks of life, but other provinces are looking to our neighbourhood and Manitoba as a role model.

One year ago, James Favel, a Bear Clan organizer, wondered if he'd get enough people to walk Winnipeg's North End streets. Now the Bear Clan has nearly 100 people who have signed on to help make Winnipeg's streets safer for everyone.

The Bear Clan has provided critical support, amplifying the essential work done by police services. Our community and the Winnipeg Police Service are working together with Bear Clan to strive for a better city by helping people find belonging and sharing stories that make us realize we're more connected by our vulnerabilities than we are by our strengths.

James has been in touch with like-minded folks from coast to coast who want to tap into the Bear Clan formula. He's spoken via telephone with people in Labrador, Skyped with a university in British Columbia and met with visitors from Kenora and Regina.

When Shawna Ochoo, co-founder of North Central End the Violence campaign in Regina, wanted to help her neighbourhood, she looked east to Winnipeg for guidance. Ochoo spearheaded the White Pony Lodge movement, borrowing ideas and insight directly from Bear Clan's successes.

Thank you, Bear Clan Patrol, for the sense of pride you're creating in our North End and our province and the inspiration you've given to people across Canada. Congratulations on your first year back in operation, and here's to many more.

Manito Ahbee

Mr. Alan Lagimodiere (Selkirk): It gives me great pleasure to stand in the House today to recognize the colourful celebration that is Manito Ahbee.

Manito Ahbee has become a highly important celebration of indigenous music and culture here in Manitoba.

Manito Ahbee Festival is to engage all nations, indigenous and nonindigenous, in the spirit of the international celebrations of Aboriginal music, arts, culture and heritage. The festival's goal is educate, entertain, inspire and unify.

The site of one of North America's largest powwows, Manito Ahbee is far more than a music celebration. It is a celebration of indigenous culture and a statement of the important historic and current-day contributions of the indigenous peoples to our great province and to Canada as a whole.

I think that all Manitobans can take pride in knowing that this event is widely recognized as one of the premier indigenous festivals in North America.

I would like to thank all the organizers and volunteers for their work in putting on this inspiring festival. Here's to a memorial—memorable and successful celebration.

Thank you. Miigwech.

Alberto Grospe

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): Madam Speaker, I rise to offer my deepest sympathy to the friends, colleagues and family of Alberto Grospe.

Alberto was killed May 5th in an accident at Russel Metals on St. James Street in Winnipeg.

He will be greatly missed by his wife, Annabelle; their son Alvin; his son Al-Christian; his daughter Angela; his grandchildren Christian and Nikayla; his mother, Lydia; his three siblings Romeo, Shirley and Herman; and his in-laws, the Gamboa, Petrasanta and Jiao families.

As his family writes about him, Alberto was born in the Philippines, where he served with the Central Armed Forces Geological Unit, as the president of the Tricycle Driver Association in San Jose City.

He came to Canada in 1990, where he served his community as the treasurer of the Knights of Columbus St. Edward's Parish Council, and he worked as a computer numerically controlled, CNC, operator-programmer for Russel Metals for the past 12 years.

His family will remember him as a shutterbug and an avid gardener, a fisherman and, most of all, a jack of all trades.

Manitoba Workplace Safety and Health has placed a stop-work order on the employer in order to conduct an investigation, and the employer is required to conduct a joint internal investigation in co-ordination with the United Steelworkers Local 9704. We hope these investigations will tell us exactly what went wrong.

Any time a worker is killed, it is an injury to all workers. Our caucus will work to make sure workers' safety and health remains at the forefront of the new government.

Our hearts are with the Grospe family as they adjust to a life without Alberto.

Madam Speaker, I ask leave for a moment's silence in memory of Alberto Grospe.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave? *[Agreed]*

A moment of silence was observed.

* (13:40)

Madam Speaker: I would just indicate, that at the end—and I know this will be a learning experience for everybody—that it will be the table officers that will indicate when the moment of silence is over through me as the Speaker. Thank you.

Any further members' statements?

Ross L. Gray School Varsity Basketball Teams

Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye): Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to take this opportunity to extend my sincere congratulations to the members and coaching staff of the Ross L. Gray School basketball program. This little school with a big heart ensures that they remain a provincial leader in varsity girls and varsity boys A basketball.

This year, the Manitoba High Schools Athletic Association single A provincials in Vita and Elm Creek, the varsity girls team, led by Coach Darryl Pederson and Assistant Coach Ainsley Pederson, won the provincial varsity girls A basketball championship for the second year in a row.

Mr. Pederson received the single A coach-of-the-year award last year, and Katelin Thiessen was named the MVP of this year's provincials. She was also named to the second team all-Manitoba team at this year's graduating all-star banquet.

Ross L. Gray School has 141 students enrolled, with only 38 enrolled in grades 9 to 12, making it one of the smallest high schools in the province. The school has only four girls that are eligible to play varsity—junior varsity, but you need five to make a team. Therefore, these girls played with the junior varsity boys team as well as the varsity team.

The varsity boys had a very successful year as well. After winning three consecutive championships, they earned a silver medal for the last two years. They are led by Coach Robert Stradeski and Assistant Coach Keith Preteau. Mr. Stradeski was named the single A coach of the year for varsity boys basketball for this year, and Jordan Hebel represented Ross L. Gray School at the annual graduating A-AAA all-star game that was held in Winnipeg this spring, which was also coached by Mr. Stradeski. Jordan was also named a member of the first team all-Manitoba team.

Madam Speaker, the hard work and dedication of the players, coaches, staff and parents is why the Ross L. Gray Raiders have been so successful. On behalf of myself and all my constituents in La Verendrye, I would like to congratulate the Raiders on their second straight championship and outstanding accomplishments. I look forward to seeing them capture their third straight title in 2017.

Thank you.

I ask for leave to have the names of the boys and girls teams put in Hansard.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave for the names to be included in Hansard? *[Agreed]*

Members of the girls team are Cassidy Davis, Danielle Hacault, Liana Hebel-Allard, Alexis Sigurdson, Rachel Brown, Frances Lerma, Katelin Thiessen, Haleigh Zimmerman, Kayla Fortin, Tianna O'Connor, Kailey Cooper, Shavon Dumas

Members of the boys team are Kyle Cooper, Carson Hebel, Jordan Hebel, James Sonnichsen, Tyler Vinet, Cyrus O'Connor, Kevin Zebrasky, Colton Meek, Walker Meek, Sebastien Brindle, Paul Hacault, Ethan Prevost, Caleb Roch

Yellowhead Chiefs Female AAA Midget Hockey

Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain): Madam Speaker, I rise today to salute the Yellowhead Chiefs female AAA midget hockey team, based in Shoal Lake in my constituency of Riding Mountain.

This group of fine young women won the Manitoba female AAA midget hockey league title in a thrilling five-game series with the Central Plains Capitals based in Portage la Prairie. The Chiefs trailed 2-1 in the series before winning the final two games, the last on home ice.

With the series win, the Manitoba champions earned the right to host the Saskatoon Stars in the west regional playoff for the Esso Cup national championship.

The Communiplex in Shoal Lake was packed on April 1st and 2nd with hockey fans from across the Riding Mountain region coming out to cheer on the Chiefs. The true sense of pride from all over Westman truly made for a great environment. The Chiefs may have lost the best-of-three series to the Stars but certainly won the hearts of hockey fans with their never-give-up style of play.

This team of fine young women from communities stretching from Brandon to Dauphin and Russell to Rivers are certainly dedicated to their sport, travelling countless miles over the winter to Shoal Lake for practices and games.

As we all know, a good team requires leadership. Head Coach Derek Tibatts, assistant coaches Kristin Nickel and Mike Adams and Manager Bill Brown are to be commended for giving of their time to work with the team.

The Yellowhead female Chiefs are a fine example of hockey players but, more importantly, excellent ambassadors for our great province. Many

of them have now committed to going on to university hockey programs and will bring their incredible hockey skills to new heights.

Madam Speaker, I would ask leave to allow for the names of the players and coaching staff to be printed in Hansard.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave to allow the names to be printed in Hansard? *[Agreed]*

Miranda Cook, Morgan Ramsay, Rayna Bonchuk, McKenna Paddock, Jalyn Elmes, Cassidy Lyttle, Taeya Nicol, Sadie Wood, Sam Geekie, Hannah Fouillard, Tess Rampton, Sydnee DeCorby, Emma Coulter, Tatum Amy, Lainie Nichols, Karissa Cullum, Karli Frederick, Jena Barscello, Jessi Rampton, Emma Greenwood, Carly Shamray

Madam Speaker: Petitions? Oh, pardon me. That was my mistake.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Manitoba's Economy Employment and Growth Rates

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Leader of the Official Opposition): Madam Speaker, today starts the great indigenous festival Manito Ahbee, the second largest in North America, initiated and hugely supported by an—by the NDP government.

Also today, Madam Speaker, we learned that the Prime Minister is offering a formal apology about the Komagata Maru incident that occurred in 1914. As an immigrant myself to Canada, I greatly appreciate the Prime Minister addressing this dark chapter in Canadian history.

Madam Speaker, our Premier is proving to be a polarizing figure. Monday's Throne Speech was one of the most exclusionary in modern Manitoba history. So much was left out; in particular, it left out any reference to the strong economy that this government inherited.

Can the Premier confirm that Manitoba had the lowest rate of unemployment when he took office?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Well, first of all, I thank my honourable colleague for the comments, but the prelude to those comments was erroneous in many ways.

First of all, of course, we currently do not have anywhere near the lowest unemployment rate in Canada when all Manitobans are included in the

calculation. We have a misleading statistic and we need to be open about that because the statistic omits from inclusion the very people that she referenced in her preamble: many of our indigenous people. And so the statistic that she cites is erroneous. We do not, in fact, have anything but a challenge in including all Manitobans in our workforce.

In particular, I should reference, though, the presence in our gallery today of a former colleague of mine who I would like to acknowledge and who all colleagues would like to acknowledge, the presence of Carol Skelton who's here today, a former colleague, Member of Parliament, former minister of Revenue Canada Agency for the country, is in the gallery and I'd like to just acknowledge Carol's presence here.

Ms. Marcelino: Madam Speaker, my statement was based on Statistics Canada, which states that Manitoba has one of the strongest GDP and unemployment rates, and I'll reference another institution later on.

My next question—Madam Speaker, the road to a strong economy included working in partnership with indigenous people, business and labour. It focused on investing in core infrastructure, education and training. It rejected austerity and recognized the need to stimulate the economy.

Can our Premier confirm that Manitoba had the second highest rate of economic growth in the country when he came into office?

Mr. Pallister: Under the previous administration we have, in fact, in economic growth statistics between 2009 and 2016 ranked ninth in Canada. We were just a smidgen ahead of New Brunswick in those categories.

We did, however, rank first in another category, and that was in exporting people. In terms of out-migration from our province we led the country every year under the previous administration. These are uppermost in our minds here as we want to build team Manitoba in partnership, we hope, with the support of calling some other parties to work with our private sector as well as the investment community to create more jobs and more growth here so that we can move to first in these statistics in a real way, not in a pretend way.

* (13:50)

Ms. Marcelino: I don't know, maybe our Premier did not hear that Dr. Michael Benarroch, dean of the

Asper School of Business of the University of Manitoba noted that the Manitoba economy is doing actually quite well compared to the rest of Canada. We're up near the top in terms of economic growth, and we really haven't seen the up-and-down cycle that some of the other provinces, especially Saskatchewan and Alberta, have seen. And he spoke on this on January 13th of this year.

Anyway, Madam Speaker, the Premier does not want to acknowledge the fact that we left him with one of the strongest economies in Canada, based on steady growth that brought good jobs to Manitoba.

Why is the Premier putting Manitoba's economy at risk with an agenda of exclusion and cuts?

Mr. Pallister: Of course, we're concerned and will endeavour to help Manitobans and partner with Manitobans to grow our economy, given the fact that we have inherited the fastest growing tax hike agenda in the country, which has deprived Manitobans of considerable discretionary income and inhibited our ability to grow our economy at the rate of many other provinces.

As well, we've inherited an agenda which has led to a rapid growth in our provincial debt, more than double, in fact, on the route to tripling our provincial debt. That's the legacy of the government that we have inherited and have to deal with.

She cites the comments of the dean of the Asper School of Business, who commented following the decline in our credit rating, an historic decline, the first downgrade in 30 years for Manitoba, that this would cost our Treasury tens of millions of dollars. That same gentleman recognizes what we recognize on this side of the House, that depriving Manitoba's most vulnerable people of the resources and support they need to pay happy moneylenders in other jurisdictions is a mistake and an error we will have to endeavour to correct urgently and with enthusiasm.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: And before we proceed with further questions, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us today the Honourable Carol Skelton from Saskatchewan, former federal minister of National Revenue and board member of the Royal Canadian Mint; and Kirk MacRae from Nova Scotia, board member, Royal Canadian Mint, who

are the guests of the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Reyes).

On behalf of all honourable members, we welcome you here today.

And also seated in the public gallery, from École George V School, 35 grade 3 and 4 students under the direction of Guy Belot, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe).

We'd like to welcome you here today as well.

Government Services Privatization Concerns

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Leader of the Official Opposition): I'm sure the—I'm sure our Premier knows that in Manitoba, the small-business tax rate is zero, lowest in the country.

Madam Speaker, Manitobans need to be very vigilant about our new Premier and his government when it comes to privatization. When they were in government before, they tried to privatize home care. They did privatize MTS after saying they wouldn't. And yesterday, he was not clear in his intentions for Manitoba Public Insurance.

I ask the Premier today: Can he indicate whether he will be privatizing Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries or any part of it, yes or no?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Well, we've inherited from the previous government an agenda of privatization by stealth, Madam Speaker, especially in the areas of health care, where many Manitobans have been forced to resort, in desperation, to outside sources of health care, whether for treatment or for, in fact, testing or diagnosis as well. This highway medicine privatization creates a two-tier health-care system in this province, and this is this previous government's legacy.

In reference to the economic myth that the leader and her colleagues are now trying to perpetrate among Manitobans, here is the—here are the facts. We have currently the highest provincial sales tax rates, tied with Ontario, west of Quebec; the highest general corporate tax rate, tied with Saskatchewan; the highest payroll tax rate; the smallest basic personal exemption for personal income taxes, meaning that at present we continue to tax people—we tax people thousands of dollars before they're taxed in other jurisdictions and take money away from the most vulnerable; and the lowest small-business corporate tax exemption.

In addition, the previous government had a practice, very nefarious, Madam Speaker, of not indexing tax rates to inflation and thereby eroding the purchasing power of Manitobans who live on fixed incomes and live at low income levels.

That's not a record to be proud of. It's a record to change, Madam Speaker, and we will change it.

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

Ms. Marcelino: We didn't hear an answer to the question, so we take it that there's a possibility of privatizing Liquor & Lotteries. Terrible.

Well, can the Premier indicate whether he will privatize public services such as correction facilities, highway maintenance, air services, government vehicles or other government services, yes or no?

Mr. Pallister: As opposed to the fear mongering of the members opposite, we propose to protect the services which must be provided to our most vulnerable citizens. In fact, protecting front-line services and the people who provide them is what we ran on and what we will do as a government.

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

Ms. Marcelino: I thank our Premier for stating that his government will protect front-line services.

How about: Will this government be turning the ownership of key infrastructure to private sector through triple Ps or other privatized structures, yes or no?

Mr. Pallister: I understand that the member opposite and her colleagues may be somewhat fearful at this point. I understand that the election which we just went through, a democratic exercise in determining the will of the people of Manitoba, is hard for them to accept. But I also understand that it is important at this time, with the vulnerabilities this province faces, which are real, it is important not to add with fear mongering or scare tactics to that already existing fear that is there within Manitobans.

