

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. 5 - 10 a.m., Friday, May 20, 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

Friday, May 20, 2016

The House met at 10 a.m.

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

Please be seated.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Madam Speaker: Introduction of bills?

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Special Committee of Seven Persons

First Report

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Chairperson): Good morning, Madam Speaker. I wish to present the First Report of the Special Committee of Seven Persons.

Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk): Your Special Committee of Seven Persons presents the following—

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense? Dispense, and so ordered.

Your Special Committee of Seven Persons presents the following as its First Report.

Your Committee prepared the following list of the proportional representation of Members by party to compose the Standing Committees ordered by the House:

AGRICULTURE AND FOOD (11)

*Government Members: 7
Official Opposition Members: 3
Independent Members: 1*

CROWN CORPORATIONS (11)

*Government Members: 7
Official Opposition Members: 3
Independent Members: 1*

HUMAN RESOURCES (11)

*Government Members: 7
Official Opposition Members: 3
Independent Members: 1*

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS (11)

*Government Members: 7
Official Opposition Members: 3
Independent Members: 1*

JUSTICE (11)

*Government Members: 7
Official Opposition Members: 3
Independent Members: 1*

LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS (11)

*Government Members: 7
Official Opposition Members: 3
Independent Members: 1*

PRIVATE BILLS (11)

*Government Members: 7
Official Opposition Members: 3
Independent Members: 1*

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS (11)

*Government Members: 7
Official Opposition Members: 3
Independent Members: 1*

RULES OF THE HOUSE (11)

*Government Members: 7
Official Opposition Members: 3
Independent Members: 1*

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (11)

*Government Members: 7
Official Opposition Members: 3
Independent Members: 1*

STATUTORY REGULATIONS & ORDERS (11)

*Government Members: 7
Official Opposition Members: 3
Independent Members: 1*

Mr. Goertzen: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for St. Paul (Mr. Schuler), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

Madam Speaker: Tabling of reports?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

50th Anniversary of the Provincial Flag

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage): As Manitoba's Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage, I am pleased to officially acknowledge an important milestone in our province's history: the 50th anniversary of the proclamation of our provincial flag.

Every day in communities all across Manitoba our flag, with its impressive red ensign and provincial coat of arms, instills pride in our citizens and reminds us of our shared appreciation for the place that we are all so proud to call home.

An iconic symbol of this province, our flag also reflects our province's place in Canadian history. At a time when the federal government was in the process of replacing the Union Jack with the leaf design we know today, Manitoba took steps to introduce a flag of our own.

In May 1965, in recognition of Manitoba being the first province to join the original four in confederation, the new flag design was unveiled. Because its design included the Union flag, a royal badge in the canton, it required the Queen's approval. Royal assent was received in October of 1965, and Premier Duff Roblin and the government of the day chose May 12, 1966, the day we now call Manitoba Day, to make the flag official. In a memorable demonstration of provincial pride, the new Manitoba flag was raised that day in 2,000 separate ceremonies across the province, and 130,000 hand flags were distributed to school children.

Madam Speaker, that pivotal event took place 50 years ago this month, preserving our heritage and establishing a symbol of our provincial identity that endures today. It was a bold step taken by Premier Roblin's government and one that moves us forward in a development as a province.

Today, I invite all Manitobans to reflect on this golden anniversary of the proclamation of our provincial flag and take particular pride in all it represents. May 12th was then and continues to be a great day for Manitoba.

Merci. Miigwech.

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): Morning, Madam Speaker. I rise to reply to the honourable Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage in her recognition of the 50th anniversary of Manitoba's provincial flag.

While our flag has flown over this province for only 50 years, Manitoba's history goes back much further than that. Last week, we celebrated our province's 146th birthday on Manitoba Day. We also celebrated Treaty Day in commemoration of the treaties between provincial governments and indigenous peoples, the base of many of the rights currently held by the First Nations and Manitobans.

From the indigenous people who have called this region home for thousands of years, Manitoba's always been shaped by its first people. It was the efforts of Louis Riel's resistance that led to the creation of Manitoba's Assembly of the Assiniboia that led directly to Manitoba's entry into Confederation. We must always recognize how this integral relationship shaped our province's history.

Now our flag flies over families from all over the world who have put down roots in Manitoba. Today, there are more than 100 different languages spoken across our province, more than 300 active ethnocultural organizations. Manitoba continues to be shaped by diverse cultures and peoples who are enriching our communities with their traditions, values and perspectives.

Here in the House, our caucus represents many of these diverse communities that make our province great. With elected members from all walks of life and from all areas of the province, including myself from Flin Flon which is in the North, we understand that it is embracing our diversity that allows our province to flourish.

We take pride in the fact that our Manitoba flag represents not just one voice from within our province, but many. We will continue to be sure those voices are heard as we move forward together as Manitobans.

Thank you.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): Madam Speaker, I ask leave to speak to the minister's statement.

Madam Speaker: Does the honourable member for Burrows have leave to reply to the ministerial statement? *[Agreed]*

Ms. Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the province of Manitoba has many symbols of significance in which we should be proud of. These symbols include a couple of the following: the great grey owl, our official bird adopted by Manitobans in 1987; the white spruce tree, which is capable of surviving in

virtually every climatic and environmental region here in Manitoba

It is with great pleasure that I stand in the House today proudly in celebration of our Manitoba flag being raised for 50 years. The red ensign on the Manitoba flag was designed to preserve heritage. The shield on the flag shows a buffalo. This buffalo is standing on a rock and is shown beneath the red cross of St. George.

Our flag here in Manitoba is a beautiful representation of our province.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

* (10:10)

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Cercle Molière

Mr. Greg Selinger (St. Boniface): Madame la Présidente, depuis 1925, le Cercle Molière présente sans interruption du théâtre en français à Winnipeg. Hier soir, leurs membres et leurs supporters ont célébré leur succès avec une levée de fonds formidable. C'est une indication de la bonne santé de la culture francophone au Manitoba.

La cinquième édition du marathon de mises en scène était composée de pièces de courte durée partout dans le théâtre. Le Cercle a promis une soirée pleine de surprises avec un large éventail d'artistes locaux, et ils ont offert une prestation mémorable.

Lors de cette levée de fonds, ils ont servi des plats délicieux préparés par le chef Leighton Fontaine du Nicolett Inn, situé dans le nord-est de Saint-Boniface. Il y avait de la musique francophone et un encaissement silencieux avec des prix incroyables.

Madame la Présidente, le Cercle Molière est reconnu comme une des plus anciennes troupes de théâtre au Canada et l'Amérique du Nord, et représente un des plus beaux fleurons de la culture francophone enracinés dans l'Ouest canadien. Aujourd'hui, le Cercle offre plusieurs programmes pour les adultes ainsi que pour les jeunes, et offre des sessions de formation en art dramatique. L'argent qu'ils ont recueilli aidera à soutenir ces programmes merveilleux.

Madame la Présidente, le Cercle Molière occupe une place de choix sur la scène des arts et de la culture au Manitoba. Il a toujours su rallier les énergies de la communauté franco-manitobaine et celle-ci l'a souvent aidé à surmonter les nombreux obstacles qui ont jalonné son parcours.

La longue tradition théâtrale du Cercle Molière, souvent couronnée de succès et de prix prestigieux, témoigne de la place de choix qu'il occupe dans le cœur de la communauté francophone au Manitoba.

Merci et félicitations au Théâtre Cercle Molière pour une nuit incroyable.

Merci beaucoup, Madame.

Translation

Madam Speaker, the Cercle Molière has been continuously providing French-language theatre in Winnipeg since 1925. Last night, its members and sponsors celebrated their success with a fantastic fundraiser. It is a sign that francophone culture in Manitoba is in good health.

The fifth edition of the Cercle's theatre marathon saw several short plays performed throughout the theatre. The Cercle had promised an evening full of surprises with a wide range of local artists, and they delivered a memorable show.

During this fundraiser, they served delicious dishes prepared by Chef Leighton Fontaine of the Nicolett Inn, which is located in the north-east part of St. Boniface. There was francophone music as well as a silent auction with incredible prizes.

Madam Speaker, the Cercle Molière is recognized as one of the oldest theatre troupes in Canada and North America, and is one of the finest assets of francophone culture in Western Canada. Today, the Cercle Molière offers several programs for adults and for youth, and they offer training sessions in the theatre arts. The money they raised will help to support these wonderful programs.

Madam Speaker, the Cercle Molière holds a prominent place on the arts and culture scene in Manitoba. It has always been able to rally the energy of Manitoba's Francophone community, and this has often helped it overcome the many obstacles it has faced along its way.

The long theatrical tradition of the Cercle, which has often achieved runaway success and prestigious awards, is evidence of the prominent place it occupies in the heart of Manitoba's Francophone community.

Thank you and congratulations to the Cercle Molière theatre for an incredible evening.

Thank you.

RCAF Winnipeg

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): I'm humbled to have the opportunity to represent the constituency of Assiniboia.

Madam Speaker, as my honourable colleagues will know, CAD 1, Canadian Air Division 1 and 2, and 17 Wing in Winnipeg are in the boundaries of the provincial constituency. Widely known in the Royal Canadian Air Force, 17 Wing is known as the home of the RCAF. Winnipeg has almost 2,000 military members and DND civilian employees and contributes about \$200 million to economic development. Moreover, all navigational or air combat systems training for the RCAF is carried out here, right here in Winnipeg, by 402 Squadron, and 17 Wing runs a fleet of Twin Otter aircraft based in Yellowknife to provide light utility and secondary search and rescue.

If you're in trouble in the North, you call for help, it's going to be the folks from 435 Squadron based right here in Winnipeg that will come and save you.

Since first detached in 1922, the RCAF has been a very important part of our community. For the past eight years they have hosted a flagship fitness event right here on the base. It's the RCAF—

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

Is there leave of the House for him to finish his statement? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Fletcher: Well, thank you, colleagues.

Okay, this is the bottom line: The run is on June 5th. I expect—I hope to have you all there. I challenge you to the 5K. I will participate, and as we know, politicians don't like going into races they can't win, so it will be a lot of fun. And I'd just like to congratulate everyone that put this on.

Thank you.

Farmery Estate Brewery

Hon. Eileen Clarke (Minister of Indigenous and Municipal Relations): Madam Speaker, I rise today to share with the members of the House exciting news about what's to get brewing in Agassiz constituency. Entrepreneurial brothers Chris and Lawrence Warwaruk, co-owners of the Farmery Estate Brewery, are closer to producing their first pint in Canada's first estate brewery.

This past September, the brothers took possession of the 15,000-square-foot building in Neepawa. Installation of equipment began early this spring when the large brewing vats arrived and as equipment continues to be delivered and the brothers work on upgrades and renovations to their building. The facility will be host to brewing beer and canning, with storefront space available for a tap room, tasting lounge and a gift store. The partners hope to have their first batch in the vats early this summer, and although storefront may not be completed at that time, the doors will be open to the public.

The location for this brewery was strategic as it is relatively close to their farm where they grow their own barley and hops. It's also an ideal location to draw tourists as it's near highway junction of No. 5 and 16. In the future the brothers hope to offer tours of their plant as well as their farming operations, so people can better gain insight and see their input from the ground up to the final retail products.