Most certainly, as we discover, as we have discovered, there were a number of obligations the previous government entered into and attempted to tie the hands of Manitobans in the future that it did not disclose in the run-up to or during the election.

It is also very important to understand there's a real risk here of a further reduction in the credit

rating which has just been reduced because the previous administration refused to abide by or adhere to in any way, shape or form the recommendations and suggestions that were given to them.

Now, this is something to be concerned about, not to fear monger about, but to address and to address immediately, because it will deprive our most vulnerable people of millions, perhaps tens of millions, of dollars of supports that they need and deserve.

Protecting front-line services is what we're about, and protecting the people who provide them is essential. We'll continue to pursue that goal.

Manitoba's Finances Provincial Deficit Numbers

Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview): Madam Speaker, today the Minister of Finance made quite a spectacle of himself by gathering the media together to provide information, and then he was unable to explain that information or to provide any details around that information.

So I'll ask him right now: Will the Minister of Finance be open and accountable with this House and with the people of Manitoba and explain the numbers behind the claim that he made earlier today?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for the question. And accountability is something that we are all about. It was what we ran on. It is what we got elected to do.

And it—and I will continue the conversation that I had earlier downstairs. I was pleased to have that opportunity to reveal those true numbers and the true state of Manitoba's economy. And I'm happy to provide additional detail to the member as I did for media members downstairs.

* (14:00)

Let me in my first answer indicate to him that some of that detail, when it came to revenue reduction, was in the area of corporate income tax to \$77 million, corporate capital tax of \$22 million and retail sales tax of \$15 million.

Remember that they missed it both on revenue and they missed on expenditure. We will get it right.

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

Mr. Allum: Well, the Minister of Finance provided no detail there except in the most general way possible.

So I will ask him again, since he was elected on a promise to be more open and transparent and accountable with the people of Manitoba, will he table the documents that he used today in order to confirm the numbers that he put out?

Mr. Friesen: I thank my colleague for the question.

I must remember the context is this, that today we had the unfortunate duty to report to Manitobans that the actual size of the deficit on '15-16 is over a billion dollars. And remember that even this government only 10 weeks ago told Manitobans that that number was \$666 million. That's the context. The detail, as I stated in my first answer, I am most happy to provide. We provided that detail downstairs. I'll do more in this Chamber this afternoon.

Let me also indicate that there were expenditure increases of \$94 million on this budget even in the 10 weeks that occurred between when they announced and what we brought today. And those had to do with things like municipal disaster financial assistance claims, but also flat revenues in areas.

So there is pressure; so there is challenge. We will address those. They did not.

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

Mr. Allum: Well, you know, we listened to the Finance Minister's bit of political theatre in the basement today, and he wasn't able to explain any of the numbers behind it and he hasn't done a very good job in the House doing so at the same time.

Why doesn't he just admit that he's setting up the people of Manitoba for Harper-style austerity cuts in the years to come?

Mr. Friesen: Madam Speaker, my colleague is correct in saying this is about explaining, and really what I explained then and will do now is that the NDP has a lot of explaining to do having run over the actual expenditures by 50 per cent in just 10 weeks of time. This is about a record of reckless spending, of budgets that ran over projections each and every year over 10 years of time.

Madam Speaker, it's important to get this right, to arrest the growth, to say no to the reckless policies

of our predecessors. This is work that we undertake with a glad heart sincerely. It will be a challenge. This will be difficult. But we will get it done.

Services to French Community Representation Commitment

Mr. Wab Kinew (Fort Rouge): Madame la Présidente, depuis la Loi de 1870 sur le Manitoba, grâce à notre fondateur Louis Riel, le Manitoba est une province où la langue française est égale à l'anglais dans les domaines législatif et judiciaire. Mais le discours du trône de ce gouvernement n'a pas mentionné les besoins des Francophones.

Ma question pour la ministre des Affaires francophones: Est-ce qu'elle peut nous rassurer que ce gouvernement croit, comme nous, que la communauté francophone du Manitoba est essentielle au succès et à l'identité de cette province?

Translation

Madam Speaker, since the Manitoba Act of 1870, thanks to our founder Louis Riel, Manitoba is a province where French and English have equal status in the Legislature and before the courts. However, this government's Throne Speech did not mention the needs of francophones.

My question for the Minister responsible for Francophone Affairs is: Can she reassure us that this government believes, as we do, that Manitoba's francophone community is essential to the success and identity of this province?

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister responsible for Francophone Affairs): Il me fait grand plaisir de représenter la communauté francophone.

Translation

I am very pleased to represent the francophone community.

English

It gives me great pleasure to congratulate you on your role, Mr.—Madam Speaker, and I thank my friend from Fort Rouge for the questions.

Francophone Affairs is very important. I know it's important to you, and it's important to me as well. I've embarked on an ambitious consultation phase with the members of the francophone community so

I can best understand how we can serve that community. And I look forward to meeting with all the stakeholder groups in the future and bringing forward measures to enhance services.

Thank you.

Mr. Kinew: Je veux rappeler le ministre que la communauté francophone, comme le Manitoba en entier, a une grande diversité—les immigrants, les Métis, les Acadiens, les descendants des habitants de la Nouvelle-France—que la caractéristique la plus importante que cette communauté partage est la langue française.

Madame la Présidente, la ministre pourrait-elle expliquer pourquoi le gouvernement a choisi une députée unilingue anglophone pour répondre aux besoins de cette communauté?

Translation

I want to remind the minister that the francophone community, just like Manitoba as a whole, is very diverse: immigrants, Metis, Acadians, descendants of the settlers in New France. The most important characteristic these communities share is the French language.

Madam Speaker, can this minister explain why the government chose a unilingual anglophone MLA to respond to the needs of this community?

Ms. Squires: I do agree that it is very essential to—diversity is part of our cultural experience, and it's part of who we are, and it's the languages that we speak and it is the languages that we are learning to speak. And I'm very, very humbled and honoured to have this position. I am so grateful for the francophone community members who have reached out to me and encouraged me as I'm embarking on this ambitious agenda, dedicating six hours of my personal time to learning the language. And I look forward to representing this community in both official languages.

Thank you.

Mr. Kinew: Oui, je félicite la ministre pour son nouveau voyage d'éducation.

Madame la Présidente, la ministre des Affaires francophones, peut-elle nous rassurer que ce gouvernement n'a pas l'intention de recréer l'ère des années 1977 à 1981, quand les Francophones de cette province devaient lutter pour leur identité et leurs

droits fondamentaux, et nous dire quel est le plan spécifique qu'elle va mettre en place pour respecter l'obligation de service à la communauté francophone?

Translation

Yes, I would like to congratulate the minister on her new educational journey.

Madam Speaker, can the Minister responsible for Francophone Affairs reassure us that this government does not intend to recreate the era from 1977 to 1981, when the francophones of this province had to fight for their identity and their fundamental rights, and can she tell us what specific plan she is going to put into place to respect the obligation of service to the francophone community?

Ms. Squires: Collaboration is a cornerstone of this government, and I look forward to working with the Francophone community. Consultation is key. We are listening to the concerns, and consultation and collaboration is a fundamental aspect of what we're doing as a government.

Thank you.

**Conflict of Interest
Premier's Asset Disclosure**

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): Madam Speaker, at the start of a new session, every member of this Legislature is required to disclose certain information by way of a declaration under Manitoba's conflict of interest legislation, and this includes declaring any corporation anywhere owned by a member.

We know that the Premier (Mr. Pallister) failed to declare two corporations he owns. We know that because his senior staffer told the media that he owns two corporations. We even know the name of one of these corporations. It is called—and you'll have to pardon my Spanish, Madam Speaker—Finca Deneter Doce Sociedad Anonima.

Has the Attorney General (Mrs. Stefanson) now seen enough to refer this matter directly to a judge of the Court of Queen's Bench to determine the appropriate remedy for this Premier's failure to follow the law of Manitoba?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): I don't know how often the—my honourable friend wants to reflag the spring

election, but the result is going to be the same. Manitobans have spoken, Mr. Speaker—or Madam Speaker, and I think they've spoken loudly and they've spoken clearly. Every member of this Legislature has complied with the legislation that governs us under conflict of interest, and every member will continue to.

Mr. Swan: Yes, well, Madam Speaker, I want to personally congratulate the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) on his re-election and on the substantial responsibilities he's taken on.

Unless I've missed something, though, he's not the Attorney General of Manitoba, and it's the Attorney General of Manitoba who has the duty to provide legal advice to the Premier and to the Cabinet, and it is the Attorney General whose duty is to act independently and in a non-partisan manner when allegations are made about the conduct of the Premier and members of this Cabinet.

The failure to make a complete and accurate disclosure is a serious matter, Madam Speaker, and I ask whether this Attorney General will stand in her place and confirm today that she will agree to refer this matter to the Court of Queen's Bench.

Mr. Goertzen: Well, and I certainly am, as the House leader, happy to respond to the member.

* (14:10)

I would encourage all members to follow the conflict of interest laws that we have. We were proud during the election to talk about even strengthening the open and transparent government that we have committed to bring forward.

I've already said to the member that our members have complied with the legislation. I wish that he had that same sort of vigilance when members of his own party were dealing with issues prior to the election.

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

Mr. Swan: Madam Speaker, this Premier wants Manitobans to accept that he believes in transparency and honesty and openness. And if the Premier didn't want to disclose the corporations he owns, for whatever reason, he had some choices. He could've requested a formal opinion from the Conflict of Interest Commissioner under section 19.6 of the act. He chose not to do that. He could've done that at any time since he was first elected. The Premier could've

chosen to do that to make sure that he filed an accurate and complete declaration.

And I ask the Premier: Does he really think his failure to follow the law of Manitoba and to disclose all of his interests in accordance with the law is transparent, honest and open?

Mr. Goertzen: I've already indicated that the Premier (Mr. Pallister) and all of our members of our caucus have complied with the legislation, will continue to comply with the legislation. We're very proud of the commitments that we made during the election when it comes to open and transparent government. We hope we're going to get support from members opposite when that comes forward.

I'm not sure why the member for Minto (Mr. Swan) is so concerned and he's so upset. I was thinking about mentioning those free Jets tickets, but I wouldn't want to upset him any further.

East-Side Road Project Construction Commitment

Mrs. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook): Madam Speaker, on December 1, 2009, Bill 31 was officially proclaimed, establishing the Manitoba Floodway and East Side Road Authority. Its mandate was to expand and maintain the floodway and to construct and maintain the east-side road, which is a strategic initiative to provide improved, safe and more reliable and transportation to remote and isolated communities in the east—on the east side of Lake Winnipeg.

Can the minister responsible make assurances that the commitment to this vital road will continue?

Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Minister of Infrastructure): The floodway authority was actually—it was started as a floodway authority and then it was changed to the East Side Road Authority. But the authority itself is a distinct arm of government and it will be dissolved, and it becomes the responsibility of Infrastructure to continue to build the roads on the east side.

Through my department, the infrastructure—and in conjunction with Indigenous and Municipal Relations—we will do everything to continue to enhance the opportunities of the east side—not just of the east side, but of the entire province.

Thank you.

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

Mrs. Klassen: One of this current government's campaign promises was to fold the east-side road into the Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation Department. Even with today's fiscal update stating over a \$1-billion deficit, one of the promises was to spend \$1 billion in infrastructure.

How much of this will specifically go to the east-side road all-season project and how many kilometres, specifically, will be built this year?

Mr. Pedersen: Over the past number of years, my colleagues and I have spent a lot of time on the road building relationships and partnerships with—throughout all of Manitoba, including east-side residents. And we've worked and we will continue to work very closely and build those partnerships with both my colleagues from Municipal and Indigenous Relations. We'll continue to build those, and we'll utilize—at the same time we'll utilize the expertise within Infrastructure who does actually build roads, and this is the best value for Manitoba taxpayers.

We will continue to spend money on infrastructure as our campaign promise outlined.

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

First Nations Contracts

Mrs. Klassen: In June 2010, East Side Road Authority finalized and implemented its six-point Aboriginal engagement strategy. The commitment of the strategy continues to be ensuring the local First Nation communities succeed and benefit in all aspects of this all-season road project.

What guarantees is the minister going to make that a significant portion of these contracts for the project go to the local people?

Mr. Pedersen: As I stated already, we have—over the last number of years, we have continued to build those relationships with both east-side residents and all of Manitobans because everyone is a Manitoban. And we'll continue to do that, and that includes building—commitments to build roads on the east side.

The Infrastructure Department is who builds roads, and this is the best value for Manitoba's hard-earned tax money. We have committed to spending over \$1 billion a year on infrastructure, and Infrastructure Department is the one who will decide where the roads are built.

**Yes! North Initiative
Northern Economic Development**

Mr. Kelly Bindle (Thompson): I'm honoured and humbled for this opportunity to represent Manitobans in the North and in the northern riding of Thompson.

Our Progressive Conservative team is committed to making Manitoba the most improved province in Canada through better services, a stronger economy, with a brighter future for all Manitobans. This includes a brighter future for the North.

Would the honourable Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade speak to our government's plans to build partnerships and economical opportunities in Thompson and throughout the North, including the Yes! North initiative featured in Monday's Throne Speech?

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade): I thank the member for Thompson for his question and appreciate his success in Thompson riding.

What—Madam Speaker, one of our government's key priorities is economic development and creation of good jobs, including northern Manitoba. We will do this by creating Yes! North, a special targeted plan for northern Manitoba. Yes! North will develop partnerships to attract new companies, assist entrepreneurs, expand businesses to create quality jobs and a stronger economy in northern Manitoba, which will in turn help all Manitobans.

Yes! North will focus on the sustainable development of natural resources, increasing tourism opportunities and will establish a respectful and productive consultation framework with indigenous communities.

Mr.—Madam Speaker, we look forward to working with northern Manitobans as we develop northern Manitoba with northern Manitobans.

**Indigenous Women Inquiry
Legislative Commitment**

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): My question is for the minister of indigenous and municipal affairs—relations.

The federal government will soon be releasing its vision, mandate and direction in respect to the national inquiry on missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, and despite the overwhelming support across the country and,

in fact, internationally, in support of a national inquiry, there was not even one single mention in the Throne Speech.

It—in seeking recommendations on how to address and prevent violence against indigenous women and girls, it is clear that the full participation and co-operation of the Province is crucial to the national inquiry's success.

Will this government commit in supporting a national inquiry more than just in spirit but by formalizing the legal mechanisms to ensure the Province's full participation and co-operation?

Hon. Eileen Clarke (Minister of Indigenous and Municipal Relations): Thank you for your question today.

* (14:20)

Manitoba continues to be involved with both intergovernmental and interdepartmental work to address the issues in regards to the missing and murdered women and girls. Manitoba will continue to engage in discussions with federal, provincial and territorial governments on priorities for action to address issues related.

Manitoba has supported work in lead-up to the national inquiry on missing and murdered indigenous women and girls and will assess the nature and the extent of continued involvement as the national inquiry is implemented.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine), on a supplementary question.

**Indigenous Women's Issues
Special Advisor Liaison**

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): Miigwech for your answer.

As we tackle this crisis and as we move forward in respect of the national inquiry, MMIWG families' roles, recommendations and direction are vital to the success of a national inquiry.

Will this government appoint a special advisor on indigenous women's issues to act as a liaison and to continue the work that our government, the NDP, has been well known for and regarded as the best across Canada?

Hon. Eileen Clarke (Minister of Indigenous and Municipal Relations): Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to announce that we have been meeting since day one with all stakeholders and partners in regards to

all indigenous issues going forward. This is one that we have not met with the working group on it at this point, but it is in our intention. And I have advised my staff to have as many of these meetings scheduled as quickly as possible so that I can be updated and work with these groups.

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

Indigenous Women and Girls Program Funding Commitment

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): Miigwech again for your answer, but actually my question was whether or not you are going to actually appoint a special advisor on indigenous women's issues in respect of and particularly on missing and murdered indigenous women and girls as we move forward on a national inquiry. So that was my question.

But my third question and final question today is: Will this government acknowledge the work that we've done, and in particular myself and the relationships that I've built with families, and commit to funding, ongoing funding, of the work that we've done, which includes Wiping Away the Tears, which is a families' gathering for missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, which up until just six months ago was the only province that we did this with families, and including Ka Ni Kanichihk's Medicine Bear program, which is a victim services program specifically working for families of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls?

And so will this government commit to continuing to fund those programs?

Hon. Eileen Clarke (Minister of Indigenous and Municipal Relations): I appreciate all the background, that you've done the background work. And, yes, I've got catching up to do. But I look forward on meeting with all stakeholders and working towards any common goals that they've already achieved, and also meeting with all the people that are involved and have been involved up until this point and make sure that we are on board.

As far as an appointment, we—I will have to update you that at a later date when I've met with the necessary groups.

Madam Speaker: Prior to proceeding with questions, can I just please ask all ministers and members asking questions to please direct them through the Chair. It will make for a much smoother functioning House.

Labour and Immigration Dissolution of Ministry

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): Madam Speaker, in the recent reorganization of the government, the Department of Labour and Immigration was abolished together with that ministerial position in Cabinet. There's been a Labour minister since 1940.

How is it that Roblin, Lyon, Filmon all saw the importance of a Labour ministry but it appears that the present Premier wants to leave labour out?

I would like to ask the Premier to explain the reason behind this decision and why he wants to unnecessarily provoke labour?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): First of all, I'd like to welcome the new member to the House and congratulate him on his *[inaudible]*

I want to assure him that all the aforementioned premiers cared less about the label than they did about the actual legislative benefits that would accrue to workers in this province, and I am in that same category. And I would give added assurance to the member opposite, Madam Speaker, that as the son of a devoted unionist and as a former labour representative myself, I strongly support organized labour in every respect.

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

Mr. Lindsey: The Department of Labour and Immigration was responsible for the administration of a substantial number of statutes ranging from workplace safety and health, pay equity, as well as providing support for the independent bodies like the Manitoba Labour Board.

Does the Premier realistically believe that Growth, Enterprise and Trade Minister will do anything more than pay scant attention to these responsibilities, given the other tasks that his department or her department is charged with?

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade): Madam Speaker, I thank the member from Flin Flon for this question, and I look forward and we look forward to working with the member from Flin Flon. I know there's some very serious issues facing the community of Flin Flon and we—hopefully we'll work together in the near future to quickly resolve some of that.

I've actually quite—very much in favour of having the Department of Labour in my portfolio. Obviously, as we focus on growing the economy we want to work with labour in terms of growing the economy. We think that's a very important component of Manitoba.

I've had some very—we have had some very positive discussions with labour and we're very excited about that and those positive discussions. In fact, within our first week of government it was nice to have the Manitoba Federation of Labour in the same—singing the same song as we were in terms of trying to protect jobs here in Manitoba, and we were standing up for Labour to protect jobs and certainly the safety of those people working in various areas around the province.

Madam Speaker: The time for questions has expired.

Petitions?

PETITIONS

Bell's Purchase of MTS

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

The background of the petition is as follows:

Manitoba Telephone System is currently a fourth cellular carrier used by Manitobans along with the big national three carriers: Telus, Rogers and Bell.

In Toronto, with only the big three national companies controlling the market, the average 5G unlimited monthly cellular package is \$117 as compared to Winnipeg where MTS charges \$66 for the same package.

Losing MTS will mean less competition and will result in higher costs for all cellphone packages in the province.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to do that all is possible to prevent the Bell takeover of MTS and preserve a more competitive cellphone market so that cellular bills for Manitobans do not increase unnecessarily.

This petition is signed by many Manitobans.

ORDERS OF THE DAY GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

THRONE SPEECH (Second Day of Debate)

Madam Speaker: Resuming debate on the proposed motion of the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Reyes), standing in the name of the honourable interim Leader of the Official Opposition.

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Leader of the Official Opposition): Madam Speaker, I'm honoured to speak about the Throne Speech as interim leader of Her Majesty's loyal opposition, but first I would like to take this opportunity to once again thank the people of the Logan constituency for electing me as their MLA.

Logan is one of the most diverse constituencies not only in Manitoba, but across Canada. This constituency is a reflection of today's Manitoba and the Manitoba of the future. I'm very proud of this constituency and I'm humbled to represent it in our Legislature. Over the years I have made strong connections to the community and I'm committed to working alongside community leaders to ensure that Logan is a great place to go to school, to work, and live in.

* (14:30)

And speaking of Logan constituency, I would like to thank all of the volunteers to my re-election campaign. The list of volunteers is too long, and in the interest of time I will not be able to name them individually. They have inspired me to persist each and every day of the campaign, especially during the time that I was in physical pain and my mobility challenged due to a minor accident. I had a group of volunteers who faithfully took their turn pushing me on a wheelchair, assisted me while I'm in crutches or in a walker, which made it possible for me to reach as many residents of Logan as time allotted.

I am also grateful to those who provided generous donations to keep our campaign going. Along with the campaign volunteers, their support and trust have strengthened my resolve to work hard each and every day of the campaign period and now in the new role that was entrusted to me and my colleagues in opposition.

Also, I'd like to congratulate all of my colleagues in the Manitoba Legislature on their election on April 19th. Whether they're returning MLA or a new MLA, being elected to this Legislature is a

significant achievement and an honour. I believe that there is no greater honour than to be public servants of the people of Manitoba.

Last, but certainly not least, I would like to congratulate the Premier (Mr. Pallister) and his government as they assume their new roles. As the official opposition, the Manitoba NDP looks forward to working with the government to keep Manitoba's economy strong, protect the services Manitobans depend on and fight for equality and rights for all Manitobans. We promise to work on behalf of all Manitobans by holding this government accountable day in and day out over the next four years.

Madam Speaker, two days ago we heard our new government's first Speech from the Throne. This speech is a crucial test—since it sets out the government's agenda for the upcoming session. As this is the first for this government, we look to this speech to ensure that Manitoba's strong economy will be maintained and will continue to grow while also retaining necessary front-line services and protecting the progressive values of Manitobans.

When we formed the government in 1999, we inherited a province that had stagnated under a Conservative government. But, by listening and working together with Manitobans, we turned the economy around. Today downtown Winnipeg is booming, and rural Manitoba has experienced some of the highest rural growth rates in Canada because of the growth in the rural economy in recent years.

In northern Manitoba, hydro construction and record investments in infrastructure have resulted in significant economic developments. When we left office just a few weeks ago we had one of the highest growth rates in the country and the lowest rate of unemployment. Moreover, after more than a decade of cuts and privatization under the Conservatives, we prioritized and invested in the public services that Manitobans depend on. We worked hard to rebuild our public services by investing in health, education, social services, child care and infrastructure.

Madam Speaker, we invested in people of all ages from all walks of life throughout our province because we really do believe that in Manitoba everyone matters.

We forged a new relationship with the indigenous peoples of our province, a relationship of respect, a relationship that sought mutual learning and reconciliation.

We are proud to have pioneered recognizing LGBTTTQ* rights. We are proud of supporting disability rights. When we talk about the equality of women, we know that even though it has been hundred years since women—this province, the first in all of Canada were given the vote, we know that we still have much, much more to do before we can ensure true gender equality in this province.

The NDP also embraced the growing diversity of this province and worked so hard to develop the most successful provincial nominee program in Canada.

At a time when the PC party was denying the very existence of climate change, we set out to make sure that our province would be at the forefront of developing solutions to this fundamental environmental issue of our time.

We also made major investments in flood mitigation and began working on the next generation of historic investments in flood mitigation. Madam Speaker, when it came to fighting major floods we were there, shoulder to shoulder, working with Manitobans at the most critical of times.

On April 19th, Manitobans chose a change in government. We respect that decision, but we have already seen, in the very first few days of this new Conservative government, that the change they are delivering is not a change for the better.

The day they were sworn in as government we saw how out of touch this government is with the Manitoba of today. They swore in a Cabinet with only four urban ministers and the farthest north constituency represented is Lakeside. This certainly does not represent all parts of our vast province and there is no reflection on the growing diversity of our population either.

The Manitoba NDP still values and represents many Manitobans. Half of our caucus are people of colour. We are able to speak to Franco-Manitoban stakeholders in their first language and we have among us four indigenous community leaders. We reflect, respect and celebrate the diversity of Manitoba.

On the other hand, we saw the appointment of a Cabinet that had no official designation of a minister responsible for reconciliation, labour, conservation, the environment, immigration, persons with disabilities, LGBTTTQ and much more, and this exclusionary perspective was respected—reflected in Monday's Speech to the Throne.

We were very disappointed that most of the 60-minute speech was filled with platitudes and vague commitments. There was plenty of rhetoric regarding front-line services, but no concrete plans to maintain and invest in them. Manitobans want to know that services will be there for them in times of need. The economy cannot continue to grow without teachers, nurses or affordable child-care spaces and affordable housing.

This speech also failed to commit to protecting Crown corporations such as Hydro, Liquor & Lotteries, and MPI. One thing that did come out loud and clear was that they are setting the stage for a Conservative agenda of cuts and austerity.

In the weeks to come the PCs will have to come clean, and their budget will demonstrate their true intentions. Which Manitobans will lose their jobs? Who will lose the services they depend on? Who will no longer be able to access affordable housing, personal-care homes, child care, post-secondary education and disability services?

*(14:40)

We, in this side of the House, will stand up for all Manitobans and keep this government accountable. We, in this side of the House, will protect our public services and defend the rights of the socially and economically marginalized in our society.

Madam Speaker, I rise to express my deep concern that many of the priorities that Manitobans hold dear were not acknowledged in last Monday's speech. Where were the commitments to improving accessibility for Manitobans with disabilities? Where were the commitments towards eliminating the child-care wait-list, or reconciling with indigenous Manitobans, or addressing the crisis of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, or improving the safety and health of women and girls, investing in programs for children and youth, supporting Manitobans who are socially and economically marginalized, or keeping public services public, protecting our Crown corporations, investing in supports for seniors, investing in supports to newcomers?

We also heard no commitments for Brandon for the first time in almost 20 years.

The Premier (Mr. Pallister) thinks we are better together. But we have to ask: Who is included in his vision of togetherness? Why didn't we hear about policies that will improve the lives of so many,

including Manitobans with disabilities, the LGBTTQ community, workers, newcomers, indigenous communities?

But just—but don't just take it from me, Madam Speaker; here are some comments from other Manitobans.

Susan Prentice, a highly respected expert in child care from the University of Manitoba and active member of the Child Care Coalition of Manitoba, said that the new government Throne Speech was utterly silent on child-care crisis, not even addressing their own campaign promises—how come?

Pat Wege of the Manitoba Child Care Association is also concerned that the vague language and failure to mention child care leaves this sector and their families that rely on this high-quality system in the dark with an uncertain future.

Michael Barkman, Manitoba chairman of the Canadian Federation of Students, said that the system can't rely on the private sector for donations. And he is worried that the PCs may remove the tuition cap that helps keep post-secondary education in Manitoba accessible and affordable.

Manitoba Government and General Employees' Union, MGEU president Michelle Gawronsky was also disappointed by the vague language around front-line services. Along with us and many hard-working Manitobans, she is worried that cuts and job losses will happen where they matter most, in delivering the services that we all depend on for health, well-being and security.

When Conservatives talk about efficiencies and value-for-money audits, these are code words for cuts and privatization. Why are Manitobans concerned? They're concerned because they have heard our new Premier and his caucus support two-tier health care, privatized child care and a willingness to make cuts across the board.

I want to put on the record today that if the Premier and his government move to privatize health care, education, social services, our Crown corporation or any one of our key public services, each and every one from our caucus and the people of Manitoba will stand together to defend this institution. Each and every one from our caucus will stand together to defend these programs and the values they represent.

The Throne Speech also attacked the rights of hard-working Manitobans. We will work hard to prevent any erosion of workers' rights to fair pay and benefits, safe workplaces, supportive work environments, workers compensation and a venue for workers to be heard. Workers are the backbone of our economy and Manitoba cannot continue to grow without a collaborative and fair relationship with their representatives.

To say that this Throne Speech was a lost opportunity is an understatement. At a time when the new government could have put forward an inclusive vision for Manitobans, this government has chosen a path of ideology and division.

The Manitoba NDP's vision is very different from this government's vision. We believe in a province in which everyone matters, not just the privileged few. We believe that building opportunities for working and middle-income families starts with having a government that works with them and for them to provide a better quality of life for all Manitobans and not just a privileged few.

The NDP will continue to stand up for the priorities of all Manitoba families and oppose an agenda based on austerity and cuts. As the official opposition the NDP will advocate for investments in health care, child care, education and jobs.

Madam Speaker, let me be clear: We do not support this government's agenda, nor this government's Throne Speech.

I move, seconded by the member from St. Johns, to pass the Throne Speech amendment motion, and this motion—

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

But this House regrets that the provincial government failed to:

- (a) recognize the diversity of this great province by failing to present a positive and inclusive vision for all Manitobans; and
 - (b) acknowledge and commit to implementing the recommendations to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission; and
 - (c) commit to ensuring a successful and participatory national inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women and girls; and
 - (d) commit to keeping public and social services public to prevent corporations from profiting on the backs of the poorest people of this province; and
 - (e) commit to protecting and enhancing the rights of LGBTTTQ* persons; and
 - (f) commit to protecting and enhancing the rights of workers; and
 - (g) commit to protecting and enhancing supports for persons living with disabilities; and
 - (h) commit to keeping the province's valuable Crown corporations public; and
 - (i) commit to focus on environmental and water protections, expand the network of protected areas, or fight climate change with innovation and green jobs; and
 - (j) commit to take steps to increase the minimum wage and to bring the incomes of all Manitoba families above the poverty line; and
 - (k) commit to eliminating the wait-list for child care by adding 12,000 more spaces for families and expanding Manitoba's workforce of early childhood educators; and
 - (l) commit to focusing on prevention and supportive programs for early years learning; and
- * (14:50)
- (m) commit to investing more in community schools, early childhood hubs and after-school programs in the inner city and in northern Manitoba, and
 - (n) commit to ramping up the First-Year Now initiative to ensure high school students earn university and college credits to get a head start on their careers; and
 - (o) commit to expanding community-based programs that help skilled newcomers get good jobs in their chosen careers across Manitoba; and
 - (p) commit to a plan that ensures all Manitoba students learn about the histories, languages, cultures and traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples; and

- (q) acknowledge that indigenous communities must be full partners in efforts to support and keep families together; and
- (r) commit to keeping post-secondary accessible to any student who wishes to attend by keeping tuition fees low and limiting increases to the rate of inflation; and
- (s) commit to partnering with post-secondary institutions to make campuses a safer place for all students with policies to prevent and respond to sexual violence and sexual harassment; and
- (t) commit to mixed-use housing for students with partners like Brandon University and the University of Winnipeg; and
- (u) commit to increasing the number of women apprentices in the skilled trades; and
- (v) commit to partnering with the University College of the North to build a new trades training centre to help students take advantage of the good jobs created by Manitoba Hydro; and
- (w) commit to an expansion of the Women's Health Clinic, more access to midwives and an expansion of the Fertility Treatment Tax Credit; and
- (x) commit to enhancing funding to seniors and seniors centres and working with partners to develop more seniors housing and improve palliative-care services; and
- (y) commit to relocating the rails that divide our city and free up the land for developments that will create jobs, housing and other opportunities; and
- (z) commit to implementing the recommendation from the Task Force on Education Outcomes for Children in Care.

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

Madam Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable interim Official Opposition Leader, and seconded by the honourable member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine),

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

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense? No?