Last summer saw Farmery beer expand its products, and it's now carried in all three of our Prairie provinces. Farmery entrepreneurs have not limited their products to just craft brewing; the company also carries a line of estate-prepared flours such as Farmery beer bread, flapjack mix, chocolate cake and fish fry batter.

Farmery Estate Brewery brings value-added agriculture and agritourism to Neepawa and the area as well as a new opportunity for rural Manitoba.

Chris and Lawrence Warwaruk are true entrepreneurs with clear vision and determination. The brothers have created the true definition of estate breweries in the fact that they put their own seeds in the ground and manufacture their own product. They've grown their business from the ground up and have produced unique products from their rural roots—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Nellie McClung on Bank Note

Mrs. Sarah Guillemard (Fort Richmond): Madam Speaker, I'm proud to rise today as a woman who is part of Manitoba's new, talented and diverse PC government.

Madam Speaker, as you may have recently heard, the vast majority of Canadians would like to add an additional woman's name beside Her Majesty to appear on our currency. Media reports show that a

member of the Famous Five, Nellie McClung, is pulling ahead of all others as the favourite among Canadians to fulfill such a role. Nellie McClung's efforts are well recognized as playing an instrumental role in ensuring a woman's right to vote. As such, in 1916, Manitoba became the first province in Canada most women would be granted the right to vote in provincial elections, and in 2016, the Manitoba–Manitoba's women have the right to vote for 100 years.

Madam Speaker, as you well know, our party and our members have a long history of advocating for women's rights. In 2002, the PC party introduced The Nellie McClung Foundation Act. The foundation raised funds to create and erect a monument to commemorate the work of Nellie McClung and to educate the public about her achievements in promoting equality and social justice.

In December 2013, our members introduced another private member's bill to recognize January 28th, 2016, as a special day in Manitoba to commemorate and further celebrate the work of Nellie McClung and the contributions women have made in the political world in Manitoba and beyond.

* (10:20)

Madam Speaker, less than six months ago, our Premier (Mr. Pallister) was one of the first who advocated his support for more women to appear on our currency by writing to the Bank of Canada's governor and expressing support for McClung. Women have had and continue to have an important role to play in Canadian politics and civic life. I can see no better representation—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Model United Nations Assembly

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, May 12th to the 14th, Winnipeg's Model United Nations Assembly was held at the Canadian Mennonite University. Organized by the Winnipeg downtown Rotary Club, it has been held annually since 1957. This year, 70 teams of students from Manitoba, Saskatchewan, northwestern Ontario, Minnesota and North Dakota represented 70 different countries.

Kelvin High School's team included students Rachel Berger Viflanzoff and Ushahshi Orunima and their counsellor Raymond Sokalski. Three teams from Grant Park High School included students Jack Oslowy, Donald Plant, Brett Macfarlane, Chase

Crickett, Emily Tennenhouse and Ricky Morales, along with their counsellors Prema Bursa, Chris Grift and Denia Morales.

Students debated resolutions on circumstances in Libya, on the situation in Iran and on the potential for the proliferation of nuclear weapons, on processes dealing with humanitarian emergencies and with the protection of human rights. There was also time for a fun evening at the Hitch 'n Post just north of Winnipeg.

US Consul Chris Gunning, who participated in a Model United Nations Assembly when he was young, made the compelling comment, and I quote him: There has been no activity more seminal in my development as a diplomat than participating in the Model United Nations Assembly.

I want to thank the members of the Winnipeg Rotary Club's committee for their dedication in hosting this annual event, particularly to Chair Roy Vallance, who is in the gallery with us today, and his wife Pat, and to Rais Khan who served as deputy to the president.

I also want to thank former Manitoba Speaker Daryl Reid who was the president of the Model United Nations Assembly this year. He carried out his job with great enthusiasm, dedication and competence.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: Prior to oral questions, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us today Honourable Michelle Rempel, Member of Parliament for Calgary Nose Hill and former federal minister of Western Economic Diversification, who are the guests of the honourable member for Fort Richmond (Mrs. Guillemard).

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

ORAL QUESTIONS

Ministers' Mandate Letters Marginalized Groups

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Leader of the Official Opposition): Madam Speaker, in one week we have seen clearly how polarizing the Premier is. His agenda is exclusionary. If there is any doubt, we saw it yesterday with the release of the Premier's ministerial mandate letters. Those letters exclude so many Manitobans.

Why is there no reference anywhere to the critical issue of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls?

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Deputy Premier): I want to start off by thanking the interim Official Opposition Leader for her question and, yes, we did do what was—what has been unprecedented in Manitoba, which is release our ministerial mandate letters.

This is about transparency and accountability, and we look forward to working with all Manitobans so they can see exactly how we achieve a more open and transparent government, which is something that Manitobans voted on and a clear mandate in the last election.

Ms. Marcelino: —Madam Speaker, but anyway, the Premier (Mr. Pallister) seems incapable of listening to Manitobans. We saw it in his Cabinet selections and in his Throne Speech, but now it's completely shocking to see that there was no mandate to advance francophone issues.

Does the Premier understand that this mandate must be for everyone?

Mrs. Stefanson: That's exactly what this mandate is. It is for all Manitobans.

And that's why we have done something that is unprecedented. We have listed all of the things that we will do, which is not inclusive, but it is very inclusive of all Manitobans, and we look forward to working with all Manitobans to ensure that we fulfill the mandate that has been given to all of us by Manitobans.

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

Ms. Marcelino: Madam Speaker, it is shocking and disappointing that the Premier has left out plans and strategies to address poverty and the roots of poverty, including the need for affordable public housing.

What will this government do to enhance affordable public housing, or do these mandate letters expose their intention to govern only for the privileged few?

Mrs. Stefanson: Her—members opposite had 17 years to deliver this kind of letter to Manitobans. In fact, Manitobans rejected their lack of transparency and accountability. That is why we are standing here with Manitobans. And by criticizing this, they are—shame on them, Madam Speaker.

Shame on them for criticizing Manitobans, because this is what they voted for, and this is what they want.

Programs and Services for Women Government Funding Commitment

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): In my first week in the House, I've watched as the Premier, alongside his Justice and Health ministers, laughed and smirked while being rightfully questioned on the lack of women in Cabinet and on Treasury Board, as if women's equality is some kind of joke and not a matter of life and death for many Manitobans.

I remind everyone of the immense influence Treasury Board exercises in approving or refusing programs and services that directly impact on the lives of women and their children, now headed up by five men.

Can the Premier explain to the women of Manitoba just exactly how he will ensure that the rights and myriad of needs of women in Manitoba will be protected and advanced?

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Deputy Premier): You know, I stand proudly in this Manitoba Legislature as only the second woman in the history of this province who has ever been named as Justice Minister and Attorney General.

The only other Justice Minister and Attorney General who was a woman was appointed under a Conservative government.

Members opposite had 17 years to do something about that, and they chose not to. Shame on them.

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

Ministers' Mandate Letters Indigenous Women Representation

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): For the last two days, I've sat listening while the Premier promoted himself as the champion of indigenous women's rights. To be absolutely clear, indigenous women are the champions of our own rights, including our right, which was only granted in 1960, to vote.

* (10:30)

Can the Premier explain to indigenous women in Manitoba that if he really is our champion, why is there not one single mention of indigenous women and girls in any of his Families, Status of Women, Justice or Indigenous and Municipal Relations,

whatever that might mean, mandate letters, as well as not one single—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Deputy Premier): I'm very proud of our Premier (Mr. Pallister), who spent over a decade working to improve matrimonial property rights for Aboriginal women.

I, in fact, Mr. Speaker—or Madam Speaker—I, in fact, stood by him when we went to committee to speak on this very issue in Ottawa, and I'm very proud. He's very passionate about this issue. He's worked very hard and diligently, and I am very proud of where we stand on this issue.

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

Missing Indigenous Women Inquiry

Ms. Fontaine: And still no mention of indigenous women in any of these mandate letters.

Madam Speaker, we are on the cusp of a very important moment in our collective history in Canada with the upcoming national inquiry on missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. I want to point out that the national inquiry is the direct result of the blood, sweat and tears of MMIWG families and indigenous women's 30-year-long struggle for equality, justice and recognition.

Can the Premier explain to this House, but more importantly, to MMIWG families, supporters and allies here in the gallery today, why there is absolutely no mention of the national inquiry in any of the corresponding ministers' mandate letters and certainly no mention of his government's full co-operation, support and participation for the upcoming national inquiry?

Hon. Eileen Clarke (Minister of Indigenous and Municipal Relations): Madam Speaker, I'd like to thank the member opposite for the question.

The new Manitoba government is committed to making Manitoba the most improved province in Manitoba, and that includes working with all issues.

We are committed to a stronger economy, 'bretter' services and a brighter future, and this is most especially the case of our indigenous peoples. I've met with several individuals and organizations already, and I'm eager to meet many more as we look to solve the ongoing issues that we face, including this very important and long-standing issue. We will

continue to engage all the stakeholders as we work to meet the collective goals.

Thank you.

MTS Sale to Bell Media Government Position

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Leader of the Official Opposition): Madam Speaker, the Premier put out his mandate letters, which left very little commitment to protecting our Crown services, and we know that their commitments aren't worth the paper they're written on, as Conservatives privatized MTS despite promising pronouncements they will not privatize MTS.

Will the government now oppose the sale of MTS to Bell?

Hon. Ron Schuler (Minister of Crown Services): I'd like to thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. We've had several questions in regard to this.

Madam Speaker, we have waited 17 years of NDP government for once—once—releasing a mandate letter, and not once did they ever release a mandate letter. And it took the courage of our leader, of our Premier to release the mandate letters.

And I would like to point out to the Leader of the Opposition, it is in the mandate letter. And I would like to quote from it where it says: "Above all else, keep Manitoba's largest Crown Corporation, Manitoba Hydro, publicly owned."

It's in the mandate letter.

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

Ms. Marcelino: What's worth is a mandate letter if it excludes so many Manitobans?

Madam Speaker, the sale of MTS will result in much higher cell rates and loss of even more jobs.

Why won't this government stand up for Manitoba consumers?

Mr. Schuler: Madam Speaker, I thank the interim leader for her question.

And, you know, good jobs and economic growth are very important to our economy, and that's, I think, why the Winnipeg Free Press would have stated just recently that that \$1-billion commitment that BCE is intending to make in Manitoba is significant and will contribute greatly to the

prosperity of our province and to the quality of our customer experience.

I think that's the reason this morning that the Premier (Mr. Pallister) of Manitoba is in Morris to announce a major initiative to see new cell towers that are created. That is why he's there to announce that the coverage will be better, the access will be better for Manitobans.

This is all part of an overall strategy to create growth and economic opportunity. We're all about jobs and steady growth.

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

Ms. Marcelino: Madam Speaker, if this sale goes through, Manitoba will be going from four carriers to three. Everywhere in the country where that is the case, there are much higher cellphone rates.

Will this government stand up for Manitoba and save what's left of MTS and oppose this sale to Bell?

Mr. Schuler: I thank the interim leader for that question.

And as I said, the No. 1 priority of this government is good jobs, it is creating economic growth, it is paying attention to the economy. We are focused on this issue.

And that's why even this morning, we're making that announcement. Right now, we're rolling out that announcement, that Bell has promised three new cell towers along Highway 75 on a major US-Canada trade route. This initiative will work to wipe out those dead zones as part of its commitment to increase its investment in Manitoba.

I would remind the opposition: This is a good-news story. We're celebrating this investment. It will benefit all Manitobans. And she should get on board.

MTS Sale to Bell Media Government Position

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): My question is to the Premier.

The sale of MTS to Bell will mean Manitobans will have only three choices for cell service. The experience in other provinces is that we could see rates double.

Why won't this government stand up for Manitobans and oppose the sale?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance): I thank the member for the question.

As I mentioned, this is about focusing on economic development. It's about respectful partnerships with partners in Manitoba. And I would suggest to those members that for too long, their approach has been one of isolation. Their history is not being able to co-operate with partners: not with the federal government, not with the private sector, not with each other on their own benches.

We are a government that has made a fundamental pledge to build partnerships. That commitment is made in the mandate letters that were revealed today, mandate letters that were never received when this party was in power.

We're excited about the opportunities; we're excited about the partnerships that we're growing in Manitoba. We couldn't be more pleased for today's announcement.

Madam Speaker: Prior to proceeding with the next question, I would just like to indicate to all members that we do not reflect on whether members are absent or present in the Chamber. Thank you.

Mr. Maloway: My question to the Premier is that the sale has to receive the approval of the federal Competition Bureau and the CRTC.

Will the Province seek intervenor status to stand up for Manitoba consumers and oppose this sale?

Mr. Friesen: Madam Speaker, thank you for the question.

* (10:40)

I can assure members that we have, from the very outset on this issue, been involved, been speaking to the partners. We've been getting those assurances that this will be a net benefit to Manitobans. I can assure the members that by virtue of the fact that this organization is large, Manitobans are going to reap benefits. They're going to have access to those better technologies. They're going to have access to the—that better Internet access. They're going to have access to better data.

These are things that are significant for Manitoba. These are changes that were left undone. They are changes that we will get done with willing and earnest partners.

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

Mr. Maloway: Madam Speaker, my question, also to the Premier (Mr. Pallister): Is that—is the real reason that this government won't oppose the sale because of the close ties between the PCs and the board of MTS, the fact that key Tory insiders made millions from the privatization of MTS and stand to make millions more from the sale to Bell?

Mr. Friesen: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his question.

I would remind the members of the opposition that the western Canada headquarters will continue to be here in the province. We will continue to have these good jobs in Manitoba.

But members should understand that this is a major US-Canada trade route on Highway 75 that has been underserved with these dead zones along that major corridor. They need to understand that today's announcement is about growing business. They need to understand that they could have undertaken such an initiative. They chose not to.

We will get it done with willing and earnest partners who are focused on helping Manitoba grow the economy. We'll get that job done.

Ministers' Mandate Letters Justice System Concerns

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): Madam Speaker, it is troubling that the mandate letter issued by the Premier to the Attorney General contains nothing about addressing the overrepresentation of indigenous people in our justice system and in particular, correctional system; nothing about expanding restorative justice; nothing about expanding successful problem-solving courts like the mental health court; nothing about advocating for improvements to criminal law in Canada; nothing about protecting, let alone expanding, legal aid; nothing about supporting law enforcement; nothing about protecting the independence of our Crown attorneys; and nothing about preventing crime, except through coded language for privatizing probation services.

How can this Attorney General be comfortable with a mandate which ignores all these pillars of an effective justice system?

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, I recall when the member opposite was Attorney General, he, in fact, never had a mandate letter at all.

This is a good step forward. This is what Manitobans asked for in the last election. That is

what we are going to fulfill. This is about open and transparent government, and that's exactly what we are going to deliver on for Manitobans.

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

Conflict of Interest Forms Premier's Asset Disclosure

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): Well, yes, Madam Speaker, we do see the mandate letter issued by the Premier to this Attorney General does contain a number of tasks. The very first is to, and I quote, "establish new, higher standards for transparency, accountability and MLA ethics."

And, you know, Madam Speaker, you know, despite the existing law, this Premier has failed to disclose his ownership of at least two—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Minto.

Mr. Swan: Madam Speaker, we know that despite the existing law, this Premier failed to disclose his ownership of at least two corporations. The Premier has not offered any explanation. The Attorney General has not offered any explanation. And the House leader had much to say on this but has offered no explanation.

How can Manitobans have any confidence in the Premier's mandate to the Attorney General to establish new standards for MLAs when the Premier can't even meet the existing ones?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): Well, and my friend, Madam Speaker, is back on talking about something that he didn't do when he was in government. In fact, it was only a few months ago that we were asking for disclosure on issues around the Tiger Dam contracts and the untendered contract.

We asked to see the contract. We got a blacked-out document. We asked to see analysis. We got a blacked-out document. We asked to see justification. We got a blacked-out document.

It seems that disclosure for this member seems to be blacked-out documents. That isn't disclosure in my book, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Swan: Well, Madam Speaker, I'm surprised the Attorney General can't answer that question.

By the end of this month, every member of this Legislature must file a conflict of interest declaration with the Clerk's office. It is a self-reporting system. We all have an obligation to disclose all information required by Manitoba law. These obligations are clear.

The Attorney General's mandate letter from the Premier (Mr. Pallister) gives high priority to transparency, accountability and MLA assets.

Given this mandate, has this Attorney General (Mrs. Stefanson), as the senior legal adviser to this Premier and Cabinet, advised the Premier to disclose all the corporations anywhere in the world that he or his immediate family own, in accordance with Manitoba law?

Mr. Goertzen: Well, I wonder if my friend from Minto, Madam Speaker, sought legal advice when he and so many members of his Cabinet didn't disclose their free taxpayer-funded Winnipeg Jets tickets. I don't think they got advice at that time.

Now, I was thinking of maybe issuing a FIPPA, even in government, trying to get the mandate letters of the former government, but I'm sure I'd get a blacked-out document, another blacked-out document and another blacked-out document because that's how they do transparency in the NDP, Madam Speaker.

Health-Care Services Wait-Time Concerns

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr.—Madam Speaker, today's Free Press reports that the emergency-room task force or committee will not even be constituted until late this fall.

This is a tremendously important and very urgent issue, Madam Speaker.

I ask the Minister of Health: Why is he not even constituting this important task force or committee until late this fall?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my friend from River Heights. It is a good question and it's an important question.

There'll be a number of initiatives that'll be happening and have already begun. Certainly we know that there is an efficiency review that's going on within the core area of government. There'll also

be a sustainability and innovation review that'll be happening with health care. We expect we're going to be getting many good ideas from that review, which will also help to inform the task force which will be formed later this year.

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

Mr. Gerrard: It appears that the government is off to one of the slowest starts that could be imaginable with this delay and delay and more reviews. This is called a study-and-stall approach, Madam Speaker, and it's exactly the approach that the NDP took to addressing the wait times in our emergency rooms.

And I ask the government, the Minister of Health: Why is he using a study-and-stall approach instead of acting immediately to address this important issue of wait times in our emergency rooms?

Mr. Goertzen: I'm glad that my Liberal friend was able to elbow his way into the question period lineup, Madam Speaker.

I would say to him that we have a number of initiatives that have already started. I don't know if there has been a government that has got off to such a quick start when it comes to a Throne Speech, comes to a budget, comes to a review of core services, comes to a sustainability and innovation review of health care. We've only just begun, but there's much more work to do.

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

Mr. Gerrard: Madam Speaker, the Free Press also reports today that many of our hospitals are over capacity. This is an issue which needs to be addressed, and we're wondering if the government is going to study and stall on this issue as well.

It's very important, and one of the hospitals of big concern is, of course, St. Boniface hospital.

Je demande au ministre : qu'est-ce qu'il fait aujourd'hui pour la situation de l'hôpital Saint-Boniface où il y a des problèmes au moment? Et il faut avoir attention à ces problèmes.

Translation

I ask the minister: What is he doing today about the situation of St. Boniface Hospital, where there are problems at the moment? Attention must be paid to these problems.

Mr. Goertzen: I thank my friend for the question.

He is correct. It is a significant issue and it is a problem, Madam Speaker, and it has been a problem for a number of years.

* (10:50)

I saw the report and I saw the study. I've already had, a number of days ago, a briefing from representatives of my department about improving patient flow through a hospital so we can ensure that not only in the short term that ERs are operating more efficiently, but also that our hospital system more generally is operating more efficiently.

We expect that the review that'll be happening on sustainability and innovation within health care over the next number of months is going to inform that process, and then the task force later on this year will make it even better with its recommendations.

Madam Speaker: Prior to recognizing the next speaker, I would like to indicate that members should be careful about holding up documents when asking or answering questions because they could be construed as an exhibit.

New West Partnership Manitoba Participation

Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River): Madam Speaker, I'm honoured and humbled to have the opportunity to represent the people of Swan River.

Manitobans rejected the NDP campaign of fear, division and false promises and chose a new Progressive Conservative government that is determined to overcome the challenges facing our province. We will work together with Manitobans and ensure our decisions reflect the values of integrity, caring, inclusion, common sense and teamwork. Teamwork includes working with our provincial neighbours to create jobs and opportunity in Manitoba.

Under the leadership of Premier Pallister, Saskatchewan—

Madam Speaker: Order. Order. I would just like to caution honourable members that when referring to a member here that we refer to their role or their constituency and not by name. So I would ask the member to conclude his question.

Mr. Wowchuk: So, Madam Speaker, would the Minister of Finance please tell the House more about

the opportunities Manitoba businesses and families will see as part of the New West Partnership?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise in the House and to be able to speak to Manitoba finally joining the New West Partnership.

Madam Speaker, for too long, the report card comment for the NDP government would have read: Does not play well with others, not with the federal government, not with business, not with the civil service, not even on their own benches, but certainly not with other provinces.

Madam Speaker, with Manitoba's inclusion, the New West Partnership will cover almost a third of Canada's population. We will no longer be shut out of procurement. And, most importantly, this trade deal signifies that this is a government that will focus on partnering with others in order to make a better Manitoba.

University Operating Grants Government Commitment

Mr. Wab Kinew (Fort Rouge): Madam Speaker, I wish to congratulate the honourable Minister of Education on his speech yesterday during the debate to the Throne Speech reply. It seems that we both share a commitment to advancing the education of young Manitobans.

And on the same note, I read with interest over the weekend, Madam Speaker, that the honourable Minister of Education intends to follow through on our past commitments for this year to increase university operating grants by 2.5 per cent, college grants by 2 per cent and to let tuition rise only by the amount of inflation.

I'd like to know: Will the minister take this opportunity to reiterate these pledges on the record in the House?

Hon. Ian Wishart (Minister of Education and Training): I would encourage the member to actually wait for the budget to be tabled in this House and then he will know for certain as to the commitment to the numbers.

But as everyone in the House knows, commitments that were made early in the year have been built in to most school divisions and post-secondary institutions long ago. And so, certainly, we would not be a responsible government if we did anything to change that.

Post-Secondary Education Tuition Indexed to Inflation

Mr. Wab Kinew (Fort Rouge): Madam Speaker, I'm certainly encouraged to hear the minister use the word responsible. However, the equivocation that I heard there does give me some pause.

I'd like to know that, you know, this perhaps shouldn't be surprising because just a few months ago I heard the member from Lac du Bonnet muse on the possibility of letting post-secondary tuition rise to the level that it is in Saskatchewan, which would represent an increase of some 50 per cent.