But this House regrets that the provincial government has failed to:

- (a) recognize the diversity of this great province by failing to present a positive and inclusive vision for all Manitobans; and
- (b) acknowledge and commit to implementing the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission; and
- (c) commit to ensuring a successful and participatory national inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women and girls; and
- (d) commit to keeping public and social services public to prevent corporations from profiting on the backs of the poorest people of this province; and
- (e) commit to protecting and enhancing the rights of LGBTTTQ* persons; and
- (f) commit to protecting and enhancing the rights of workers; and
- (g) commit to protecting and enhancing supports for persons living with disabilities; and
- (h) commit to keeping the province's valuable Crown corporations public; and
- (i) commit to focus on environmental and water protections, expand the network of protected areas or fight climate change with innovation and green jobs; and
- (j) commit to take steps to increase the minimum wage and to bring the incomes of all Manitoba families above the poverty line; and
- (k) commit to eliminating the wait-list for child care by adding 12,000 more spaces for families and expanding Manitoba's workforce of early childhood educators; and
- (l) commit to focusing on prevention and support of programs for early years learning; and

- (m) commit to investing more in community schools, early childhood hubs and after-school programs in the inner city and in northern Manitoba; and
- (n) commit to ramping up the First-Year Now initiative to ensure high school students earn university and college credits to get a head start on their careers; and
- (o) commit to expanding community-based programs that help skilled newcomers get good jobs in their chosen careers across Manitoba; and
- (p) commit to a plan that ensures all Manitoba students learn about the histories, languages, cultures and traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples; and
- (q) acknowledge that indigenous communities must be full partners in efforts to support and keep families together; and
- (r) commit to keeping post secondary accessible to any student who wishes to attend by keeping tuition fees low and limiting increases to the rate of inflation; and
- (s) commit to partnering with post-secondary institutions to make campuses a safer place for all students with policies to prevent and respond to sexual violence and sexual harassment; and
- (t) commit to more mixed-use housing for students with partners like Brandon University and the University of Winnipeg; and
- (u) commit to increasing the number of women apprentices in the skilled trades; and
- (v) commit to partnering with the University College of the North to build a new trades training centre to help students take advantage of the good jobs created by Manitoba Hydro; and
- (w) commit to an expansion of the Women's Health Clinic, more access to midwives and an expansion of the fertility treatment tax credit; and
- (x) commit to enhancing funding to senior centres and to working with partners to develop more seniors housing and improved palliative care services; and

- (y) commit to relocating the rails that divide our city, and free up the land for developments that will create jobs, housing and other opportunities; and
- (z) commit to implementing the recommendations from the task force on education outcomes for children in care.

As a consequence of these and many other failings, the provincial government has thereby lost the trust and confidence of the people of Manitoba and this House.

The amendment is in order.

Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris): Madam Speaker, it's my pleasure to rise today and welcome yourself as our new Speaker, and as I said earlier, I hope you have infinite patience with us as new members and returning members as we each become accustomed to the new roles afforded to us by Manitobans on the vote of April 19th.

I would like to welcome the 29 new MLAs in their roles as representatives of their constituencies and also representatives of the province as a whole, wish them the very best in their careers and hope that they find the Legislature, as I have found it, a fascinating experience, and that is really an experience of what you make it to be.

To the 28 returning MLAs, I welcome you back as representatives of your communities that have earned the trust of your local voters who have returned you to this House to ensure that you continue to represent them in this Legislature.

Mr. Doyle Piwniuk, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

Love is better than anger, hope is better than fear, optimism is better than despair. So let us be loving, hopeful and optimistic, and we'll change the world.

I open those words by the late Jack Layton, because it was with those words—I remember suggesting those very words to members opposite who now find themselves on the opposition benches prior to the start in the next—of the last electoral campaign, a campaign that we saw members opposite, the NDP, wage an electoral campaign composed of fear and hate, an Americanization of politics here in Manitoba.

It began, of course, with the MLA of Fort Garry-Riverview insisting that the day a PC government formed that every civil servant, every teacher, every

nurse, every daycare operator would be fired immediately the next day.

* (15:00)

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to advise the House that since the election my children have attended school each and every school day; there has been no change to their child care. My older neighbour, Boe, who took a nasty fall down his stairs, had an ambulance attend to his house and is currently on the long road to recovery at Victoria Hospital. And local improvements are continuing, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Of course, the low point in the NDP's campaign of fear mongering, and the ultimate in fear mongering, was something that embarrassed a number of NDPers themselves, and that was the MLA for St. Boniface claim that a PC government would somehow jeopardize the coverage of cancer drugs.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, my grandfather battled prostate cancer. My sister has just finished the first round of battling breast cancer. In the last two years, two dear friends have lost battles with cancer, brain cancer in particular.

But the story, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I share is that one of Jane Doe, and I will use the phrase Jane Doe just to protect her identity, but is one actually that should be known to members opposite, in particular, their outgoing Health minister, the former minister of Kirkfield Park.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Jane Doe is battling breast cancer. She found herself not only in the midst of—as being a mother with some young children finding herself battling cancer, but in the throes of a separation with her partner who is not a resident of Canada and was subsequently relocating out of the country. This situation—the separation, the out-of-country relocation—resulted in a great deal of stress, along with the cancer diagnosis and the constant battling of cancer.

During all of this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, she unfortunately failed to properly submit her income tax returns to the Government of Canada and, as such, her cancer coverage, the coverage of her cancer medications, wasn't fulfilled, despite promises by the NDP government that all cancer-care coverage would be free.

She approached our office over a year ago, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We went to the minister of Health, we explained the situation, we provided her

the background information. At that time, and I will give the minister of Health credit, at that time she actually personally phoned my constituent. She apologized to my constituent for essentially for falling through the cracks. She invited this constituent to be part of the solution, to work with her department and with CancerCare Manitoba to ensure that what happened in her situation wouldn't happen to other Manitobans who had to deal with the stress of fighting cancer.

So what should be a happy resolution to a story, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is not.

Mr. Speaker, despite those promises by the then-Health minister, NDP Health minister, my constituent never heard from the Health Department again. I personally spoke to the Health minister after she—after the constituency—constituent contacted me, saying, I haven't heard anything, I haven't received any reimbursement despite the receipts I've turned in, I've had no return phone calls from the minister or her department despite the promises.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I gave the minister a heads-up. I sent the minister additional correspondence. Nothing. Absolute silence from the minister.

Mr. Speaker, I regret to inform you that during the course of the campaign, this constituent had entered palliative care.

So, while the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Selinger) was fear mongering about the state of the delivery and coverage of cancer care drugs, my constituent, whom his own Health minister made that commitment, is now in palliative care, on the losing end of that battle.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I listened to the interim Leader of the Opposition's comments and criticisms, and they're falling into the role of opposition quite easily which, you know, based on their comments in government, I can see why. They were a very critical government, a government basically chomping at the bit to find themselves in opposition.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if members opposite and the NDP actually did the things they claimed, perhaps they wouldn't have been sent the message that they received on April 19th and found themselves on the opposition benches.

As the interim Leader of the Opposition tried to set, indicate to this House, a number of the benchmarks that they have left the incoming

government, it is interesting to note the benchmarks that they failed to mention and put on the public record.

There was no mention, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that Manitoba finds itself as the child poverty capital of Canada—17 years of NDP legacy.

There was no mention, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that Manitoba has the highest food bank usage in the country—again, the 17-year legacy of an NDP government.

There was no mention, Mr. Speaker, that Manitoba finds itself with the highest number of children in care, in excess of 10,000 children, again, part of the 17-year legacy of an NDP government.

In fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there was no mention of a recent revelation that in 2014-15, two foster children found themselves in a new bed every three days over the course of a year, shuffled along like so much trash, all under that government watch.

Mr. Speaker, a Throne Speech is about hope, and I've always considered myself the glass-half-full individual. And so that is why I was very pleased to hear the Lieutenant Governor deliver the message on behalf of the PC team that finds itself with a historic majority here in the province of Manitoba. I'm not underestimating the task ahead of us as a government, but I welcome that opportunity.

The breadth of that work, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was hinted at earlier today by the revelation that the outgoing government has left Manitobans—not just us, the incoming government, but it's actually Manitobans as a whole—a deficit in excess of \$1 billion, some 52 per cent higher than their earlier projections. These are all monies that have to be repaid. These are monies that are going to have to come from somewhere. The members opposite never seemed to really care that each and every year they were diverting in excess of \$842 million from front-line services, services of health care, of education, of family services, they were diverting it from those services in order to simply pay interest on that debt, not principal, but interest payments, all because they simply couldn't live within their own means and, more importantly, live to their own commitments.

Time and time again, Mr. Speaker, this government launched—in 2009, then-House leader, Mr. Chomiak, launched what we called his belt-tightening initiative. He talked about plans to reduce waste, reduce spending. In fact, one of things

he outlined was to limit out-of-province travel. I remember asking the then-minister of Conservation if that plan included to his trips and the number of members opposite that decided to fly to Paris first class; it apparently didn't.

Mr. Speaker, it's encouraging that one of our government's first order of business is to conduct a comprehensive, value-for-money audit to ensure that our government is prudent with the resources provided to us by Manitobans.

Another important component of yesterday's—the other day's Throne Speech is that one of infrastructure. We made a commitment, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of investing a minimum of \$1 billion a year towards infrastructure. Members opposite underspent in one department alone year after year after year, and that was Infrastructure. The only year that they didn't underspend, lo and behold, an election year.

Mr. Speaker, I live in a constituency that has two major rivers flowing through it. Flooding is—it seems to be a perennial problem, and a problem that's been exasperated, obviously, with the impact of climate change on our world. That is why I'm particularly pleased that part of that \$1-billion commitment that our government has made to Manitobans will focus on flood mitigation, including those being affected in terms of an outlet for Lake Manitoba. I remember the members opposite making a similar commitment when they came to a permanent outlet and they released their action plan. This is what we as an NDP were going to do in terms of creating that permanent outlet to bring down that water on Lake Manitoba. Step 1 on the government's own tabled action plan? Release a press release. That gives you an idea where that government's priorities lie.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to note that joining New West Partnership, which has been an issue that this side of the House has identified as a priority, continues to be pursued under the direction of our Premier (Mr. Pallister). Apparently, a New West Partnership, the members opposite don't even believe is a reality.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things I heard when I was knocking at the doors in my community is an issue of better care for Manitobans. I heard time and time again from individuals that found themselves on the receiving end of some of the highest ambulance fees in this country, on average of \$500.

* (15:10)

I met a senior at the Niverville personal care home who unfortunately had to call an ambulance three times in the last year. This is an individual on a fixed income who suddenly found himself facing the \$1,500 tab, and the NDP's answer to it all? Well, that was the answer: simply Silence.

We will work with those front-line services, with the providers of health care, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to establish a wait-times task force to identify how we can shorten those wait-lists that only seem to grow year after year under the previous government.

I note that the wait-list for cataract surgery, an issue that affects a lot of seniors within our province, had more than doubled under the previous administration, and it had gotten so bad that you weren't even put on the waiting list until your cataracts had become so problematic they actually impeded on the quality of your daily lives. So your physician could say: absolutely, you have cataracts; you should get in surgery; you should be on that waiting list. But, according to the NDP, no, not until actually it starts impeding on your daily activities, and they did that, again, to artificially keep that growing waiting list down.

Our government announced a comprehensive mental health strategy as another priority of government. Mental health is a stigma that—has received a stigma far too long not only in this province, but in this country. I have spoken in this House about the own struggles in my family, Mr. Deputy Speaker, how my mother was a—voluntarily placed herself at Brandon Mental Health Centre before it had become an auxiliary service or auxiliary site to Assiniboine Community College—when—both—when I was a young man of 10, and when in my high school years that—when she voluntarily placed herself in there for several months to deal with some crippling issues that she had to deal with. As a teenager, I can honestly say that it was a difficult time not only for myself in terms of dealing with it, but dealing with my peers. And it's very clear when it comes to a mental health strategy in this province of Manitoba there is much more work to be done on that file. And so I am pleased to be part of a government that recognizes that together we will provide that strategy to ensure that all Manitobans have the opportunity to find those services, to find that help they need to help erase or at least, you know, start that process of erasing the stigma that associates too many individuals who self-identify and find themselves with the diagnosis of a mental health issue.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as a parent with three young children who find themselves in the public education system, I am encouraged that we will work with teachers, educators, parents and school boards to improve the literacy rates in our province. Year after year in the—on the Canadian national testing we found our students falling further and further behind, last place when it came to science, when it came to literacy, when it came to comprehension. And every time those results came out, each successive NDP Education minister would literally repeat the same lines: this is getting worse; this is a tragedy; we'll work to improve it. Four years later, the new results would come out, we would drop even further in those results.

I remember recently, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was at one of my children's parent-teacher conferences going over their report card, and what the teacher said to me was quite striking when I was asking some specific questions about the report card. My teacher told me that the report card is essentially useless as any kind of measuring tool for a parent, any kind of reference tool for a parent. And I found that quite shocking that the teacher would be so frank in her assessment of the tool that she uses, that she must use in order to assess my children.

Our new Minister of Sustainable Development (Mrs. Cox) gave us an update the other day about the issue of the forest fires that we find ourselves in in eastern Manitoba. Obviously, not as grave as the situation in Fort McMurray, but, clearly, as noted by all members of this House, climate change will continue to have an impact on that. And we, as a new government, will work to provide a clear and comprehensive plan to deal with climate change, unlike the NDP opposite who actually put into legislation firm and specific targets and said we will live up to these targets. And, if we do not live up to these targets, the question was asked: What will Manitobans do? What should Manitobans do as a course of action? The then-premier said, well, they should vote us out of office. And that is exactly what Manitobans did.

More importantly than anything, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we will provide an honest and accountable government, something that Manitobans have been craving for the last 17 years. We will be—start by removing the vote tax subsidy. It is always interesting that this government that cries poverty, that this government, that on Christmas Eve went to 100-plus not-for-profits here in the city of Winnipeg and demanded a clawback of their government

operating funds, could somehow find themselves diverting millions of dollars from those very services into the NDP's own bank account.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to see that we've identified and we will continue and we will strike a task force to look at reductions in red tape, something that is a bane not only of business, but, again, of the non-profit world.

We're going to re-enhance or reintroduce Manitobans' right to vote on major tax increases, a right that was denied by members opposite despite running on a very clear platform that they supported balanced budget legislation.

We'll make sure that publicly tendered projects are those that benefit all Manitobans and not just the friends of the NDP.

And we will ensure that by-elections take place within six months of a vacant seat.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I've often made comments in earlier speeches that my by-election actually was three first. It was the longest wait in Manitoba history. It was 360 days from vacancy to swearing in, the longest wait in Manitoba history. It was the first election to cover two calendar years, and it just happened to be, as you'd well know, the coldest election in Manitoba history.

I remember, actually, talking to a minister of the Crown in June of that year, Mr. Deputy Speaker, asking, you know, when, if we can anticipate a by-election being called anytime soon, and what that minister of the Crown said to me was that a political representative for the people of Morris was not, quote, our priority. End quote. That is the arrogance of members opposite.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm not suggesting the road ahead will be easy, but unlike members opposite we have an historic mandate that Manitobans are prepared to ensure that we deliver on a clean, open government that reflects their values of integrity, inclusion, common sense, and most important of all, teamwork—the issue, and a characteristic lacking all these many years.

I thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for those comments.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member of Burrows—St. Johns—St. Johns. The honourable member of St. Johns, I said, yes.

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): First off, I just want to apologize. I understand that the protocol is I am to always direct my questions here. So just learning, so apologize to the House.

Let me begin by acknowledging that we're gathered today on Treaty 1 territory and on the homeland of the Metis people. I ask everyone in the House to consider what this opening protocol actually means. Fundamentally, it means that in the very act of acknowledging this territory and our collective histories we intrinsically situate ourselves as relatives. So it is from within the spirit of family that I recognize each and every one of you here today.