So I'd like to ask whether the honourable Minister of Education would commit here to tying the increase in the level of post-secondary tuition to inflation for the rest of his mandate.

Hon. Ian Wishart (Minister of Education and Training): Madam Speaker, as I said earlier, I would encourage the member for Fort Rouge to actually develop some patience and wait for the budget.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member of Fort Rouge, on a final supplementary.

Mr. Kinew: Madam Speaker, of course, I'm asking for the benefit of post-secondary students across Manitoba during the recent election who told me that they can't afford to see raises in tuition. And, of course, the impatience that they may feel is the reason that brings me forward to ask such a question in the House today.

So, once again, I would like to ask whether the Minister of Education will commit to tying the increases in post-secondary tuition to the rate of the increase of inflation over the rest of his mandate.

Mr. Wishart: Thank you very much for the question.

As I said, the member should wait for the budget to be sure of numbers for this year.

As to the future, the future is what it is. We have committed to listen to Manitobans, something that the previous government had a reputation for not being particularly good at. And Manitobans rejected that future of not being listened to.

Climate Change Emissions International Targets

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): Madam Speaker, my question is a very simple one to begin with.

I'm wondering if the honourable minister could inform the House which international targets her government is considering for the reduction of climate change initiatives.

Hon. Cathy Cox (Minister of Sustainable Development): Thank you to the member opposite for that question.

As I've said before, climate change is of the utmost importance to all of us on this side of the House. You know, we know that it has a huge impact on wildlife, forestry, agriculture and many other important industries here in our province.

And that is why I'm happy to tell you that on May the 26th, I will be meeting with Minister McKenna to discuss this important issue. It's a national, global, provincial issue that we need to work together to develop a national strategy.

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

Mr. Altemeyer: Madam Speaker, the—perhaps the minister isn't aware of the international targets that I am referring to.

When I was in Paris for the negotiations, there were two different groups of targets that were being discussed. One set of targets some countries committed to was to limit climate change to 2°C of warming. The other one is for one and a half degrees Celsius warming.

I'm wondering which target her government is looking at implementing, Madam Speaker.

Mrs. Cox: Thank you again for that subsequent question. I appreciate it.

Our government is a government that listens. We're a government that is transparent. And that is what we plan to do with regard to targets and emissions.

I do realize that the NDP government opposite didn't meet their emission goals, and just like to say that we are going to work together. We're going to start immediately to discuss with our partners and stakeholders a made-in-Manitoba plan.

Thank you.

*(11:00)

Madam Speaker: The honourable member of Wolseley, on a final supplementary.

Mr. Altemeyer: Well, given the answers we've received so far this week, it seems it's going to be a made-in-Manitoba-corporate-boardrooms plan, Madam Speaker.

The reason why I'm interested in targets is when you read the Throne Speech that was introduced on Monday, Madam Speaker, there is no mention of targets for climate change. However, in her inaugural speech in this Chamber, the MLA for St. Vital did indicate that the government would be bringing targets to the public's attention.

I'm wondering: Did she accidentally disclose confidential Cabinet information that is now being withheld from the public by the minister? Are they contemplating targets? If so, what are they?

It's a pretty simple question, Madam Speaker.

Thank you.

Mrs. Cox: Thanks again for that subsequent question, and I think that as we move forward we will consult with all members in our community: stakeholders, partners, national, global, provincial. It's a huge issue and it's not something that we take lightly. So I thank you so much for that question, and we will consult before we make any decisions.

Madam Speaker: Prior to the next question I would just like to remind all members that when questions are asked or answers are given to please direct them through the Chair.

Thank you, and now I recognize the honourable member for Flin Flon.

Bargaining Units Certification Process

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): Madam Speaker, in examining the mandate letter provided to the Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade (Mr. Cullen), I note that the words labour and union do not appear, not even once.

It would appear that labour's nothing more than a disposable commodity to this government as it prepares a one-sided province that's going to look after only their business friends.

Can the Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade tell this House which union organizations they have discussed the legislative proposals which will change the certification process for bargaining units? Which union did they discuss those with?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Acting Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade): I thank the member for the question and, first of all, let's understand the context, that the member's asking questions that are based on information that this government has provided, information that is key to our mandate, information that we have taken the decision to release so that all Manitobans have the information. These are actions that were not undertaken by our predecessors on this side.

In respect of his question, I would say to him that I can assure him that the minister for this portfolio is on this file. He has already, at this time, met with the Manitoba Federation of Labour. He has already had initial meetings with the Manitoba government's employees union. I know that this is a priority to him and I know that he will have much more to say on this issue.

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

Mr. Lindsey: Can the Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade please tell this House if these proposals have been submitted to the Labour Management Review Committee for consideration and, if so, inform the House what these recommendations were?

Mr. Friesen: Thank you for the question.

This is an important issue, and it's an issue of importance to this new government. Already, in the very few days that we've had behind these benches, I would want to give assurances to this whole House that these ministers, in their portfolios, are reaching out to stakeholder groups; they are reaching out to labour. I know that the minister here has been reaching out, and he's initially very, very optimistic about the conversations that he's had and the level of support there is to be able to work together in a collaborative manner.

So, Madam Speaker, I give the member those assurances, and I want to indicate to him that we will continue on this issue.

Madam Speaker: Petitions. Oh, pardon me, I missed something.

The time for oral questions has ended.

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 cellphone—all cellphone packages in the province.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to do all that 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.

And this petition, Madam Speaker, is signed by many, many Manitobans.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

THRONE SPEECH

(Fourth Day of Debate)

Madam Speaker: Resuming debate on the proposed motion of the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Reyes) and the amendment and subamendment thereto, standing in the name of the honourable member for Fort Richmond, who has nine minutes remaining.

Mrs. Sarah Guillemard (Fort Richmond): Madam Speaker, I would like to acknowledge my parents, Ab and Jenny Chudley, who are here today with us. Yesterday, I shared how thankful and blessed I am to have such strong role models in my life. I love you both.

To continue from yesterday, I had spoken about the community projects I had worked on in Fort Richmond. The success of these projects would not have been possible without the dedicated volunteer hours from all the stakeholders. Their tireless fundraising efforts, coupled with a generous donation of their skills and creativity, is the true secret to reaching our goals.

It is this recipe that will continue to lead towards solutions for a better Manitoba. When you see a fellow Manitoban volunteering their time and talent, it is contagious and you are motivated to act in kind.

Fort Richmond has been my home for over 31 years. I attended Ryerson Elementary school, Acadia junior high and graduated from Fort Richmond Collegiate. I attended the University of Manitoba as a young adult, and now my oldest son will follow the same path to post-secondary education in the fall.

The taste of independence at university helped prepare me for my time living overseas in the Czech Republic. The challenge of learning a new language in addition to being a new wife and mother in a foreign land was a test of my limits but also proof of my determination.

I learned more than a new language. I learned how important community is, regardless of where you live. This lesson led me to volunteer with newcomers to Canada, helping them learn the basics of English as well as how to connect with their new community.

We have an amazing province because of the people who live here. I am inspired daily by the potential for large-scale success when we are all working together for a common goal. This is the reason I decided to run. I wanted to be part of a team that has a focus beyond its own gain and a vision that brings hope to every person in Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, I am excited to hear in the Throne Speech that a comprehensive mental health strategy is a priority of our government. As I have had to use their services for loved ones, I am encouraged that we will work with the mental health professionals and advocacy groups in order to ensure our province leads the way in access to services for mental health programs and addiction counselling and treatment. There remains a stigma for mental health programs, and this leads to far too much suffering in silence. It is time to break the barriers

and help fellow Manitobans get the help they deserve.

Our government has high expectations to achieve all the goals we have set out in the Throne Speech: the goals of lowering taxes and working towards balancing our finances, reducing wait times for health care, building infrastructure, increasing our personal-care-home beds and making sure our economy is strong for generations to come.

* (11:10)

Our plan is to work with Manitobans to ensure that our decisions reflect the values of integrity, caring, inclusion, common sense and teamwork. We are looking forward to Manitoba becoming the most improved province in the country over the course of the work of our new government. This team has 57 members that each play a role in the success for all Manitobans.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Kevin Chief (Point Douglas): Madam Speaker, proud to put some words on the record for today's Throne Speech. I, like all members of the House, I just want to say congratulations to everyone who's here on a very exciting but also a very tough election. Of course, we all make lots of sacrifices. Our families make lots of sacrifices, and I've got to tell you, when I sit here and I listen to all members give their speeches and thank their families, thank their campaign teams, regardless of which side of the House you're on, it's always very inspiring to listen to people that come into the House and reflect on how much it means and what truly an honour it is to be here to represent a neighbourhood, represent values and principles of Manitobans. So I just want to say how proud I am and I've been—I have been inspired.

I'm like most people, I'm very proud of the neighbourhood that I get to represent, Winnipeg's North End, also known as Point Douglas. It's a neighbourhood that has provided me with so much. I'm born and raised in Winnipeg's North End.

Mr. Doyle Piwniuk, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

It's always been a neighbourhood that have welcomed people from all over the world—Polish people, Jewish people, German people. We continue to see lots of Filipino people coming and getting their start in Winnipeg's North End. And often when people come from all parts of the world and they get established in Winnipeg's North End, it's when

they've had the least, and it's through hard work and finding that sense of belonging in a neighbourhood where people have been able to come together and, of course, do incredibly well, that the story of Winnipeg's North End and Point Douglas has always been a story grounded in possibility.

Myself and my friends that grew up in the neighbourhood, we never grew up with a lot of wealth, but when people looked at us and they looked through our eyes, they didn't just see hardship; they saw potential. And they always made us believe that anything was possible. Even with limited means, they always made us believe anything was possible—our families, our coaches, our teachers, people in our community. And I'm very proud of that.

I want to, of course, thank my wife, my three boys, my mother and father-in-law, my brothers, all the people who've worked so very hard throughout our campaign but have continuously been able to support me. I'm very proud, of course, of people like Connie's Corner. You know, best fried bologna in Manitoba and I've always said, you know, not even the Premier (Mr. Pallister) can serve up better bologna, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But I'm very proud of our campaign team. You know, one of the things we prided ourselves, we made sure to reach out to all of the schools, including elementary schools, that they could come and tour our campaign office so they can get a sense of what it's like, what campaigns are about, what politics are about, very proud to welcome schools like William Whyte School that came with their teachers. You know, they see people's signs, campaign signs, up; they hear about it, and we wanted to really show children what campaigns were all about, and very proud to welcome them.

We prided ourselves that we have a wallpaper where people walk in the door, they get their picture taken and we make sure to put all our volunteers up on a wall so when people came in they understood that that was an office, a campaign office where people belonged. We made sure that when people walked through the door they were greeted. They were greeted; they had their hand shaken and we always made sure we had lots of food. We always made sure we had a lot of bannock or pancit or perogies and they got a representation of food that reflected our neighbourhood in Point Douglas. And I want to thank people like Rob Cueto, Rom Cueto, people like Jim Thompson, Wendy Hallgrimson,

Gina Smoke, the Procter brothers. The list goes on and on of people who worked so incredibly hard.

You know, one of the things, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we do in Winnipeg's North End, we're—we've never been afraid to talk about struggle and hardship and challenge. And, of course, we hear that from time to time about a neighbourhood that is reflected, that has some—that has its challenges around poverty and struggle, but we've always tackled those issues head on. In fact, one of the things that we've always done is we've always been willing to talk about vulnerability, the struggles that we have. And, when you have a willingness to have the strength and courage to talk about the struggles you have, you can't help but feel and be sincere. And sincerity is a big part of building understanding, and when you can build understanding you can get co-operation, and that has always been the tradition of Winnipeg's North End.

You know, you talk to families, and families that don't have a lot, they will still tell you they are proud of who they are. They're proud of where they live. They're proud of their neighbourhood. They're proud of their hometown. They're proud of their home province, and they want to have the opportunity to give back.

And I know campaigns all throughout Manitoba had volunteers, people who might not have had a lot of money, but people who came out every single day to help door knock, to help fold leaflets, to be able to give back in their neighbourhood and that's one of the things that campaigns allow us to do to allow people to feel generous and get that sense of contribution in their neighbourhoods, and I know all members of the Chamber worked incredibly hard to make sure that people all throughout Manitoba, young and old, had the opportunity to get that sense of generosity.

In an area like Point Douglas, we know that our services and resources work best when people are engaged, and so when we go through an election campaign we know that it allows people to get engaged in a campaign so those services and resources that government often can provide are going to make the biggest difference. There is no better example of that than the Merchants Hotel in Winnipeg's North End.

As a group of elders led by people at Urban Circle like Eleanor Thompson, a group of young people like Michael Champagne who is part of the Aboriginal Youth Opportunities group, these are

groups of people that came together and said, you know, we think we could do more with the Merchants Hotel. We think we could make our neighbourhood safer if we did something different with the Merchants Hotel. And, driven by that community spirit, that engagement of young people and old people and elders, we were able to close the Merchants Hotel, something that our government stood with the community on.

You know, one of the things that me and my friends used to do growing up in the North End, we used to go get a Safeway cart and we would go to each other's homes and we'd get empty beer bottles and we'd put them in the Safeway cart and we'd push the Safeway cart down to the Merchants Hotel because you'd get 10 cents a bottle. We'd get a little bit of extra money and we could buy some candy.

Well, now my boys and other young people and other children in the neighbourhood, they won't be taking empty beer bottles to the Merchants Hotel; they're going to be taking books to the Merchants Hotel because it is now going to become a place and a hub of activity for people to live. It's going to be a place for post-secondary education so that every child in our neighbourhood is going to get a tap on the shoulder to say post-secondary is for you, and it's going to be right in their neighbourhood. That was the kind of vision—that's the kind of vision that the neighbourhood had and our government at the time was able to stand with members of our community.

You know, we know that we have one of the youngest and fastest demographics in Manitoba here than anywhere else in the nation. It's one of the youngest and fastest because of our young indigenous population. It's one of the youngest and fastest because of our new Canadians and our immigrant and our refugee populations. And, if we want to continue to be able to maximize the economic growth of our province, we have to make sure that we send a message to young girls and women all throughout our province that there is no job they can't get.

And, you know, one of the things that the new government's inheriting, they're inheriting one of the strongest economies in the country, and it's not one of the strongest because I'm saying that, every private sector forecaster has said it's one of the fastest and strongest economies in the nation with one of the lowest unemployment rates. There is independent validator after validator that is saying that.

Now, if we want to continue to have one of the strongest economies in the country with one of the lowest unemployment rates with more people working in Manitoba than ever before, in fact, BuildForce Canada says that in the next 10 years there's going to be a demand for 12,000 jobs in the construction field alone. When you have a strong economy, it creates demand for high-skilled jobs.

The only way that Manitoba can continue to have a strong economy is to engage this young demographic, this young indigenous population to make sure that we're engaging the new Canadian refugee immigrant population; that we send a strong message to girls and women that there's no job they can't get. Unless we invest into those demographics we will never continue to meet this demand for high-skilled jobs.

Now I got to say, you know, we've seen an absence of some of those messages in the Throne Speech. But one of the things that I know is my colleague from Fort Rouge spoke yesterday on reconciliation, and it was an inspiring speech here, of course, in the Chamber, but he's also written about this in a bestselling book. He's travelled the country. He spent time with elders. He spent time with prominent people like Senator Murray Sinclair.

*(11:20)

There is a real opportunity for us, through reconciliation, to meet this demand by making sure that we find ways to work together. And, if you heard his message yesterday, he will make sure that any person in the House—he's willing to help work with and be part of and make sure that we all understand how important reconciliation—if you look at what Mayor Bowman has called for around reconciliation, it's the year of reconciliation.

And these—our municipal governments all across the country are talking about reconciliation. Provincial governments all throughout the nation are talking about reconciliation. The federal government mentions reconciliation. You know, and so there's a real opportunity for us to be able to build on that.

And this is one of the things for me that I thought that we can continue to build on, particularly in Manitoba, with young of the—one of the youngest and fastest growing demographics. The—that opportunity still exists, but it was not mentioned in the Throne Speech. So we want to make sure that we maximize and engage this young indigenous population. There's a great opportunity to do it.

You know, we've been able to send a strong message, not just in Winnipeg's North End, but all throughout Manitoba, in all the neighbourhoods, in all our urban or rural areas, that for our new Canadians, our immigrant and refugee populations, wherever they're going to come, that the message is loud and clear: you belong, that this is a province where you belong on day one and there is going to be an incredible opportunity for you here.

I got to hear, again, a very inspiring speech from the member from St. Johns. You got to hear not only her personal story, but the stories of so many other people when it came to missing and murdered indigenous women. Her speech reflected how important it is for us now—I do want to say, when you listened to her speech, not only was it inspiring and emotional and very engaging, but everything she said is important because the work that needs to happen is around prevention. So we're doing everything we possibly can to make sure that we don't have more victims.

And I know her work that she has done and she has stood side by side with so many families of victims when it comes to missing and murdered indigenous girls and women. And for her to be able to come into the House and share those is a testament to all of those families that have gone through incredible hardship.

And, when we spend time and you talk to those families, this is where I'm talking about. When you listen to families talk about an incredible amount of hardship and struggle and challenge, it builds understanding. And when you have understanding, it leads to co-operation. And there's no place more important to have co-operation than in this Chamber as it relates to missing and murdered indigenous girls and women.

And so, when you hear somebody like the member from St. Johns to be able to come and reflect those values, I have to say, not only inspiring, but one of the most important issues that we're going to deal with in this Chamber going forward.

Now, I do want to talk about a few other people that I've got to meet along the way. There is a young indigenous woman, low-income woman, her name was Candace. And she stood with us when we increased the Rent Assist program, a program that was going to give a little extra money to people who were in transition.

And we have to recognize that transition is tough, no matter what kind of transition it is. You know, when I had my first child, like so many people in the Chamber have children, it's one of the most exciting times, but when you have a child it's probably one of the most exhausting times in your life as well.

When you get your first job, you're in transition. You want to learn, you want to do really well. Like so many newly elected people, and even people who've come back, because so many people have made sacrifices, and you want to show them that they've made the right decision. And so you get more—you get some anxiety, you get a little scared. It's exciting, but you're also a little bit worried about it.

So, you know, for families that are struggling every day, particularly on issues of poverty, we want to make sure that we can give them a little extra resources. So we helped them with that when it came to the Rent Assist program.

And so I got to meet Candace. I asked Candace, I said, would you be willing, Candace, to talk to members of the media on what this Rent Assist program's going to mean to you and your family? And she said she'd do it.

So when they asked her directly, what was—what are these extra resources going to do for you? She said, well, you know, for me, I can make my children's lunches a little heavier; you know, I'm going to be able to give a little bit of extra support to my mom, who doesn't have a lot, but provides some support to my children and child care because I'm in training—I want to become a welder. And she said, you know, it would be nice if I could get myself some nicer clothes, maybe for that first job interview, she said.

And to me, it took—I thought it took an incredible amount of strength and courage to be able to share that, so—so publicly, so I asked her, I said: Candace, if you could give advice to other single women, low-income women in your circumstance, what would your advice be?

She said: You know, my advice to them would be it's okay to ask for help. And I said to her, I said: Well, when did you know that? When did you know it was okay to ask for help? And she said, well, she said, I probably heard this at some time growing up, but, she said, frankly, I don't remember when, but she said, you know, when I was sitting in my class

over at the Aboriginal centre, at the Centre for Aboriginal Human Resource Development, in training to become a welder, she said, my college instructor said, you know, Candace, we need you to come to class, and the reason we need you to come to class is because we need you to become a welder, and the reason we need you to become a welder is because we've got to show other women that they can become welders and we've got to make sure that we meet the demand for welders because Manitoba says we need you because we need more welders. That's the only way that we're going to continue to do well.

And she said: Every time I talk to my college instructor, I heard the same message: we need you; we need you. And she said: You know, it was then I realized that message of how important it was. So she said it was something that I probably hadn't heard in such a long time, and when we have an example of a Throne Speech that can represent so many values, so many principles, a message in a Throne Speech, to me, should be a message of saying to people that we need them if we want our economy to do well. If you want to have healthy and prosperous and safe and healthy communities, a Throne Speech has an opportunity to send a strong message to young people, to children, to families, to people like Candace that show a lot of strength and courage to be able to say I need a little extra help, and we don't have to tell women that it's possible for them to be welders because we can show them because people like Candace are able to do it.

In closing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to be able to share a story. Me and my friend, his name's Chris Henderson, he went on to become the Southern Grand Chief of Manitoba, now works for Treaty Land Entitlement. We used to go swimming at Centennial Pool. So we'd take a bus from the corner of Main and Selkirk Avenue, and I was about six years old and Chris was about seven years old. We got on the bus one day, and I walked to the back of the bus and Chris came up, he said: Did you see the bus driver? You got to go look at the bus driver. So I went back. I looked at the bus driver—now, this is about over 30 years ago—and I came back and Chris said: You see the bus driver? The bus driver's Aboriginal. Can you believe it? We can be bus drivers.

You know, and I think about that story often now because Chris went on to become a—now negotiating land entitlement agreements for First Nations, and the other little guy, myself, became now

a representative of the Manitoba Legislature in a neighbourhood that has given me so much. So I have to say I think about that bus driver all the time, and I wonder, does he know how many people he inspired?

Now, as time has gone on in this job, I've got to say that people I often think about now over 30 years ago are the people who said, you know, and you didn't see Aboriginal bus drivers over 30 years ago, so the people I think about now are who are those people in that system that said, you know, I think Aboriginal people should be able to be bus drivers. And they pushed that system a little bit harder. They made sure there was a strong message for that man to be able to recognize that he could become, and it provided him the supports.

You know, all of us, I know, in the Chamber who are elected here today, want to push those systems a little bit more to make sure that they are more inclusive, that the message is loud and clear that no matter who you are and where you come from in Manitoba, you belong and who you are and where you come from, there is no job that you can't get and achieve.

Thank you, chi-miigwech.

* (11:30)

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): It's a pleasure to be able to rise and to speak to our government's first Throne Speech. I want to thank the member for Point Douglas (Mr. Chief) for his words, particularly at the end of his speech. I think that those were inspiring as well.