I am deeply honoured and humbled to be here as a representative of the diverse and beautiful people of St. Johns. St. Johns constituents have fixed a great deal of hope and expectation in me to represent them in a good, respectful, courageous and honest way while advocating for social, economic, physical and cultural equality.

I assure you that I regard my role and responsibility as St. Johns' MLA as a sacred trust and fundamentally commit to listening to and advocating on behalf of my community's distinct and varied narratives, journeys, their struggles and their joys, their wisdom and their counsel, their wants and their hopes, and to share the myriad of the realities and experiences with you in the Manitoba Legislature.

I want to acknowledge the profound leadership and dedication to St. Johns of both Gord Mackintosh and Judy Wasylycia-Leis, each of who have already shared and taught so much, for what I am—for which I am forever grateful.

* (15:20)

I wish to offer my congratulations to Premier Brian Pallister and to all his newly elected MLAs.

I would like to take a moment to share with you and all Manitobans a little of my own personal journey, which culminates in this very particular moment here today.

I've always understood that our individual and collective paths are not born in isolation from one another, but rather that our experiences and insights are intimately interwoven with one another. All of our journeys are rooted within the joys, trauma, triumphs, struggles, wisdom and, ultimately, the love that we humbly receive from our families and

communities. Our human explorations are never divorced from those that came before us. Rather, our descendants' history serve to navigate the footsteps we walk as we strive over interwoven moments of agency and action.

To that end, my own journey has been fundamentally informed by the lives of my grandparents and parents, as well as the decisions made by them and those that were forced upon them.

My mother's family is from the Sagkeeng First Nation, located 120 kilometres north of Winnipeg. My family—my father's family is from Montreal, Quebec. Consequently, I've had the very distinct privilege of growing up within both indigenous and white space, each with its own struggles and benefits, which has allowed me to navigate both worlds.

My maternal grandfather, Henry Charles Fontaine, voluntarily enlisted with the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders at the age of 18, landing on the beaches of Normandy in the second and third waves, was soon thereafter captured by the Nazis and held as a POW for nine months. Once liberated, my grandfather returned to Canada, disenfranchised and, like most indigenous veterans, was systematically discriminated against by the very country he fought for.

My grandfather and grandmother, Nora Fontaine [*phonetic*], were amongst the first families to leave Sagkeeng First Nation and were among the first wave of indigenous peoples to move to the North End in the early 1950s. Our family predominantly grew up in the North End of Winnipeg. Indeed, my family, like so many indigenous families, dealt with the horrific consequences of the Indian residential school system, systemic racism, targeted discrimination and the corresponding manifestations derived—of derived intergenerational traumas.

In the main, I grew up with my mom, Sharon Fontaine [*phonetic*], who, as a consequence of colonialism, like many indigenous people, simply did not have the emotional or physical skills to parent. As a result, from very early on, I faced emotional, mental and physical abuse with intermittent moments of sexual abuse, all while entrenched within extreme poverty and cultural dislocation.

My mother was amazingly beautiful and creative. Unfortunately, as a result of a myriad of factors, including being raped as a child, she found

herself sexually exploited and prostituted throughout Canada, including in the last years of her life on Vancouver's notorious Downtown Eastside, where she ultimately lost her life at the age of 42 from a heroin overdose, alone on the dirty floor of a bathroom stall.

I would come to deal with my own harmful manifestations of trauma expressed in a variety of ways. It was in St. Johns where I was introduced to an indigenous women's healing circle, whose members, resilient, giving, nurturing healers and teachers, changed the course of my life. These women and elders taught me the strength—*miigwech*, sorry—the strength, beauty, courage and profound agency of indigenous women and the sacred responsibilities I forever and have always carried as an indigenous woman.

Immersed in my culture and traditional teachings for the first time in my life, I felt worthy, respected and loved and hopeful for my future. I openly share my personal journey always, not to gain pity or admiration, and particularly in this space, but to simply give voice and place to the thousands of similar stories of Manitobans across this province, particularly those of indigenous women and girls whose voice and face is so often marginalized and silenced. It is only when we courageously stand in truth, brutally uncomfortable as it may be for some people that recreate space for real change within the collective narrative, intrinsically cultivating greater understanding, compassion and connection between us all.

I share my story to highlight the enormity of the obstacles indigenous women confront in order to literally physically be standing in this space and to participate in this House as a representative of not only one culture and heritage but for all Manitobans, this, while at the same time forging pathways for the next generations to come.

I want to make it explicitly clear: Indigenous women are and have always been the champion of indigenous women's rights. From the first moment of contact, indigenous women emotionally, mentally, physically and spiritually fought against the colonial enterprise in safeguarding their families, their communities, their languages, their culture and traditions alongside their lands and territories. Indigenous women continue to do so today. We are our own champions. Indigenous women have stood on the front lines for the last 30 years in bringing attention to the savage levels of violence against

women and girls, demanding change and recognition of the crisis of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. We are our own champions.

Indigenous women are present today within every facet and sphere of our society. To name but a few: politicians like MKO's Grand Chief Sheila North Wilson and Chief Francine Meeches and Cathy Merrick; community advocates like Althea Guiboche, Alaya McIvor and Sadie-Phoenix Lavoie; elders like Thelma Morrisseau, Leslie Spillett and Velma Orvis; academics like Dr. Emma LaRocque and Dr. Wanda Wuttunee; journalists like Rosanna Deerchild and Shaneen Robinson; physicians like Dr. Lisa Monkman and midwives like Melissa Brown; police officers like Winnipeg Police Service member Edith Turner and former RCMP member Marge Hudson; entrepreneurs like Brenda Parsons, Lisa Meeches and Eva Wilson-Fontaine; MMIWG defenders like Bernadette Smith, Kim McPherson, Gerri Pangman, Barbara Houle, Sue Caribou, Cheyenne Chartrand, to name a few; artists like KC Adams, Jackie Traverse and Gayle Sinclair; and MLAs like my sister Amanda Lathlin and Judy Klassen. We are our own champions.

For the last 18 years, I've had the enormous privilege of working with and advocating for families of Canada's missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. And, in the last five and a half years, I've been lucky enough to forge a working relationship between MMIWG families and government in my role as special adviser on aboriginal women's issues for the indigenous issues committee of Cabinet. We have been able to do some amazing work in partnership with MMIWG families, like supporting the call for a national inquiry on missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, a provincial summit of MMIWG stakeholders, six Wiping Away the Tears gatherings for MMIWG families, Christmas party celebrations for MMIWG families. We've hosted the second National Roundtable on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and the monument dedication at The Forks. And, if members have not seen it yet, I would strongly encourage you to do so.

Working with MMIWG families has shown me first-hand the quintessential nature of resiliency, courage, strength, forgiveness and unconditional love as they've continued to seek justice for their loved ones, missing or murdered. MMIWG families provide Manitobans an example of what commitment can look like when working for something greater than yourself. My personal

academic and professional journeys have fundamentally informed the work that I do and the spirit in which it's done. These experiences have forever forged how I see and understand my obligations as an advocate, as a community organizer, as an elected representative and as a global citizen.

* (15:30)

I want to ensure that this government unfailingly commits to listening to and engaging on the perspectives of indigenous peoples, people of colour, persons with disabilities, the socio-economically disenfranchised, our Muslim relatives and our LGBTTTQ relatives and, of course, newcomers.

We must all walk together towards reconciliation, healing, renewal and equity in this province, and in order to do so there must be an equitable space in place which reflects, accommodates and celebrates Manitoba's diverse peoples.

As the critic for Families, persons with disabilities, Status of Women and MMIWG, I look forward to working together to realize this inclusive vision of Manitoba for all. I am incredibly proud and honoured to have been welcomed into a party that is committed to social justice, compassion, renewal and reconciliation, and I honour each and every one of you here today.

This is the party of Jack Layton who believed wholeheartedly that love is better than anger and that hope is better than fear. We remain a party that will continue to fight for the next generation of leaders, families and citizens working to expand opportunities for every Manitoban. We remain a party that acknowledges and honours Manitobans' diversity and commits to the path of reconciliation.

Our team brings the experience, knowledge of long-time members alongside new, vital and diverse voices of members representing Fort Rouge, Flin Flon and myself in St. Johns. Our role as official opposition will not be one we take very lightly. We will use this opportunity to assume new approaches and try new ideas. We will use this opportunity to channel fresh energy and a new narrative into a renewed fight for a progressive tomorrow.

So, finally, let me end where I began by acknowledging each and every one of you as relatives, and like most families we will undoubtedly disagree on different ideals, visions, direction and pathways. But as we begin this journey together, know that I will strive to engage you from a position

of collegial respect and forever with the best interests of all Manitobans.

I want to say miigwech to all the volunteers who worked so tirelessly on my campaign, as tough as it was, and that I am forever grateful for the work and energy and love and support shown me.

And, finally, I want to dedicate my inaugural speech to Canada's missing and murdered indigenous women and girls and their families for whom I will continue to work and advocate for.

Miigwech.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Before we continue, I would like to offer a reminder to all members that in the House we do not refer to the other members by name, but instead we refer to them as constituency or portfolio. In this case members should have been the Premier, the member of Kewatinook and the member of The Pas. Thank you.

Next, the honourable member of Brandon West.

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): Congratulations on your appointment as Deputy Speaker, and congratulations to Madam Speaker for her election. We know that you will both guide us well and you both know that we do indeed need guidance in here from time to time. So thank you for that.

And thank you to the MLA for St. Johns for sharing her story with us. It is part of the inaugural speech here that you tell us about yourselves, and you did a fine job today and I'm sure we'll hear from you many times in this Legislature.

Congratulations also to colleagues who have been returned to the Legislature by the voters in their constituency, and to the many new MLAs who have been elected for the first time. It is a fabulous place to be. Welcome to the Manitoba Legislative Assembly, to this beautiful building. It is also very good to see the clerks and Chamber staff as well as our pages. They help us and guide us in their quiet and efficient way and make things—make sure we do things in the right and efficient manner.

So I'm very pleased to rise to speak to the amendment to the Speech to the—*from the Throne*, and it was a speech that I feel reflected all of Manitoba. It does not pick winners and losers as we have seen done in the past speeches. It is inclusive and, indeed, it sends a path for a better Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, as—sorry, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have to revise here if you're going to call me on that. There we go.

As we knocked on doors all over Manitoba we heard this message that Manitobans wanted a better Manitoba, a Manitoba that we can be proud of and that is a contributor to Canada rather than a have-not province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I had many—a great deal of help from many, many volunteers who put in countless hours of their time leading up to and during the last election. I am thrilled to be joined by 39 PC colleagues on this side of the House in the government. I'm even more thrilled that I am joined by the new MLA for Brandon East, who, I know, will be a great representative. This is a historic time—first time we have ever had a PC MLA from Brandon East, and I can't say enough about all the work that was done there from all of the constituencies that helped us in Brandon East with that win.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are many stories from the campaign trail, and I do wish to recognize some of those who shared that campaign with me. I really can't say enough about Lori Dangerfield, Lee Jebb and Jim Green, who were not only a big part of my campaign team and led the campaign but spent the last day door knocking with me to get out the vote in Brandon West and in Brandon East, making sure that I was somewhat distracted, not focusing on the voters all the time and what might happen or might not happen that night, but they did a very good job of that. So that distraction was a great group of people, that they took me around and made sure that we talked to all the voters and got them out to vote.

Bob Harrison and Jeff Harwood, our experienced campaigners who were at the doors with me many times. Ramona Coey was instrumental in making sure we'd—had ample volunteers. She was politely relentless and very good at getting to yes, while Gerald Cathcart ushered the teams out the door to knock on doors. David Shuttleworth made sure the money was all accounted for and guided our team through the nuances of election financing, while Dale McKay and his team made sure that we had the donors. Donna Shuttleworth I can't say enough about her as a phoner. She would—we would be—go out to the door with teams and we'd be knocking on 'doors' and finding supporters, and we'd come back with our tally, and Donna would quietly say, well, you know, I found 30 voters tonight, and we'd feel humbled because she found more just on her phone

than we got at the doors some nights. Cal Coey and his sign team worked early mornings and late evenings for many, many sign requests.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the 2011 election, we won Brandon West by 151 votes. Every vote counts. Coincidentally, that is the same number that is on the back of my MLA pin, so it is very memorable for me. This election, we won by 3,740. Our team and the PC team, led by now-Premier Brian Pallister, was very successful, and we thank—*[interjection]*—I'm sorry, by the Premier, was very successful, and we thank all Manitobans.

On our team, Trudy Corbett was one of the calmest, most organized people I have ever met. Her team, with Derryk Jackson, was instrumental in achieving those voting results. Drew Ostash, Jaelyn Hogeveen and Dianne Fotheringham made sure the office, the candidate and the information was always organized, available and ready to respond to constituents.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, our Speech from the Throne spoke to all Manitobans, building relationships, working together as a team and working with families. I can't say enough about how our family worked together during the election. We had an extended family, over 200 volunteers, but my mother and father, Ron and Vera Helwer; my sisters, Sherry and Gail; our children, Jessica, who is a transplant-kidney transplant recipient, as you know, waiting for another transplant now; her husband, Nevin; our son, Andrew, is a potential donor for Jessica; Carolyn and Adam, all helped and supported us.

I am very fortunate to have been married to Aynsley, a kidney donor, for over 30 years. She was involved in all areas of the campaign and a very patient listener. Being the spouse of a 'signifant'—of a—or a significant person of an MLA or any politician is not easy. It takes a very special person.

* (15:40)

You know, I don't say I love you enough to Aynsley, certainly not often enough, but being an MLA now for a second term has brought a new and different aspect to our relationship.

As MLAs we are away from our families a great deal, and communication is critical. I encourage all MLAs to spend as much time with your families as you possibly can, because this job will draw you away from them. And you don't belong to yourselves any more, you now belong to the people of Manitoba.

You know, I often remarked during the campaign that the six weeks that I was in Brandon during that election campaign is the longest time that Aynsley and I have been together in five years. That's a long time to not be together all the time. We're together, of course, on weekends and when we can be, but that is how often this job takes you away from your spouse and your family.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I learned a great deal during the last term of office and I've already learned a great deal during this term of office in government. Our Premier (Mr. Pallister) has set a clear path for Manitoba to be the most improved province in Canada. We know we have a lot of work to do. There are challenges, but that creates opportunity.

I know Manitobans want a better Manitoba. We will work to strengthen the economy, improve health care and education. Our campaign team worked together. We created partnerships. Our government will do the same.

Joining the New West Partnership is a step along that path to a better Manitoba. We need to talk to our neighbours, as we are a trading province in a trading nation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we will be open and accountable. Manitobans want to know more about how their government operates. I have always promoted information sharing in every part of my career, so this is nothing new. I know how to share information with people.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, you know, it is quite something to have gone through this, an election. I'd really like to thank all constituents of Brandon West. I will represent them all, regardless of their political stripe. We had a great number of calls to our constituency office over the last four and a half years and we continued right after the election, people asking for help navigating the bureaucracy. Some of those things we can help them with, some of them we just have to listen and try to find a way to send them in the right direction or help them along the way.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Throne Speech was informed by consultations that our party held all around the province and reinforced at the door time after time as we listened to Manitobans in Brandon West. There are many stories from door knocking, and I'm sure everyone here has stories they could share with us. You know, there are light moments and there are not-so-light moments. But to—time and

time again when we started door knocking early in the afternoon, I'd knock on the door and a young child would come flying to the door with a big smile on their face, and then the smile would disappear as they'd realize that I'm not the play date. I'm that—I'm just there knocking on the door for some other reason, but I'm not the person that he was expecting or she was expecting, the friend that was going to come there to make their day after school.

There's lots of other stories that we experience, people at the door that we were able to help over the last several years, because as I said, some of—most of our job is really helping people to navigate the bureaucracy. Some of them we are able to help through the health-care system, as we heard from the MLA from Morris. He was somewhat less successful with his attempts, as I have been in some of mine. I have found success with some of them. But all those stories are those that you will learn and you will help people along the way.