I understand he's—there's been an addition to the Chief family on or about election day. Baby Dax, is that right, was born into the Chief family, and I want to congratulate him on that. There are—there's lots of things that we do here in the Assembly that are important; they're important to Manitobans. But there's nothing more important than our families, and it's always important for us to remember that, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

It is a great honour to once again be re-elected as the member for the Legislature of Steinbach and, of course, I'm proud to be—have been appointed to the Cabinet but there is no greater job to me than to be the representative for my constituency. And after the Cabinet swearing-in, I made it clear within our local media to say that my No. 1 job is still to be the MLA for Steinbach. It's the job that I ran for; it's the job

that I wanted the most; and it's the job that I value the most, to be able to represent the wonderful people of the city of Steinbach and the portion of the RM of Hanover that I represent.

I also want to pay tribute, as I have in past throne speeches, to the many people in the Assembly here who make this place work: of course, our pages, who come for the year; our table officers in the Clerk's office. I—as House leader, I've had the opportunity over the last number of years to work many hours, sometimes many—too many hours with the Clerk's office as we've done some changes to the rules. And I've had a much greater appreciation for the work that they do and how they help to guide us, and that's particularly true now with so many new members in the Assembly. You will learn to rely on them and they will never steer you wrong. I might steer you wrong but they won't steer you wrong, so certainly rely on their good wisdom, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

My wife and my son weren't able to be here this morning. My son's in school and my wife is working at her occupation. But I would be remiss if I didn't thank them for their support in political life and in other things.

This was a unique election for me because my son, who is now 9, participated more fully in this election than any election that he has done before. And he wanted to be part of every part of the campaign, whether that was putting up signs or delivering brochures. And at one point, he even wanted to identify vote and to go door to door, and the member for Dawson Trail (Mr. Lagassé), who I—*[interjection]* The—well, maybe that'll be next time. You never know. The member for Dawson Trail, who I had the opportunity to spend a lot of time with on the campaign and to go door knocking with, my son came with a number of times. But the very first time, he said he wanted to go door to door and to knock and to ask for the ID, to do that process of seeing if somebody is going to be supporting him. And he was a little shaky the first time that he did it, but I was amazed the second time; he absolutely nailed it. He was just tremendous at the door. He was confident. He made me tremendously proud. And we were in a community that, you know, probably hasn't always been historically Conservative, but he knocked on six doors and he identified six Conservatives in a row.

And then I realized we can't have him at the door ID'ing because nobody would say no to him, right? I

mean, there was no way that these were all Conservatives. And so we had to, you know, mark them as undecided and go back and reconfirm. But we had so much fun. I did; it was a special time to be able to do that. And we never know how many more elections that, you know, we'll be involved with; people's lives change and they go on to do different things. But to be able to share that with him was very, very special to me and it's a memory that I'll keep.

My wife, who ever since we've been married, we've been involved in—or I've been involved in political life, and she has been too. Previously, she was working for a Member of Parliament. She's not involved in the political side anymore, which is good, I think. But she's been involved with me in every aspect of my political life, and what a tremendous support she's been. I've always felt that way as an MLA, and I feel that way more strongly now with the additional responsibilities that I've been given because she has to take on additional responsibilities as well at home. And she's done that with great enthusiasm and she knows that the work that we're doing is important. And I'm so thankful to be able to have her support because simply couldn't do it without her support. So I want to have that on the record for eternity, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Of course, there are many volunteers, and we all rely on volunteers, regardless of which political party you're in. We rely on people to come out and to help us on our campaigns, and they're the people that don't do it because they're expecting anything. They're not trying to get elected themselves. They just believe in you, and that's true, regardless of which political party you belong to. They just come out, whether it's a cold day or a warm day. And I think we experienced all of those things on this particular campaign. And they just come out because they believe in you.

And that's a very humbling sort of thing, you know, when you drive down a street and you see somebody's got your name on their lawn. Doesn't matter how many times you run, that's a humbling thing. You wonder, you know, why would they want my name on their lawn? And people come out and they say, we're going to just go door to door for four or five hours for you. And you go home in amazement. And we've all had this experience. And it's an incredible thing to think that those people have that faith in you.

But it's also a responsibility, because then you come here to the Legislature and you know that they're depending on you and they're relying on you because they put their faith in you. And all of us have that common experience. And I think that all of us will work to validate the faith that our volunteers have put into us.

I want to, I mean, it's always dangerous when you mention one volunteer over the other, but I will mention Mr. Ed Penner specifically, who has been volunteering with me and for our party for longer than I can remember. And he's just such a faithful individual in helping me and encouraging me; more encouragement these days, I think, than anything else. And I very much appreciate what Ed does.

I want to congratulate the interim Leader of the Opposition and congratulate her on her post. She's come to Steinbach many times during the Filipino events that we've had for the Christmas Filipino, I know. *[interjection]* Yes, and we've had great Filipino food. I don't know if we sang karaoke together or not; that might come yet. And I certainly would welcome you to do that at any of our local Filipino events. But I did appreciate, I know the community appreciated that she would come out and participate in those. And so I wish her well in the role. It's not an easy role to fulfill, being an interim leader, and in opposition, I know that there are particular challenges. And so I wish her well as she goes about that.

I—all members who are new, and I'm just excited to see the many new members we have on our side, but I welcome all new members to this Assembly. This has been a sense of renewal. There are so many new members here in the Assembly that this week has been a little surreal for me in a lot of different ways. Of course, being on the government side has not been my experience for the last 13 years, but just seeing so many new members. And it's great.

I think that the Assembly in many ways benefits from that renewal and the new perspectives that come from new members. We're not always going to agree on things, but that is the good part of our democracy, that we don't always agree. But it's good to have the different perspectives that come forward with new members and the different experiences. And everybody comes with their own life experiences, their own work experiences. And you better the Assembly by bringing forward those differences.

The election night was interesting for me because I was doing a CBC panel that evening, doing sort of analysis on the election. I wasn't at our central campaign victory. *[interjection]* I know, I missed a good party. You know, I waited for 13 years to be in government, then I don't even get to our own victory party. But I—it was interesting to be on the election-night panel with my friend Kevin Lamoureux and the former member for Seine River, Theresa Oswald. And I do consider both of them friends. And so that was still an enjoyable experience, although maybe not what I would have envisioned of trying to form government.

But there was a few different things that from that night were memorable. Of course, when the declaration came in from CBC that the Conservatives, Progressive Conservatives, would win a majority government, that'll be something I'll always remember.

Probably second to that, though, was when the member for Burrows (Ms. Lamoureux) came into the studio and gave her dad a hug, and I saw Kevin was quite emotional, as he should be with that. He was emotional when his daughter was declared victorious on that night, and when she came into the studio and gave him a hug, I got a picture of that, and I'm going to keep that always because that was an emotional moment for me too. It was just a great thing to see.

And I want to welcome you to the Assembly. And I know that you'll fulfill the legacy of the Lamoureux's very well, but more than that, you will craft your own path and you will have your own vision and ideas. And I know that you'll do that very successfully. So, congratulations.

Now, again, this is always difficult, because I want to be clear that, you know, how excited I am to see the new members on our side and the great work that they're going to do—particular our new member for Kildonan (Mr. Curry), and I'm excited by his youth and his enthusiasm. It reminds me a little bit of me when I was newly elected, not to—he probably won't be happy to hear that, but he comes in with great ideas and great, great vigour.

And I'm always happy to see when we're successful, a new MLA's successful, but I'm not necessarily happy to see people lose. I think that's an experience that we all have.

* (11:40)

And so Mr. Dave Chomiak, who I worked with as House leader when he was the House leader for

the NDP, I didn't take pleasure in him losing, even though I was very, very happy to see our new MLA win. And I would say that—and I've said this to Dave in the last couple of weeks, that I really enjoyed being able to work together with him on the new rules that we have in the Assembly. It wasn't an easy process. It was difficult, it was stress filled. There were long nights to get through that process and the fulfillment of those rules will probably be seen by new members more towards the end of this year going forward than they are right now.

But I did very much enjoy having the opportunity to work with him and I do wish him well. And I have wished him well and I have told him that his work in this Assembly in terms of the rules will probably not be appreciated by anybody other than MLAs and that'll be forgotten in time as well. But that is a legacy that he will leave in terms of those rules that have been changed and I wanted to put that on the record as well.

The election of government is exciting, obviously, for us and I'm looking forward to that but I do want to leave a message for my friends in the opposition on both parties, and I said this both on election night and I said it at the swearing in for our Cabinet. I do believe that opposition is important work, and all of us as MLAs, of course, strive to win government. That is the ultimate goal for those of us who are running as MLAs or MPs. But, you know, I sometimes heard people say, well, you've now come out of the wilderness.

I never really viewed opposition quite that way. There were certainly days of frustration—don't get me wrong. But I viewed it as important work and you were elected to that job, and Manitobans relied on you because a good opposition makes good government and it makes a good democracy.

And that is a role that you've been provided and you may not feel that way every—each and every day but it is important work and there are many people who are going to come to you and talk to you about different things. And you should always view it as important work, and I viewed it as important work and I'm proud of the things that we were able to achieve in opposition.

Now, moving forward, of course, I have great optimism about what I believe we'll be able to achieve as a government. And the work isn't going to be easy and I don't think people ever believe that it's going to be easy. I don't think that any of the members on our side believe that the work is going

to be easy work, and in the early days I think that's probably more true than ever. I realize that it is going to be hard work. But for all of us we have been given a task and we've all been given a task of difficult work.

As the Health Minister, I—and I don't know if I can say this now that I'm the Health Minister, that I'm looking forward to having fried bologna; I might get in trouble for suggesting that. But I certainly—I—*[interjection]*—what's that? Well, there you go. So I certainly am looking forward to it, to being invited.

But there's a lot of work that's going to be happening within the health-care system. In my experience in the very short time that I've been Health Minister is that the people who are working with in our health-care system have a great, great, great passion for the work that they do. All of them are there to improve the lives of those that they serve. And I haven't met anyone so far who I haven't been entirely impressed with, with the passion they bring to the different health-care delivery system that they are assigned to.

And one of the commitments that I made early on, and I'm going to fulfill that commitment through the summer and, hopefully, into the fall, is to have an outreach process to those who are involved in our health-care system and to ask them for their ideas about how this system can be made better, be more innovation and to do so in a financially responsible way.

There are the number of health-care providers have come to me and said, you know, we have lots of ideas about how to make the system better and more efficient, then they all—don't all cost millions of dollars. And I said to them, I want to hear those ideas, I truly want to hear those ideas. We won't be able to act on all of them; I know that and they know that as well. But there has to be an avenue for them to be able to express those ideas, and so I'm certainly working with department officials about how can we get those ideas in from those who are working within our health-care system and then take a look at them to see which ones would work in the immediate term and then going forward.

We will be conducting a sustainability and innovation process over the next number of months. More details will come out on that in terms of a review of the health-care system, which will be parallel to the review that is happening more broadly in government. And we have to always remember that the health-care system isn't about what's just

happening today in a hospital or what's happening today in a clinic or what's happening today in a personal-care-home bed. Those are very important things and they are very, very real for the individuals who are experiencing those things at that moment.

But we also have to remember that the health-care system has to be there in an efficient and a sustainable and a quality way for the future as well. We need to ensure that our health-care system will be there for those who need it in five years and 10 years and 15 years and 20 years.

And my criticism of the government hasn't just been on the quality of outcomes that we've had within the—the former government—of the health-care system but also not looking to the sustainability of the health-care system. If you're not able to provide 7, 8 and 9 per cent increases each and every year, then how do you make things more sustainable? And we've seen in other provinces where they've struggled with that as well, but Manitoba in particular has had a struggle.