So I'm very happy to be part of this new 'tream.' And what we heard time and time again at the door was people are concerned about jobs. Brandon East and West, southwestern Manitoba and, indeed, all of Manitoba has been impacted in the downturn in the oil economy. I met many people at the door that used to work there or have a spouse that works there. Now they may be travelling to northern BC to work a couple weeks at a time and then travelling back, looking for jobs where they can find them, job sharing, reduced hours. Those are all the impacts that Manitobans are facing today.

And those are the things that the previous government ignored. They—time and time again we reminded them of the oil patch in southwestern Manitoba. Mr. Deputy Speaker, you were part of that and you know that the previous government didn't know what was happening in your area of the province. So it's very disappointing to see that. We know that there are opportunities there for all Manitobans, and those are things that we can help them with. I have been a builder throughout my career and I know that I can help Manitobans and this government can help Manitobans build a better Manitoba. And that's what we'll see.

Thank you for the time, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm sure there are many others who wish to the—speak to this wonderful Throne Speech. The optimism in there is something that I can embrace and I know Manitobans embrace as well.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): I would like to begin by taking this opportunity to extend a heartfelt thank you to the residents of Burrows for their support in this past election. To them, I say thank you for entrusting me to bring forth the ideas, issues and concerns that arise in Burrows. I take such joy in getting to know so many of you throughout the years and more recently in this past election.

Secondly, I'd like to thank all of the volunteers who helped out on the campaign. Elections can, in fact, be a lot of fun, contrary to what many politicians will say. I believe that the volunteers who helped out on the Burrows campaign would attest to it. Your time, skills and efforts have paid off, and I am forever grateful. Thank you all.

Thirdly, I would like to thank my parents: my mother, who is currently sitting up in the gallery, and my father, who is right now in the House of Commons in Ottawa. As I'm sure many of you can appreciate, I am grateful beyond words for both my mother and my father. My parents have been strong, positive examples in my life, and I contribute all that I am to the values that they have taught me. I am grateful for the unique opportunities I had being raised in a political household, and I plan to utilize what I have learned over the years. Politics is my passion and it is through my parents that I have learned to thrive off serving people, which enables me to follow my dreams.

Lastly, after getting elected, as the new MLAs were given a crash course of sorts on the workings of the Manitoba Legislature, I would like to thank the Clerk's Office for all they did in assisting us and helping us adjust.

You know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I love my city. I'm a proud Manitoban. When I look around the Chamber, I acknowledge that we all come from various walks of life. That means we all bring various expertise to the table, and I'm looking forward to working with everyone here in this room to better the province of Manitoba.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, allow me to tell you a little bit about Burrows and why it's such an exceptional community. If you break down the constituency of Burrows into sections, you will find an abundance of pride, including Canada's oldest housing co-op, homes that were built in the traditional Winnipeg North End over 100 years ago. You will find established communities such as Shaughnessy Park and The Maples. Burrows is an area that reflects the growth of Winnipeg.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I should add that Burrows is home to Maples Collegiate and Manitoba's largest high school, Sisler. Sisler High School is a treasure in the North End, and I'm so honoured to join those who are Spartan alumni.

As for the people who call Burrows home, our Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said, diversity isn't just sound social policy; diversity is the engine of invention. It generates creativity that enriches the world.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I agree and I love the diversity in the community in which I represent. It is through immigration that multiculturalism in Canada has evolved.

In getting to know the people who live in Burrows and the concerns that often arise, a few of them are the following: infrastructure, health care, crime, child care, senior care and immigration. But please allow me to elaborate on a few specifically, beginning with crime and safety.

You know, there was not a lot of content in the Throne Speech pertaining to the local-level situations on crime and safety. The idea of Manitobans feeling unsafe in their own communities should never be an issue, but it is. Parents should feel comfortable allowing their children to walk to school. People should feel safe opening the front doors at all times of the day. It is a sad reality that there are residents in Burrows who do not.

We need to reinstate community policing. We need to provide opportunities for young offenders, rather than having them carry around track records, and we need people in the community to be aware of and active on Neighbourhood Watch programs.

Another concern that I would like to discuss is health care. I am disheartened when I hear people refer to the Seven Oaks hospital as the seven jokes hospital. That—this reputation needs to be drastically adjusted. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I plan to continue fighting for the Seven Oaks hospital. When I was younger I fought to maintain a more comprehensive emergency facility. I did this by sleeping in the waiting room overnight in protest with some former Liberal MLAs.

* (15:50)

The Seven Oaks hospital has hard-working health-care nurses and good facilities. The problem is the support for these workers and how the facilities are functioning. I am hopeful that the Conservative

government have learnt their lesson and that this time around the Seven Oaks hospital will be made a priority and recognized as a shining light here in Manitoba. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am hoping to work closely with the member from Kildonan specifically on this.

During the election our new Premier (Mr. Pallister) promised that government would cut ambulance fees in half. I take comfort in the fact that this was reinforced in the Throne Speech. The subject of high ambulance fees were often brought up at the doors in Burrows. There was one woman who stood out in particular to me. She explained how a few months back she stepped out of her house and she fell. Her neighbour called her an ambulance and she went to the hospital and had herself checked out. She was okay, which is great news, but a few weeks later, she received a bill of nearly \$550. She expressed to me how she was on low income and she could barely afford her prescription medicine.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am asking the Premier to consider removing the entire ambulance fee for those on low income. Manitobans are in real need of this.

Adjusting issues for seniors is more than just health care, and therefore I am surprised that seniors fall under health care. I am, however, looking forward to seeing the Premier keep his word and implement 1,200 available personal care home beds.

For the past three years, I had the distinct pleasure of working for the long-term care association here in Manitoba. Through this I have learned how to differentiate between personal care homes, retirement homes, supportive housing homes and hospices. I am saddened when I find out that seniors have been misplaced. Senior care is crucial. One day we're all going to need it. We should be considerate of those currently receiving it. I believe not only do we need more spots for seniors in various homes, but we need to ensure that these seniors are being placed accordingly.

Lastly, I would like to touch on immigration. I am concerned and disappointed that the topic of immigration, in particular the Provincial Nominee Program, was not discussed in the Throne Speech. With immigration continuously growing here in Manitoba, I believe it needs to be strongly represented inside of the Manitoba Legislature. The NDP's proven inability to manage and make necessary changes to Manitoba's Nominee Program has caused unnecessary stress and incredibly long

waiting periods. It has also prevented families from being united in a very real way.

Given the importance of the Nominee Program I look forward to working with the Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade (Mr. Cullen), as well as the Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage (Ms. Squires). I'm anxious to see how our Premier (Mr. Pallister) and his government plan on addressing the mess that has been made.

I'd like to conclude by thanking the Manitoba Liberal Party and reiterating the largest thank you possible to the residents of Burrows. Thank you for entrusting me to represent you here on the floor of the Manitoba Legislature. I will stand strong; I will stand proud, and I will always be accessible.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I now move, seconded by the MLA for Kewatinook,

THAT the motion be amended by adding after clause (z) the following clauses:

- (aa) commit timely construction of the road network connecting communities on the east side of Lake Winnipeg; and
- (bb) commit to the improving and enhancing the Provincial Nominee Program and the process of bringing immigrants to Manitoba; and
- (cc) commit to putting the highest possible priority on the establishment of a dedicated stroke unit in Manitoba; and
- (dd) commit to addressing the urgent need for First Nations housings; and
- (ee) commit to implement, together with the First Nations and Metis people in Manitoba, a plan to improve nutrition and to decrease diabetes in our province.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It's been moved by the member of Burrows, seconded by the member of Kewatinook,

THAT the amendment to be amended by—that the motion is amended by adding after the clause for the following clauses:

- (aa) committed to a—commit timely to construction of the road network connecting

communities on the east side of Lake Winnipeg; and

- (bb) committed to improving and enhancing the Provincial Nominee Program and the process of bringing immigration to Manitoba; and
- (cc) commitment to putting the highest possible priority on the establishment of a dedicated stroke unit in Manitoba; and
- (dd) committed to addressing the—an urgent need for First Nation housing; and
- (ee) commit to implement, together with the First Nation and Metis people of Manitoba, a plan to improve nutrition and decrease diabetes in our province.

The subamendment is in order.

Any debate?

Mr. Alan Lagimodiere (Selkirk): Mr. Deputy Speaker, congratulations.

Honourable MLAs, members of the House and guests, I humbly yet proudly stand before you as I introduce myself to all Manitobans. I am the member for the constituency of Selkirk. I am proud to say that this is the first time in documented memory that the Selkirk constituency has been Progressive Conservative.

Firstly, I would like to congratulate every elected MLA. Being elected by the people of our respective constituencies is a tremendous honour. Earning their vote is a measure of their trust. We are now responsible for their interests. This position is not to be taken lightly.

It is common knowledge that we, the elected, did not reach this position on our own. From the bottom of my heart, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to thank the core group of my campaign team for their time, energy, encouragement and support. I would like to thank the individual volunteers who donated however much time and effort as they could. I would like to thank the Selkirk Progressive Conservative Party association and its members and directors for their support and assistance.

I need to give special thanks to my campaign manager, Mr. Richard Perchotte, and my campaign adviser, Mr. David Bjornson, who brought skill sets that were fundamental to every successful team. Mr. Perchotte's organizational and logistic skills are second to none. Mr. Bjornson's political campaign

savvy brought confidence and composure to our relatively new and inexperienced group.

I wanted to thank Mr. David Borgjford for keeping us on track financially. And thank you to Cindy Mckay, our media whiz. Thank you to Stu Mckay, Gail Mckay, Joe Bedard, Alaing Clare, who tirelessly hit the streets, knocking on every door in our constituency. Thank you to Andre Deroseire for keeping everyone in the country informed on a minute-by-minute playback of our activities with tweets and posts. And thank you to Jackie Sparks, Pam Armstrong, Eva, Gail, Alaing and Joe in the office, who kept our doors open in case we had visitors. Jackie helped to keep everyone on track. The guidance and contributions of everyone involved in my campaign were instrumental in leading the Selkirk constituency to its first ever Progressive Conservative seat in the Manitoba Legislature.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to give a special thanks to Mr. Greg Dewar, who represented the Selkirk constituency in this very hallowed building for approximately 26 years. Following the election, one of Mr. Dewar's supporters came to my office to tell me that Mr. Dewar, on the election night, stated to his supporters that Selkirk now has a new MLA. And he told everyone present that they now need to support the newly elected MLA for Selkirk constituency. I feel that Mr. Dewar's diplomacy and grace demonstrated at this time needs to be stated for the record in the House where he spent 26 years representing the Selkirk constituency.

*(16:00)

I want to thank my family: my granddaughter Ella Lavoie, whose hugs kept me energized and focused on the reason I was a candidate; my daughter Kerry Lavoie—her husband Tim; my son David and his partner Leslie Loutit; my son Chris and his partner Randi Monkman; my son Jason and his wife Jennifer. Thank you for being there for family suppers every Sunday to share your thoughts, comments and support.

Finally, and most important, I would like to thank my wife Judy, who has been there for me through ups and downs, good and bad times and lately through a stressful campaign.

Mr. Deputy Speaker and fellow House members, a few words about my background. I am Metis. When I was growing up, I didn't have much. But what I did have was opportunity. I took advantage of that opportunity every chance I had. And because of

that, I am standing before you here today as an elected member of our government.

When I was five years old, my father purchased a mixed farm just outside the town of The Pas. It was here that I learned the value of hard work. Farming teaches you the value of life and compassion for all living creatures. You see animals born, eggs hatch; your world is that of the life cycle. You learn to appreciate each and every day. Farming teaches you the importance of doing the best you can each and every day no matter what is thrown at you. It teaches you to respect and support those who respect and support you.

I finished school at the age of 17, and at that time I thought my future lie in the big money of the construction camps in the North. Working as a construction labourer, I soon realized the importance of an education and I travelled south to Winnipeg and enrolled at the University of Manitoba.

An accident at the age of 19 resulted in my almost losing my leg. The intense hospitalization periods following my surgery allowed me the time needed to rethink my future. Initially, I saw my injury as a severe disability. Later, I saw it as an opportunity to rethink the direction my life was heading. I resolved to continue to improve myself. It was during these years that I met the woman who would become Mrs. Judy Lagimodiere.

I received my bachelor of science in agriculture in 1979. After graduating from agriculture, I worked in the feed sales industry as a territorial sales manager in northern Alberta. I then decided to expand on my education. I continued my studies at the University of Saskatchewan, where I completed my masters of business administration, majoring in finance and marketing. While working on my masters, I opened and operated MBA Business Analyst, providing business consulting services within the province of Saskatchewan.

With my love of animals, I then continued my education at the Western College of Veterinary Medicine and received my doctor of veterinary medicine. I dedicated my life to providing care and treatment of animals, serving the community with dedication and discipline required to operate a demanding 24-7 veterinary practice. During my veterinary career, my days were never routine, bringing new animal life into the world, assessing, diagnosing and treating complex medical and surgical problems, doing everything I could to enhance the quality of life for our animal friends

through treatment or cure. I had a career highlight every day.

Madam Speaker in the Chair

During my career, I was actively involved with the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association's mentorship program. This provided me with opportunities to share my passion for veterinary medicine and animal care with junior colleagues. As a member, I was known for being tough on students and challenging them to reach their full potential.

A few years ago, I had a serious car accident and was now faced with another life-altering moment. I had to regroup and reconsider my future. Luckily, my educational background allowed for a transition into the entrepreneurial world.

Since obtaining my MBA, business management has always been another passion of mine, Madam Speaker. In addition to maintaining my veterinary licences, I invested in various hospitality industry endeavours. I obtained extensive Choice University course training in hospitality, operations, management and financial management. I'm a member of the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association, Manitoba Veterinary Medical Association, Manitoba Hotel Association, Revenue Management Professionals and Edwards MBA.

Madam Speaker, Cabinet ministers and fellow House members, in addition to my practical scientific background and educational skill sets, my professional tool box carries comprehensive business development planning, strategic and analytical skills. I bring project and operations management, revenue analysis and management, marketing and communications, leadership, collaboration and negotiation skills to my team, the Legislature and Manitoba.

I became a candidate because I truly love Manitoba, its people, its places and its history. My life experiences have allowed me the opportunity to travel and see almost every area of Manitoba, to meet and enjoy the company of people from all walks of life and all areas of our province. During my travels, I've learned that Manitobans are very bright, resilient people. There is nothing we cannot accomplish when we work together. The constituency I represent includes the city of Selkirk, the rural municipality of St. Clements and the Brokenhead Ojibway Nation. The Brokenhead Ojibway Nation, with its newly re-elected chief Jim Bear, is a very progressive and forward-thinking

community. As part of our constituency, it boasts the South Beach hotel and casino and new residential development areas.

Our constituency has a diverse economy, with agriculture, manufacturing, hydroelectricity, fishing, small business and tourism as our economic generators. We have great farmlands, waters, wetlands, communities and blue skies in every direction. Over the years, Selkirk has provided diversity in employment in the steel mill foundry, industrial and manufacturing businesses, waterfront, shipping and commercial fisheries. We have mixed farming operations, large greenhouse operations, a growing industrial park, and tremendous tourism attractions. All of these business sectors have been struggling with taxes, red tape, poor access to markets. They have been forced to cut back, decrease spending, put a hold on hiring, due to our poor business environment. These businesses are now all anxiously awaiting to have their burdens lifted so they can grow and prosper. This will ultimately lead to more jobs, a stronger economy, and allow us to improve our front-line services in health care and education.

During my election campaign, I had the wonderful opportunities to visit several of Selkirk constituency's successful businesses. The companies I refer to employ between two and three hundred Manitobans and generate millions of dollars in revenue, yet the owners told me that I was the first local political official to ever set foot inside their buildings. I'm very excited for the opportunity to have other made-in-Manitoba companies in the Selkirk constituency create new success stories under a new business-friendly PC government, Madam Speaker.

A new hospital in Selkirk is expected to open in 2017. It will become a regional health centre. The PC team's commitment to provide better care for Manitobans is commendable. Manitobans should rejoice as our new government works toward finding practical solutions to emergency wait times and personal-care-home shortages and develops initiatives aimed at improving the delivery of health care for all Manitobans, a government focused on providing the best possible care for families, seniors, children and patients.

The Selkirk Mental Health Centre dates back to 1871. Initially, the centre was an institution to house those with mental health issues. Today, this 252-bed facility provides specialized mental health and

acquired brain injury treatment and rehabilitation services to residents of Manitoba and Nunavut, returning many to successful, functional lives. By working with mental health and advocacy groups to develop a comprehensive mental health strategy, we can ensure that Manitoba leads the way in access to services for mental health, addictions, counselling and treatment.

The Selkirk constituency offers a multitude of opportunities just waiting to be unleashed under our Progressive Conservative government, opportunities that we can improve upon and develop, opportunities that will further enhance the quality of life of the residents of Selkirk, St. Clements, Brokenhead Ojibway Nation and all Manitobans.

It is encouraging for all Manitobans to see one of the PC team's top priorities will be to complete a value-for-money audit. This is the only way to ensure that Manitobans' tax dollars are being used to get the maximum benefit for all Manitobans. Manitobans are all frugal when it comes to expenditures, and it is exciting to see a new government that reflects this philosophy.

* (16:10)

Manitoba's Metis and indigenous communities have very knowledgeable leaders who are prepared to have an open dialogue and work side by side with us. It is good to be part of a government and team that finally recognizes the importance of working together for the betterment of all Manitobans.

Our province has more to offer than any other Canadian province. It is encouraging to see a government in place that realizes this and will work with other provincial governments for the betterment of all Canadians.

The Golden Boy faces north to signify the vastness and resources of our north country. It is exciting to see our new government is committing to the north and will be working toward sustainable development in the north.

I am a strong advocate of education. I learned long ago your education is something no one can ever take away from you. And although it does not open doors for you, it does give you the key to unlock these doors. Investing in education today is an investment in our province's future. By ensuring proficiency at the undergraduate levels and providing support for post-secondary education throughout Manitoba, our government will provide opportunity

for Manitobans to be successful in whichever career path they choose.

I'm looking forward to working with the PC team towards a clean economy and seeing Manitoba become a leader in the country. Yearly, I calculate my carbon footprint, and I am happy to report that it is presently in a negative balance.

As politicians, we all need to work towards upholding the trust placed in us as Manitobans. This can only be accomplished by following our government's plan of leading with honesty, integrity, compassion, trust and common sense.

I look forward to working with an honest, transparent government and colleagues. Together, the PC team can build a better Manitoba for everyone. This can only be accomplished with establishing a detailed short-term and long-term plan.

As a member of this team, we will not be here to debate the past. We will be here to make all of our skills and abilities available to help drive our economy, support our culture, protect our province and help move Manitoba into the future, a better future, a future that is well thought out, well planned and well implemented for today and future generations.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Just before recognizing the next speaker, I'm going to read back the text of the sub-amendment for clarification.

Moved by the honourable member for Burrows (Ms. Lamoureux), seconded by the honourable member for Kewatinook (Mrs. Klassen),

THAT the motion be amended by adding after clause (z) the following clauses:

- (aa) commit to timely construction of the road network connecting communities on the east side of Lake Winnipeg; and
- (bb) commit to improving and enhancing the Provincial Nominee Program and the process of bringing immigrants to Manitoba; and
- (cc) commit to putting the highest possible priority on the establishment of a dedicated stroke unit in Manitoba; and
- (dd) commit to addressing the urgent need for First Nations housing; and

(ee) commit to implement, together with First Nations and Metis people in Manitoba, a plan to improve nutrition and to decrease diabetes in our province.

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): Madam Speaker, I'm deeply honoured and thankful to be here as a representative, not just of the city of Flin Flon but of the constituency of Flin Flon.

Flin Flon has a long history of association with the New Democratic Party. I believe 2017 will be 50 years without a break that we have been represented by the NDP, and I am very proud to carry on that tradition and look forward to another 50 years of proper and decent representation for all Manitobans.

The Flin Flon constituency is one of the largest constituencies in Manitoba. It takes in the communities of Flin Flon, Cranberry Portage, Snow Lake, Tadoule Lake, Brochet, Lac Brochet, South Indian Lake, Nelson House, Hughes Lake and many of those communities are quite different from the other ones. It is my hope to be able to address some of those differences going forward so that I'm properly able to represent all members of that constituency.

Today I renewed my commitment to be of service to people in those communities, to listen to them and to bring their concerns and issues to this Legislature. I offer my congratulations to all members of the Legislature. I'm hopeful that we can work together in this House to do what's best for all Manitobans. But make no mistake, I and the members of our NDP team will stand up and fight for what we believe in.

I would also like to congratulate you, Madam Speaker, on your selection as the—your election as the Speaker, and I'm sure you will carry out your duties with the responsibility and dignity and respect that the position calls for.

I would like to thank all the volunteers who worked not just on my campaign, but on everybody's campaign. Without them, none of us would be here today. I'd especially like to thank the woman that showed up one day looking for a sign at my campaign office. She stayed and became the office manager and will soon become my constituency assistant. Be careful where you show up.

One of the most important people or groups of people that we should be thanking is our families, and I would like to thank my wife, Sharon, for her

love and support. It's been quite a ride for her, following along and supporting me in some of the things that I've done over the years, and I certainly couldn't do it without her. This particular ride was complicated when her 92-year-old mother had a stroke, of which she's pretty much fully recovered now, and it's a testament to her strength and her daughter's strength that she was able to carry on and that Sharon was able to carry on and support me in this.

There are many upstanding members on both sides of this House who will not be joining us again, and they deserve our acknowledgement because they've worked hard for their constituents and for the people of Manitoba. They've made valuable contribution to the province.

It's in this same vein that I'd like to thank our former premier for his service and leadership. The important work that he and the former members did in their time here is a legacy that will be honoured and respected. Thank you.

I was raised on a farm in southern Saskatchewan and it was from my parents that I learned about service to community and helping the less fortunate among us. While they would never identify themselves as being socialists, everything they did throughout their lives was to help other people. So, while the name maybe didn't fit them, the aspect did.

I moved to Flin Flon in 1974. I had originally planned to stay for a year while I figured out what I was going to do next with my life. It's been a long year and any day now I'll figure out what I'm going to do with the rest of my life.

The path has been not preordained or set out. I didn't have a strong plan when I graduated school as to what I was going to do. I've been fortunate to be able to do many of the things that I've done, including becoming an MLA. It was never part of the plan, but here I am, and I look forward to fulfilling that role and those duties.

My friends, neighbours and family are hard-working Manitobans. Many of them rely on natural resources of our province to make a living. Flin Flon is a classic single-industry town, and its future is, at present, very uncertain as the last mine is soon going to be depleted of resources.

* (16:20)

Keep in mind there's been mining in Flin Flon for nearly 100 years. I'm sure there's another mine

there and we'll need to work towards finding that mine and developing it, and I hope the government of the day will help ensure that that mine happens and that mines in other communities such as Lynn Lake, that's in desperate need of jobs, that those mines will happen as well.

I hope that there is more focus on the North than what we've heard so far from the Throne Speech. There's desperate needs for many people, not just the people of the city of Flin Flon, but the people in all of those communities that I mentioned previous that need help, need resource.

It was from my sense of community and caring that I became involved in the workers' movement in Flin Flon. I went to work for a large mining company, a completely different experience than growing up on a farm, and I very quickly realized that working people needed to have a strong voice to represent them and their concerns, not just in the workplace but in the community as a whole.

I very quickly became shop steward, then the chief steward of my department, became a member of the executive board of the local-local 7106 of the United Steel Workers. Eventually, I became the full-time health and safety representative for the entire mining complex in Flin Flon and Snow Lake. Again, that was never part of the plan, but it's something that I took on, and very quickly into that role a worker died at work in my workplace, and very quickly after that another worker died. Nobody should be subjected to that. No family should be subjected to having their loved one not come home from work. Seeing those dead bodies spurred me to make sure that I didn't see any more. With the National Day of Mourning just recently passed, I'm feeling renewed in my commitment to advocate for safer, healthier workplaces all over our province to prevent more workplace injuries, more deaths.

The work that has been done has been substantial in this area. We've got some of the best workplace health and safety regulations in the country, and I will fight tooth and nail to make sure that we maintain those regulations that have been bought with workers' blood.

No one should have to go to work fearing for their life or their livelihood. We must continue to fight for the living. We must create productive working relationships between our government, our union leaders, workers and business. And I'm very concerned about the lack of commitment to consulting with union leaders, to consulting with

workers to make this province continue to grow. It's through workers that have borne the brunt of making this province strong like it is, and they need to be recognized, they need to be consulted with and they need to be a part of our future.

I have a long history of listening to people's concerns, of caring what their needs are and advocating for them. As a union leader I was never afraid to stand up and speak out for the benefit of the people I was representing. As an MLA I will not be afraid to stand up and speak for the people that I'm representing. It is their best interests I have at heart, certainly not mine.

I plan to do the same thing for all the people of the Flin Flon constituency, whether they be workers in the mine in Flin Flon and Snow Lake or whether they be unemployed people in Tadoule Lake, their concerns need to be addressed. We need to make sure that we hear their voices.

In my 40 years working for the mine, I learned a lot about the needs of Flin Flon and Snow Lake areas, but I have much to learn about the rest of the communities and the people that live in our north. I had the great honour throughout my campaign of travelling to each and every one of those communities, of talking not just to the leadership in those communities but of talking to people, just everyday people.

I made one promise throughout my campaign and only one promise, and I made that to the people on their doorsteps when I talked to them, that I'll be back. I want to listen. I want to represent you. I can't possibly represent you if I don't come back and listen to you. And I take that promise very seriously, and I intend to fulfill that promise. I will be back in all of those communities, talking to the people that matter: Manitobans.

Many of my neighbours need help making ends meet. They want to know that there are good, stable jobs available for them and their families. They want access to quality education. They want access to quality training programs. They want a strong universal health-care system that they can rely on. They want community programs and services that will uplift and empower their communities. We've heard of so many communities in the North where young people are in trouble because of the lack of resources for them to be able to do anything, for them to have hope, whether it's school programs, sports facilities, recreation facilities. We need to address those programs. Along with that, many of

the First Nations communities in my riding are in desperate need of clean water, infrastructure, along with good jobs. Hope is what's missing from many of those communities in the North, and I want to help all Northerners realize their future so that they have hope, hope for their children's futures.

Job creation is crucial so that everyone has an opportunity to prosper. Manitoba's steady economic growth benefits everyone, especially average working families. Manitoba has a wealth of resources, and everyone should be able to share in the prosperity that that brings. The wealth cannot remain in the hands of a few but must help all the people prosper.

While jobs are important, we cannot just have jobs at any cost. Economic prosperity cannot override environmental protections. The two must go hand in hand. It can be done. I participated as the union health and safety rep in developing a mine in a park. We can do resource extraction. We just can't do it the same way we used to do it. There are protections that can put in place so that when that mine is done, you'll never know it was there. So we can do it. We can create jobs. We can protect the environment.

Residents of the constituency need more community supports, housing for our seniors. If we want people to stay in our communities, we need to make sure that those resources are put into the communities so that they can stay in their communities. Education and training are so very important for all the people so that they are able to participate in the future.

I would like to thank our previous government for their investments in Frontier Collegiate and University College of the North. These two vital education centres do so much to allow northerners to have a bright and successful future. I can only hope that these investments in the people continue to grow to allow more communities to participate.

Our NDP team brings the experience and knowledge of long-time members along with the fresh, diverse voices of the member from St. Johns, the member from Fort Rouge and myself. I am confident in our new team, a team of renewal and change coupled with wisdom and an intimate understanding of Manitoba's key issues. We have an opportunity to take new approaches and try new ideas. We have an opportunity to channel all of this dynamic new energy into a fight for a progressive

tomorrow, to be a clear voice for the people of Manitoba in this Chamber.

* (16:30)

Our new team will stand on this side of the House and push the government not only to allow—to follow through on the promises that they've made to Manitobans but to prioritize the needs of working, middle-class and disadvantaged families and to continue the strategic investments that have put Manitoba on the fast track to becoming an economic and cultural force.

Hon. Ron Schuler (Minister of Crown Services):

First of all, I would like to take this opportunity to one more time congratulate you on your new position. You are the dean of the Legislature. You have served many years in this Legislature. And we know that we are in good and steady hands with you as Speaker.

I'd like to point out to members opposite, when we talk about dean of the Legislature, it's continuous years, not, you know, what you kind of cobble together having run for different offices. It's continuous years. And, Madam Speaker, we congratulate you on this honour. We know we are in very good hands with you as Speaker.

And very excited about the Throne Speech that was presented. It was presented by Her Honour, a woman of unbelievable and great distinction. For those of you who know the kinds of things that Her Honour has gone through in her personal life and yet always has—always has—a pleasant and positive deposition about her. And, if we're ever looking for heroes in society, Her Honour is one of those individuals we can look to and say, there is a woman of distinction. Great lady.

Madam Speaker, you may or may not know this, but I've also been here a few years, not as long as Her Honour, but I have been here for a few years. This isn't exactly my first Throne Speech. And I was going to try and count how many throne speeches I have made, and I just figure I'll leave that for another day.

It's very exciting, though, Madam Speaker, in that this is the first time in my career as a member of the Legislature that I get to give a speech to the throne as a member of the government side of the Legislature. And that is very exciting. But, even more so, this is the first time in my career, and I do this position with great honour and humility, it's the

first time I get to speak to the Throne Speech as a member of the Cabinet. And that is an amazing honour, and I do not take it lightly. It is something that I am humbled by. And I take my duties very serious as I'm learning them. We all seem to, or many of us, seem to be on quite the learning curve, and I am certainly one of those individuals.

I do wish to say to the House, clearly, Manitobans voted for change. This Chamber has a real new, fresh look. I would like to first of all congratulate the NDP party, lot of new dynamic individuals having been elected, and that's important. I would like to compliment the Liberal Party that increased its seats in this Legislature by 300 per cent. And I think there's another record; I believe two thirds of the Liberal caucus is women. And I think that is an amazing, amazing feat.

And, you know, the honourable member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) has a dynamic caucus with which he gets to now sit with. I used to be a seatmate of the honourable member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) and got to know him well. And he's a great parliamentarian. I also got to sit with a one Kevin Lamoureux, who now sits in the big House in Ottawa. And he was just a great, great parliamentarian. He was just an outstanding individual. And, lo and behold, there is another individual with a similar last name again in this Legislature. And I happen to think, and I'm not allowed to say the person's last name, so I can only reference, you know, I believe the individual is a relative of Kevin Lamoureux's, and who's now a Member of Parliament in the big House, and I think this Chamber is always a better place when there is one of those individuals with the same last name in this House. So, without saying your last name, welcome. It's great to see you here, and we really appreciated the years your father was here, and I am sure that you will at least achieve and probably exceed anything he did here. So you have a really high bar that you have to achieve. Thank you for being here.

And to all the members in this Legislature, I had the opportunity to listen to many of the speeches of the new individuals and what dynamic enthusiasm on all sides of the House. I would dare say that those of us who are returning, and there aren't a lot of us, but those of us that are returning, it is really refreshing. And for those of us who are the class of 1999, and there are three of us, the former Premier and great to see him here as well, and the former—the now member from River Heights and myself were all

elected in 1999, and we're the last of the stragglers of that group, and it is great to see all the new dynamic individuals that got elected in this election.