So the issues are not going to be easy. Members opposite—I didn't get a question specifically on it from my critic, my friend from Concordia, today. He may do that yet in terms of the mandate letter. But there are many things within that mandate letter that we've been asked to achieve, and I don't take that lightly.

There are many, many things that aren't going to be easy to achieve, but we have to start that work, and that work has to happen systematically, and it has to happen with a plan, and it has to happen with the idea of improving things not just for today but improving things for five years, 10 years, 20 years. Because, as I started my speech talking about my son and the involvement that we've had in the political campaign, regardless of how long I or anybody else is elected to this Assembly, from my perspective, I'm also working for him and for the other children who are within Manitoba to ensure that they have a system of health care that'll be there when they need it. Now, of course, they might need it at an earlier age, but, statistically, if they need it when they're a little older, that that system is going to be there as well for them.

So that is our dual responsibility. It can't just be about looking at today; it also has to be about looking to the future.

So those are weighty responsibilities, and we all bear them. We all have a responsibility as elected

members in this Assembly. We have responsibilities to our families. We have responsibilities to the people who helped get us elected here to this Assembly. We have individual responsibilities as critics. We have individual responsibilities as ministers. We have individual responsibilities as private members on the government side. We all have responsibilities that are important. We all have responsibilities that I know each of us will work hard at in this particular Legislature. And we all have responsibilities that I know and I trust that each of you will fulfill to the best of your abilities in keeping with the oath that each of us took as MLAs.

Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Ted Marcelino (Tyndall Park): It's always a pleasure to be able to speak from the heart. And I welcome all the newly elected MLAs, especially those that I have met. And I intend to meet all of you one of these days. And it is—I want to make a special mention to another ethnic elected MLA from St. Norbert. I'm very proud that he got the seat.

My initial impulse was always to express my regrets, but I won't, I assure you, Mr. Speaker—Mr. Deputy Speaker. As the deputy House leader, I have to be a little bit more respectful, I was told, and also as deputy whip, I was told that I should be a little bit less brash. But I haven't changed. I am the same Ted from Tyndall Park.

The Throne Speech that was delivered in the House is something that lacks so many things and we have asked questions about. It was a 15-minute speech that was lacking in so many ways, and it shows us the priority of this current Conservative government. It reflects the balance between what we see as our priorities and what the government sees as their priority. For them trade is important; I respect that. For them, balanced budget, maybe, but they never mentioned that.

* (11:50)

On this side of the House, it is important that we deal with the people that we care about and those people that we care about and those folks who will be most vulnerable if we allow the Conservative government to go and get through with their agenda of cuts and austerity that never worked from way back.

We fear that there will be cuts and there will be privatization—privatization meaning the Crown corporations could be in danger, because during the time that the MTS was also promised not be sold,

they set up same old word, that they won't do it, and they still did. In less than six months, the Manitoba Telephone System was sold, and it was rammed through this Legislature without any concern for the objections of the public. And it is a shameful part of our legislative history.

When the steamroller of the profit-driven Conservative was privatizing MTS, and considering that I am the critic now for Crown corporations, I am studying a lot about how MTS was sold. And I discovered so many uncomfortable techniques that were used. First off, they sold the coaxial portion of MTS for \$11 million, and that's what we call the slice. And then they diced it so that the call centre—they sold it to Faneuil ISG. And it was amazing that people forgot all about it, and the greatest fear that most people have is that it was a one-time hit and that there were suspicions about people making money out of the sale of MTS.

I cannot point fingers because I don't have proof, but it's amazing that there's suspicions that our own Premier (Mr. Pallister) might have made money out of MTS sale. And I am very comfortable to say that I don't have proof, but soon, one of these days, it might come out, and that cloud of suspicion needs to be addressed by the Premier himself. He's got to come clean, and he's got to say that he did not. During the election, my campaign team were asking me to keep on door knocking. At my age, which is a secret—I am 69—it was very difficult. I will be 70 this year. And, if you're interested, I'll be running again when I'm 74. But the tragedy of it all is that I only won by 491, 491 plurality over somebody.

But, before that, I may have to mention what my beef is about the polling companies who have been telling me that I have lost, by 98 per cent, Tyndall Park. CBC has published a polling result that shows that I'm 98 per cent sure to lose Tyndall Park. And it was one of those that really goaded us into working a little bit harder.

Madam Speaker in the Chair

And it's one of those things that really get to me. The polling companies and media companies can try to influence the results of elections 30 days even before April 19th. It's amazing that polling companies could do that and get away with it. There should be a law that will at least blunt or forbid or prohibit the publication of those results without telling who paid for it. It is amazing that in their attempt to influence the outcome of these elections, there was never any mention of the error that they

had, that when Ted Marcelino was proclaimed the winner in Tyndall Park, how can that happen? And it's not part—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

I would just remind the member to not refer to himself by his—I would just remind the member not to refer to himself or any member in the House by their names.

Thank you, and I urge the minister to—member to proceed.

Mr. Marcelino: Madam Speaker, I was a rookie.

My real concern is that we may not do anything about it. And we may not even be concerned about it.

I welcome to the Legislative Assembly the member from Flin Flon, one of our assets, one of the fresh blood, very, very young. And, of course, I welcome the member from St. Johns, also very, very young. And I also must welcome back those who have been re-elected.

An Honourable Member: All very, very young.

Mr. Marcelino: All very, very young.

And, of course, my congratulations go to those who have been elected. I heard yesterday that somebody called this a career. And I'll beg to disagree. This is not a career. All politicians have expiry dates. You could be here in four years or eight years, but we all have a best-before date.

* (12:00)

Madam Speaker, I have expressed my congratulations to you. And I have told you that the job that you have now is cut out for your personality. And I express my sincerest hope that you will keep this job and that you will be doing it the same way that you intend it to be, to be fair, impartial, non-partisan, and that you will attempt to hear all of us in the same—with the same ear, with the same compassionate attitude when we observe you using the timer. And it is amazing how my observation is that you are giving us a lot of latitude to speak during the members' statement. And I thank you for that, especially for the newbies like us.

There is currently an issue that I have regarding the Throne Speech again. The Throne Speech did not mention anything about immigration. And I am an immigrant. I did not say I was an immigrant, because no matter what we do, I will remain an immigrant to this country. And there's a dose of gratitude that

always comes when I say that. This country and this province has been very welcoming. We have stood out of so many as among the most welcoming people on earth. And Manitobans have always tried to be as accommodating and as welcoming and as hospitable as anybody else.

There used to be a time when I would go to the airport and ask around during those times when the government workers were coming in from the Philippines. And I would ask around those who do not have any arrangements for accommodation. And we would welcome them to our home, no questions asked, no strings attached. And it was our way of giving back.

The Leader of the Opposition did the same thing. She happens to be my sister-in-law, married to my brother. We were cut from the same cloth, and the way that we do things is quite different. The way that we speak sometimes is different. Our accent is sometimes different. Well, sometimes I try to mimic the white nasal voice that I hear over the phone, but I could never do it.

My gratitude has always been overflowing towards those who have been very, very accommodating, towards those whose attitude has always been welcoming. And, of course, I welcome the member from St. James. We have a mutual friend who happens to be his sister. And say hi to her.

And I thank you for allowing me to speak.

Mr. Andrew Smith (Southdale): Madam Speaker, I stand in the House today, first of all, to congratulate you on being elected as Speaker of our House. I also want to thank the honourable member from Tyndall Park for putting his name forward and participating in this incredibly democratic process.

Madam Speaker, I'm sure that your years of service and experience will serve you very well in this new role. I have to admit that the very first political campaign that I worked on was, indeed, yours, in 1997, in your by-election. And, at the time, I was a high school student eager to learn about the political process. And here we are, 19-some-odd years later, and I'm not only honoured to be here as the Member of Parliament—or Member of the Legislative Assembly, sorry, for Southdale, but also to have you as our Speaker of our House. You are truly an inspiration, and I'm touched to have you here.

I want to thank you and congratulate all the members in both sides of the House here today, both

newly elected and re-elected. Each one of us represents our constituents. I know we've worked incredibly hard, knocking on doors, working with our campaign teams, to do just that. So I thank you and welcome you all here.

You know, our Progressive Conservative Party campaigned on the underlying theme of teamwork. Now, that teamwork will translate very well into our transition into government. But I want to extend that sentiment to all members of the House. You see, since we represent every one of our constituents, we also represent Manitoba on a whole, and I'd like to welcome you to team Manitoba. I look forward to working with every one of you to not only represent our constituents but also to represent our province on a whole.

Madam Speaker, Sunday, February 7th of this year, I fondly remember, partly because it was Super Bowl Sunday, with the Broncos and the Panthers squaring off. But that day was particularly important to me and my volunteers as we were door knocking in Island Lakes, trudging through snowbanks and facing the typical Winnipeg wind chill factor. A true test of tenacity was demonstrated with our team working tirelessly despite the weather. We were determined to speak to as many constituents as possible before the kickoff to the 50th Super Bowl got under way.

My volunteers endured such cold weather, but were rewarded for our diligence and with many warm hearts who greeted us. We won them over by sharing our vision with them, a vision for a brighter tomorrow. But how did we keep going, no matter the weather? We held true to our unwavering passion. We were energized and strengthened by our passion for a better Manitoba, our passion for a better Southdale.

There are a few people here that I'd like to give special thanks to, as they literally were with me every step of the way. First of all, Jaime, my better half, who's in the gallery right now; I want to thank her for being here. She not only stood by my side, but took an active role and crucial role in this campaign despite working a very demanding full-time job. Jaime, you are my strength and my love.

Next are my parents, whose unwavering support was with me every step of the way. With that—without that family support, I wouldn't be here today. My dad, Gary, who's actually here despite recovering from a recent operation—so I thank him for coming

here today for this—he took a very active role in this campaign not only as my financial officer, but he also pretty much did everything else on a campaign one can think of. So I'm incredibly honoured to have him on my team and to have him as my father, so thank you, Dad.

* (12:10)

Of course, I'd be remiss if I didn't mention my mother as well, who put up with the gruelling hours that my father had to be away and the constant political talk at any family dinner; so thank you, Mom, for putting up with us.

And I want to thank every single person on my campaign team. Every person running for office would hope for a campaign team that I had, and I thank them all.

The honourable member from Morden-Winkler, I want to thank him for his support and his mentorship throughout this campaign and congratulate him for being Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen). I know he will serve Manitobans very well in this portfolio, so thank you.

As I continue to reminisce about my campaign, I can't help but remember the so many icy days. I think we can all relate to this, which made most driveways treacherous at best. One of those days in particular stands out. It was a cold Saturday morning, mid-February. Our team was out door knocking when we came across a driveway that was particularly slippery. Now, we continued on without a second thought, but, as it turned out, we should have been more cautious.

Despite our best efforts to maintain proper eye-to-foot co-ordination, which isn't always our strong suit, we had difficulties negotiating the sheer ice beneath our feet, and, unfortunately, the inevitable happened, and one of our volunteers slipped and fell on the ice flat on her back. Now, I was horrified, and I immediately ran over to them and tended to them, not knowing the possible extent of the situation.

Well, just as I approached, I was relieved to see that they were really weren't injured, and, as they started laughing and got up on their feet, I was relieved. The volunteer happily continued on my campaign despite the ice on this driveway and remained undeterred with the possibility of facing more, their passion outweighing their prudence. That said, we continued door knocking with a little more attention paid to the perils beneath our feet.

Again, it was passion and belief in our cause that kept us all going no matter what happened. And it was this passion that was conveyed time and again to our constituents, our friends and our neighbours.

The heart of my campaign was all the volunteers who devoted their time and effort no matter what obstacle stood in their way. They made so much headway knocking on doors, making phone calls, posting signs and even generously bringing food to our campaign office.

There was also a core campaign team who I can honestly say were responsible for me being here today, the donors who gave so generously to our campaign, as they shared our vision and passion for a better province and a better community. None of this would have been possible without their unwavering dedication to our cause. My most sincere thank you to all of them.

The voters, my constituents, my neighbours, granted me the means to make a difference with their vote. And I will meet and exceed this expectation. I thank all those voters who entrusted me with the future of our community, and I will fulfill our mandate to the best of my abilities. I will always be grateful, honoured and humbled in their choosing me to represent Southdale, to be their voice here in Manitoba's Legislature.

During my formative years, I grew up in a household with loving parents who worked hard to nurture and support our family. Strong values were instilled in me which shaped my very being. I learned early on to be tenacious, not just in school, not just in sports, but in dealing with everything I do.

I had the privilege of being taught by some excellent teachers over the years that encouraged me to be the best, set goals and strive to attain them. One in particular that I can fondly recall was my 9th grade social studies teacher. He was intelligent, engaging and witty. He inspired his students and encouraged them to be thinkers. And, as a matter of fact, it was him who planted the political seed at such a young age.

It is teachers like this in our society and through our education 'shystem' that help shape the minds of our community, so it's imperative that we protect and positively enhance our education system.

Outside the classroom, I was also inspired by being part of Manitoba Weightlifting Association, where we represented our province on three occasions at western Canadian championships. You

could say that this was my first foray attained on the provincial stage.

The person who stood up most and influenced me most was my coach. My coach was an Olympic-level weightlifter from Eastern Europe who was slated to go to the 1984 Olympic Games, until, that is, the Soviet Union boycotted the games. Several years later, once the Soviet Union collapsed, he was left with no choice but to leave his country.

He chose Canada, a nation of freedom and opportunity, and became a provincial-level coach in Manitoba and a teacher. And he led our team to many victories. He was, again, one of those people who both inspired and encouraged those around him. His story reminds us of how grateful we should be to live in a country based on political and economic freedom with communities that prosper as a result of these values.

Working hard and overcoming obstacles together has led and will lead to many substantial achievements. The combination of these values and tenacious spirit inevitably shaped me into being the person I am today.

I've worked successfully with many people through the years by means of a background in marketing and business development and, as well, possess a strong understanding of government from my years working with federal politics.

After I graduated from the University of Manitoba with my degree, I was employed in the private sector, first as a business development manager for an oil recycling company in Nova Scotia. During this time I developed my business acumen while working for a brilliant entrepreneur who I refer to as a mentor. My employer at the time had a knack for always making the right decision no matter its complexity.

In the 'shore fort' years that he owned, the company profits and revenue grew eightfold. This is a company that was not only profitable; it was environmentally friendly. The belief there was that for every litre of oil we leave in the ground, there's a litre of oil we have for the next generation.

Living on the east coast gave me the ability to look back at my home province with an outside perspective. What I saw troubled me and increased my passion for positive change. My boss recognized that political desire within me and encouraged me to follow it. Right there, at that point, I decided to pursue politics in a more official capacity.

I went to Ottawa and quite literally knocked on the doors of parliamentarians. As we all know, this would be the first of many thousands of doors that I'd be knocking on. One MP happened to be hiring and was impressed by my tenacity to come all the way to Ottawa to see them.

As it turned out, this was a Manitoba MP, and he hired me to work in the constituency office in Winnipeg. Thus begun my formal forays into politics.

I'm proud to be here today to serve under the leadership of our new Premier (Mr. Pallister) of Manitoba. Our mandate and future course is clear. Manitoba's new government is committed to making Manitoba the most improved province in all of Canada, to better health care and education for families, to better jobs for our young people, and to an open, transparent government that earns and deserves the trust of all Manitobans.

That is what politics should always be about—the people we represent and how we best represent them. That is the basis of our vision and we will continue to do so.

Our province was built by immigration. Our forefathers and foremothers were largely immigrants coming to this country and this province. I am proudly half Ukrainian, as my maternal grandparents were immigrants from Ukraine. After facing the harsh realities of the Second World War, they sought refuge in Canada, a Canada, a country full of opportunity. They wanted to build a better life for their family and decided to cross the Atlantic and settle in Manitoba's prairies.

Arriving here with no possessions, no money, and actually no command of the English language, they took on a challenge that most of us can never imagine. Backed by a solid work ethic and a determination to survive, they became farmers.

My grandfather had to commit to two jobs in order for he and his family to survive. He worked on the railroad by day and tended to his small family farm on evenings and weekends.

My grandmother worked the farm in conjunction with raising a family full time. They invested everything in their family with four daughters to support. They were true pioneers and, by today's standards, true entrepreneurs.

Today's immigrants continue to play a crucial role in our communities. Winnipeg is one of the most

diverse cities in Canada, as is my riding of Southdale. Our riding continues to grow and prosper. Friends of mine who lived in the area when Southdale was first developed some 40 years ago described a place that was quite literally a few houses on the edge of farmland with a golf course on its fringe.

As far as the eye could see, to the east there were farmhouses, silos, horses, cattle, and crops. This is a place that represented many communities in Manitoba at the time—young neighbourhoods on the verge of impressive growth. This empty space would soon be replaced by sprawling, lively communities full of houses, apartment complexes, condos, schools, and businesses.

The population increased greatly from what seemed like a few dozen back then to over 19,000 as early as 1996, and it's still growing at an increasingly rapid rate.

Today, with the addition of Island Lakes, Royalwood, Sage Creek, and Prairie Grove, we have matured into a very large, culturally diverse and impressive neighbourhood. This expansion has given us so much room to accommodate an increasing number of people and so much more potential with that growth.

* (12:20)

Southdale is currently filled with many schools, including the French immersion elementary schools École Guyot and École Van Belleghem; the elementary schools, Niakwa Place, Shamrock, Island Lakes Community School and J.H. Bruns, which is adjacent to the Southdale Community Centre. These fine institutions serve our community, on a whole, that is driven by volunteers and an incredible entrepreneurial spirit.

One such success story is that of a young family in Southdale who moved to Canada in only 2006. Since that time, they have demonstrated tremendous commitment to our province and our community. When they decided to come to Canada, they knew that they were taking a huge risk. They left their family behind so that they could come to Canada in order to make a better life for their children.

Today, she is a well-respected teacher and he, a successful entrepreneur. Together, they not only built a life for their children but remain incredibly active in the community. As a teacher, she has led a number of successful educational projects including nurturing the sciences in young people by hosting

science fairs for her students. She has taken leadership roles in a number of community organizations as well and, as an entrepreneur, he is invested in our economy. He's created jobs and is an upstanding member of the business community. These two people have led by example and share a similar story with many others in the riding of Southdale.

When it came time for Jaime and I to decide upon a place where to set down our roots, there were many viable options; however, the one that we were interested in most was Southdale. We found it incredibly diverse, friendly, community-oriented, and, after we moved there, we immediately found it to be a place with so much potential, a place teeming with young families, a community that has so much room to be guided and nurtured towards a brighter future.

Another Southdale success story that comes to mind is one that involves another new Canadian who, several years back, came from his home country arriving here with literally nothing and eventually laid the groundwork for an entrepreneurial business, one with ties not only throughout the province but globally. Their business continues to flourish like many others in our community and our province on a whole.

Through my ongoing outreach in the community, I have spoken to many people who have said that they want a government that listens to their concerns, a government that understands their issues and a government that represents their values.

We will show Manitobans that we can provide leadership and vision for this province. It's been said that when politicians have no vision, the people perish. But, I believe, that when politicians have a vision, the people flourish. When people cast the vote our way, they were looking for a government that will take our province to a new and better direction.

Trust and integrity are the heart of what Manitobans expect from their elected officials. Manitoba government—the new Manitoba government will seek to help Manitobans in evaluating our progress toward specific results. Our goal is to make Manitoba the most improved province in the country. We will also develop measurements to report on our progress towards restoring fiscal responsibility, reducing health-care wait times, strengthening our infrastructure and improving literacy rates and restoring trust, integrity in government.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Mohinder Saran (The Maples): I'm so grateful and honoured to again represent the vibrant community of The Maples.

I would like to offer my congratulations to the Premier (Mr. Pallister) and his government. I am hopeful that we can work together in this House. I also congratulate the members of the Assembly on their election of the election.

My success is a direct result of the immense amount of time and work that so many have learned here donated to my campaign. I am so indebted to those volunteers who walked door to door with me, delivered fliers, made phone calls, gave rides on election day and, of course, kept our campaign office a space of positivity and optimism.

I want to extend a warm thank you to all of The Maples candidates and their campaign teams. Though we were in competition, we came together in our desire to do good for the people of The Maples.

I am so thankful to my campaign staff. I also appreciate the hard work of my present and previous years whose hard work in the constituency is reflected in my election.

I would also like to congratulate you, Madam Speaker, on your new role. Even in this first week, you have demonstrated that same dignity and poise that made you such an excellent MLA.

Congratulations as well to the Premier and his Cabinet. Though we may disagree as to what is best for Manitobans, we are united by a deep and enduring love affair with this province and these people.

I have lived in The Maples for 38 years. It is my home, and I care about the community and the people who live there. I'm proud to say that my constituency has a large Sikh community that celebrates the diversity and vibrancy of our culture.

As the first Indo-Canadian person to have been appointed to Cabinet in Manitoba, I am proud of my heritage. Madam Speaker, it is a great privilege for me, being a shy person, coming from this small village from the Third World country and be in the Legislature in the country—one of the best countries in the world. That was—that is a great privilege and a great honour.

I could not have done this without God's grace, without so many great friends which made it happen. And I truly know that people gave me far more honour, more respect than my ability, I would say.

As the—I am—I know that the Sikh women and men who came before me and established themselves in Canada have opened the doors to my success. Yesterday, on the 18th, you may know that the Prime Minister of Canada apologized for the wrongdoing at that time government did upon the people from India, Punjab province, and those people made a path for us to be successful over here.

This is a great country where people can be respected. It doesn't matter what race, what religion or where they come from. And—but sometimes it's not that easy to integrate, get integrated in the new country. When I came in Vancouver, 1970, and I was almost ready to go back, on the road when you are going there, there were chances when people told you, go back where you come from. There were incidents—one incident when we are going there, walking there, some people from the pickup had eggs

in their hands thrown at us. So I wrote a letter to my father because I don't want to stay here, send me the ticket.

* (12:30)

Madam Speaker: Order.

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member will have 14 minutes remaining.

The hour being 12:30 p.m., the House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 on Tuesday.

And, at this time, I would just like to thank everybody for all of their patience with me as I learn my new role, and I want to wish everybody a very wonderful May long weekend. The weather's supposed to be great, so enjoy Manitoba, your family and friends, and drive carefully.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, May 20, 2016

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