And I just feel so honoured, and I feel so privileged to be here in this Chamber and be able to sit and listen to your experiences and what you've done in life and where you come from, and I'm sure that the—from the—I'm going to speak for the class of 1999, and I'm going to say, you know, it's about time you guys got here. It's just outstanding that you're here, you know, listening to speeches from all sides of the House, listening to questions today from new members getting up, and it really is refreshing.

And we're so excited that all of you are here, and you bring a lot to this Chamber, and you bring a lot to democracy. Democracy needs to renew itself. Democracy needs that cleansing, and certainly you are that. I believe it's 29 new members. I don't know if that's a historical number; I suspect it is. One of the newly elected members is nodding; yes, it is 29; it's a historical number, and just great to be part of that.

So very, very excited about this Chamber and about going forward and the kind of enthusiasm. Please don't lose that enthusiasm. Please don't lose what you bring to this place and what made you run for a nomination and what made you go out at minus 40 door knocking, what made you go door to door. Please don't forget what brought you here. Remember that passion. Remember that excitement. Remember that enthusiasm. Remember those issues, what it is that you brought you here. Please remember that, and remind yourself of that every day. And I know for a lot of us in this House, it was voting for change. So we—[interjection]—I think the members across the way are pointing out that the clock is ticking, so I will be mindful of that.

I do also want to thank my two opponents who ran against me in the last provincial election. They were great candidates, ran their campaigns with great integrity. I got to know my Liberal candidate a little bit better because I'd known him from years in the community, Pete Sanderson, outstanding individual, and it might come as a surprise to members, the Liberal candidate who ran against me two elections ago, Ludolf Grollé, for those Liberals who might remember him, he's a painter; he's got a great place down in Fort Garry Place. And after the election, we became such good friends that he painted a painting for me, and it is just beautiful, hangs in my living room. And he is just outstanding. You know what? Adversaries can be friends.

And I do want to also point out that there are many individuals who are new to this Chamber, which means there were many individuals who didn't return. And there were individuals on all sides of the House who over the years you do become friends with. Yes, colleagues on this side of the House, you do actually start developing friendships with individuals in other parties, and I would encourage you to do that because in the end we are all legislators, not during question period but outside of question period. And there are great individuals that I learned a lot from and that I got to see how you conduct yourself as a legislator. I'm allowed to say his name.

* (16:40)

There is one Dave Chomiak who people would see us out at events and say, wow, like, you guys are like brothers. And then they would see us in Question Period when I was his critic, and they'd say, wow, you guys must hate each other. And it's just sort of how that goes. Question Period is a unique place. And I do wish Dave Chomiak well. He was one of those really good friends of mine and many others, and I should probably stop or I'm going to start naming all of them and I don't have time for all that.

But, you know, to all of them, I wish them well on all sides of the House, because if there's 29 new members, there are also 29 members who either decided not to run again, or just didn't—didn't make it.

So, to all of them, we certainly wish them well.

I do want to also say that I'd like to thank the volunteers who were involved in my campaign. I had an outstanding team as I've had for several—many, many elections, and they did just a fantastic job, allowed me to—not just campaign in my own area, but I had the opportunity to visit a few other areas and help out in a few other areas, and it was a great campaign team, and I thank them so much. And I know you should be careful that if you mention one, you should mention all of them, Madam Speaker, but my campaign manager, Gladys Hayward Williams, Joan Golebioski, who was responsible for all my volunteers, Matthew LaPage, who did just yeoman's work. Matthew LaPage, at one point in time, worked 27 hours straight to make sure that we had everything ready for our election—just a dynamic young person.

And then, of course, just a great—Cameron Hay, my CEO or CFO—chief financial officer—outstanding

individual, and there were many, many others, but I'd like to thank that core team.

I would really like to thank the people of St. Paul who have stood by me. Actually, this is my second constituency that I now represent in this House. I started off as the MLA for Springfield, and then, because of population growth, the name changed to St. Paul, and I want to thank the voters of West St. Paul, of East St. Paul, the portion of Springfield that I have. I share Springfield with another colleague of mine.

I would like to thank each and every one of them, and how kind and how generous they are to myself and to my family. I just love travelling in my community. I love going door to door. I love going to events. They're always kind and generous, and, Madam Speaker, it is never lost on me when I drive to Oakbank or Dugald or wherever I'm going in one of my communities and I see the crops are now starting to show a little bit, and later on, you know, you're driving and you see beautiful crops in the fields, it's never lost on me that our communities help to feed the world.

And, when people ask me, whether it's in this province or across the country or even at international events, they say, so tell us a little about your community, like, what kind of a community is it. And, without hesitation, I tell them I represent God's country. It is an absolutely beautiful place, and when I ran for my nomination in 1999, I was a little—obviously a few years younger than I am today, and I thought, I'm going to bring a lot to this community and I'm going to teach them and I'm going to show them, and this is what I'm going to bring to my community.

Well, fast-forward now 16 years later, and actually I think I got the better part of the deal. They actually showed me a lot and they also taught me a lot, and they have made me a better person. And that's when you represent dynamic and outstanding communities like I represent. I suspect the 56 others of you probably can say the same about your communities, and so you should.

In the little bit of time remaining, I do want to thank my family. I want to thank my daughter Brigitta, who came out and helped, my son, Stefan, who is studying in Sweden. And we somehow arranged to get a ballot mailed to him and he mailed it back and it made it back in time, and he was very excited. This was the first time he could vote because he was just 18 at that time, and he could actually

vote. And, evidently he voted for me, but that is a secret ballot and I'm not too sure about that, but we'll leave it at that.

I do want to say a few things. I'd like to thank all members of the House for participating in this debate. The Throne Speech was outstanding. It laid out basically what we said we were going to do, and it basically says we are going to do what we said. And I'd like to thank all members for being here and for all the great speeches. I look forward to hearing more of them.

I understand our colleagues across the way are going to have an opportunity next, and this is a great place to be. This is a great democracy, and just the way it played out, and I would like to thank the former premier, and I watched after a press conference between the premier-designate and the former premier coming out, and the media asked the former premier some questions, and he said, well, actually those would probably be better placed—asked with the premier-designate. And it just shows the maturity and the beauty of our democracy. And I've been on the other side when we haven't been successful. I've now been on this side when we have achieved government. And you know what? In all respects, the people are always right. Let's never forget that. Let's love—love our democracy. Let's love this Chamber and what we do here. And let's go forward and give good government for the next four years to the people of Manitoba.

Thank you, members of this Chamber. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm honoured to get up today and to speak to the Throne Speech and as well as to our amendment that actually fills out all of which is missing from the Throne Speech.

I am delighted to follow the member from St. Paul. He managed to actually keep his go to 15 minutes, and I think he spent 12 seconds on the Throne Speech, which may have been longer than the Throne Speech itself. I'm also curious to know how my friend from St. Paul could be celebrating 16 years in this Chamber and yet not have one grey hair. Perhaps he can share for us what the magic of that is. I noticed the Minister of Education has only been minister of Education for a very short time, but already there's grey around his temples. And I'm not sure if the Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen) is going grey over there, but I noticed the forehead has

already grown a little bit, but I am delighted to be here today.

Of course, I want to welcome all new members to the House, the very numerous new members from the opposition. It's a rare privilege to sit in this Chamber. It is sometimes a difficult thing to do, to sit in this Chamber, but it is a rare privilege. I'm delighted to be joined by all of you in this House, Conservative and Liberal alike, as we work, all of us, all 57 us—of us on behalf of the people of Manitoba.

Like my friend from St. Paul, I certainly want to thank the people of Fort Garry-Riverview for their continued support. For me, I was in a close campaign, Madam Speaker, like many of us, and I owe them a great debt of gratitude for hanging with me for another term. I'm honoured and privileged to be the MLA for Fort Garry-Riverview. I live in a very progressive community with very progressive people who know that when their community is strong, their family is strong; when their city is strong, their family is strong; when their province is strong, their family is strong. That means that they put their community, their neighbourhood, their city and their province before themselves because they know at the heart of it that that's where the strength of their family comes from. And I am honoured to be the MLA for Fort Garry-Riverview.

Like many others in the Chamber, I have many, many people to thank. Of course, all of those folks who come out of the woodwork to support you in an election campaign, to put up a sign, to deliver a handbill, to walk with you as you canvass door to door, certainly, to write the odd cheque along the way. And so for all of those people, all of those volunteers who may not know me personally but come out and support my campaign because they believe in something. They believe in community. They believe in equality. They believe in environmental justice and social justice and social inclusion. And for that I also feel very privileged to represent such a progressive and forward-thinking group of people.

I also, of course, want to thank my campaign team, who were utterly fantastic and who hung with me every step of the way. Kate Sjoberg, campaign manager, if you're listening out there, thank you so very much for the work that you did. Shafadan Safar [*phonetic*], Linda Wilson, to name but a few. My own sister, Nancy, I want to thank her for hanging with me. I have two brothers and a sister in southern Ontario, so my oldest sister, who lives in Winnipeg,

carries the burden of hanging with her little brother. And so I owe her a tremendous debt of gratitude.

* (16:50)

Liz Parsons also came out. I thank her so much for hanging with me. All those involved in my campaign team: the phoners, the canvassers and the volunteers, I know, like every member in the Chamber, that we owe them an extraordinary debt of gratitude.

I also want to pay tribute and, frankly, to thank the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Selinger), the former premier of this province, for giving me the great honour of having served as minister of Education and Advanced Learning and minister of Justice during our time. It was a rare honour for me to be able to have that job and to reach a personal aspiration and a personal goal. I was honoured to work with you, sir, and I'm honoured to continue to work with you for many, many years to come.

And, finally, just while I'm on the thank-you train here, Madam Speaker, of course, we always want to thank our families. I have a beautiful wife, Susan McMurrich, two beautiful daughters, Sarah Jean and Hilary. Sarah Jean's going to be married in September, so I'm delighted to know about that. Hilary, of course, is doing very well, gone back to school and is a proud, proud New Democrat like all members of my family. And my youngest son, Donovan, who's just about to graduate from Trent University in Peterborough, one of my alma maters and where I met my wife over 30 years ago, I'm so proud that he's home for the summer, and so I'm so proud of his graduation. As I say to them always, I love them very much and thank them, thank them, for still loving me after all these many, many years.

As I think about the Throne Speech, Madam Speaker, I was surprised, I have to say, a little disappointed, to be honest with you, but quite surprised that it could be so short, so short on detail and so short on the things that matter most to Manitoba families. How is it that you can have a Throne Speech which doesn't really reflect the diversity and inclusiveness of our province?

I can't understand why a new government, a new Premier, a new Cabinet, many, many new members of this Chamber, would table a Throne Speech that didn't reach out to every single person in their province, regardless of who they are or where they come from, because on this side of the House, as it was when we were on that side of the House, Madam

Speaker, every Manitoban matters and every voice counts, and that it wasn't included in the Throne Speech is a travesty which we will fight against every single day.

And then how is it, Madam Speaker, that you could have a Throne Speech that doesn't talk about truth and reconciliation? The word reconciliation doesn't even appear in the Throne Speech, and yet it is the critical issue of our time, along with environmental protection and climate change. They all actually go together. If we respect Mother Earth, if we've respected Mother Earth better, we would be in a better environmental position today.

I cannot put it any better of the need for reconciliation than my sister from St. Johns did today. I am honoured to serve with her. And she said, I don't want admiration, but she's got it from me and she's got it from every member of our caucus, and, I believe from the standing ovation she received, she has the admiration and support of every member of this Chamber.

I'm equally delighted to serve with my new friend from Flin Flon, who brings a very strong presence to this Chamber, as his speech certainly and clearly indicated, and will be a strong voice for labour, which wasn't also mentioned in the Throne Speech—doesn't belong in the government; they don't even have a Department of Labour. There is not a minister of the Crown for labour now; that historic role that working people in this province have played over the years since Confederation no longer, no longer represented in the new government of Manitoba. That's a terrible omission, a frightful omission. And we'll continue to fight for working people every single day to make sure that they enjoy the benefits of our society, as everyone should, rather than the mere elite that appear to be represented by the new government.

* (16:50)

So no mention of a diversity, no mention of truth and of reconciliation in the Throne Speech, no mention, as my sister pointed out earlier, from St. Johns, about missing and murdered indigenous women and girls—again, a central, pivotal issue of our time that needs to be addressed in order for us to have reconciliation in the first place, Madam Speaker. And yet no mention of it in the Throne Speech. Already it seems to me, in such a short period of time, the new government seems like they're out of touch with the reality of Manitoba in 2016, out of touch with Canada in 2016, and out of

touch with the global environment that we live in today.

Another serious omission, Madam Speaker, was no mention of the LGBTTTQ community as well. I've been proud to serve with many members in that community and proud to take that fight, and we're going to stand with members of that community every single day to make sure that they enjoy—they enjoy—the full benefits of citizenship that the rest of us would like to have.

I can't understand, Madam Speaker, how it is that we could have a Throne Speech that doesn't talk about protecting and enhancing supports for people living with disabilities. How could that be? If you're a new member of this government, you must have to ask yourself why is this omission? Why are we so narrow? Why aren't we reaching out to the people that matter in this province?

It is—it will—I'm certain that many members of the opposition are—want to come and join this side of the House before too long because we stand with all the people of Manitoba all the time.

We have had—during the course of Question Period over the last few days, and I want to acknowledge our fantastic interim leader for stepping forward and representing the face of Manitoba as it actually is in 2016 rather than the front bench on the other side, which represents the Manitoba probably of 1915, and that's generous by any stretch.

But she's asked some very important questions of the Premier (Mr. Pallister) about Crown corporations, about the important role that they play in our community, in our province. We know that it wasn't so long ago that they promised not to sell the phone company, and yet what happened? In the dark of night, pfft, it's gone; poof, just like that. And then, on top of that, we understand that many members on the other side and their friends profited from that sale.

They put profit before the people of Manitoba, and, frankly, Madam Speaker, we're very, very afraid that that's exactly what this government's going to do with the remaining proud Crown corporations that we have, whether it's Manitoba Hydro, whether it's Liquor & Lotteries or Manitoba Public Insurance. As I said and members of this Chamber will know, I'm a southern Ontario kid. You get a better deal with MPI every single day than you'll get in Ontario at any time over the past number of years.

This is a Throne Speech that didn't make any mention particularly of water protection. We had a surface water management act before this Chamber, before the election to restore and protect wetlands, which is the front lines of flood protection and environmental health in our communities. No mention of that. No mention of water. Water may well be the other key issue of the 21st century, and yet, when it came to the Throne Speech, it was dry and arid; there was no mention of water, or of green jobs, or of the things that really matter to the future of this province.

There was no mention—and we'll be asking the Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen) about this in the days ahead—and I'll tip him off right now that it's coming, about the minimum wage. This is a government, on this side of the House, that raised the minimum wage every single year for the very purpose of making sure that every Manitoban has a living wage. Did you see that in the Throne Speech? It wasn't there, don't care, and I can expect—I expect him to tell me when I ask him, Madam Speaker, that he will be raising the minimum wage and that he will be working toward a living wage for all Manitobans. But I doubt I'm going to be happy about the answer for the very simple reason that they favour income inequality while we favour income equality all across this province.

No mention of child care in this Throne Speech, Madam Speaker. No mention of a poverty-reduction plan, and I would advise the Finance Minister that that's required by legislation. When he tables this budget in a few weeks' time, he'd better have a poverty-reduction plan, because he doesn't—if he doesn't, he's going to get one from this side of the House whether he likes it or not.

No mention, Madam Speaker, of prevention and yet prevention is the—is what we've been working on for many years, because we know an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure every single time.

Madam Speaker: When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Fort Garry-Riverview (Mr. Allum) will have six minutes and two seconds remaining. [*interjection*] Six minutes.

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, May 18, 2016

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