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of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
Official Report
(Hansard)

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-First Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALLUM, James	Fort Garry-Riverview	NDP
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	NDP
BINDLE, Kelly	Thompson	PC
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	Man.
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	Ind.
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
LAMONT, Dougald	St. Boniface	Lib.
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, Hon.	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	Ind.
SCHULER, Ron, Hon.	St. Paul	PC
SMITH, Andrew	Southdale	PC
SMITH, Bernadette	Point Douglas	NDP
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, Hon.	Gimli	PC
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
WISHART, Ian	Portage la Prairie	PC
WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC
YAKIMOSKI, Blair	Transcona	PC

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, November 26, 2018

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

Please be seated. Good afternoon, everybody.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 204—The Election Financing Amendment Act

Mr. Dougald Lamont (Leader of the Second Opposition): I move, seconded by the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard), that Bill 204, The Election Financing Amendment Act, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Madam Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Leader of the Second Opposition, seconded by the honourable member for River Heights, that Bill 204, The Election Financing Amendment Act, be now read a second time—be now read a first time—perhaps we can start again and have the Leader of the Second Opposition just redo it.

Mr. Lamont: I move, seconded by the member for River Heights, that Bill 204, The Election Financing Amendment Act, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Lamont: Just in reference to this bill, the idea behind it is we'd like to raise the level of the content, basically, in advertising related to elections especially.

Right now, when it comes to political advertising and other kinds of political content, if it's produced, usually it just says approved by—it used to be the official agent, but now approved by the financial officer or—of a party, and we want to make sure that it is more accountable, that the—it's

about accountability for the content and not just accountability for spending, in order to improve the level of debate.

Thank you.

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

Committee reports?

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade): Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to table the quarterly report for the Communities Economic Development Fund.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister responsible for the Status of Women): November 25th is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. It also marks the beginning of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence.

Madam Speaker, we know that women and girls here in Manitoba and around the world are all too often subjected to sexual violence, abuse and harassment. Unfortunately, we know that some women and girls around the world are also subjected to sexual violence as a horrific act of war.

One such community is the Yazidis. In the summer of 2014, ISIS swept into the Sinjar region of northern Iraq, systemically targeting the Yazidi people. Those who were unable to flee were rounded up in what the UN, and indeed this Legislature, has recognised as a genocide. Men who refused demands to convert to Islam were shot, while the women were taken into captivity. There they experienced horrible abuse, being passed from captor to captor and used as sexual slavery.

Last week, the Yazidi Association of Manitoba reached out to me to discuss their members' experience of the use of sexual violence in conflict. I was honoured to be able to meet them this afternoon, along with my colleagues from Rossmere, St. Norbert and Fort Richmond.

All of us, Madam Speaker, have an obligation to stand up against the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war. And while we are fortunate enough to live in a country that is not experiencing anything remotely resembling that level of violence or genocide, it is—we all need to work together to eradicate gender-based violence here at home in Manitoba and around the globe.

I welcome members of our wonderful Yazidi community here at the Legislature today. I thank them for sharing with me their story of survival and their courage and hope. And I want all of them to know that, here in Manitoba, we are your allies in eradicating gender-based violence.

I invite all Manitobans to join the 16 days of activism and use the hashtag #HearMeToo as together we work towards ending gender-based violence.

Thank you, Madam Speaker. And thank you to the Yazidi community, who is here with us today.

Madam Speaker: I would indicate that the required 90 minutes notice prior to routine proceedings had been provided in accordance with our rule 26(2).

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): November 25th was the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and the start of 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence.

I would suggest activism, reclamation and agency is desperately needed for and by Manitoba women and girls who, according to a Status of Women report, experience the highest rates of sexual assault in all of Canada, Madam Speaker.

Rates are double the rest of the country, with 81 per cent of police-reported incidences of partner violence made by women and girls. These rates reflect only that which is reported to police, Madam Speaker. We know the stigma, trauma and safety issues often prevent women and girls from reporting.

Gender-based violence goes beyond the physical. Many women and girls experience isolation, marginalization, intimidation, bullying, gossiping and harassment in the workplace, affecting their work and mental health. Sadly but not surprisingly, Madam Speaker, studies have found that up to half of Canadian women and girls experience some form of harassment at work.

When talking about gender-based violence, we must also include and remember indigenous women, LBTTQ and gender non-binary people are

disproportionately targeted simply because they represent the most marginalized in our society.

Thanks to the #MeToo movement, our society is having open, frank conversations about misogyny.

I encourage all members to do their part for the 16 days of activism. Do what you can over the next few days, Madam Speaker, to support women and girls. Speak up when you see injustice and believe survivors.

I encourage women and girls through the hashtag #HearMeToo to share recommendations on actions, personal narratives of survivor and reclamation, if you are able. And I invite men and boys to reclaim their commitments to ending—

* (13:40)

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): Yesterday marked the first day of 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence with the international day of the elimination of violence against women. These 16 days will be a time to increase awareness surrounding of the disproportionate amount of violence women and girls face.

We acknowledge that this violence is often further compounded for indigenous peoples, LGBTQ2 community members, gender non-binary individuals, those living in northern, rural and remote communities, people with disabilities, newcomers, children and youth and seniors.

Statistics show that women face violence every day.

This year's theme uses the hashtag #MYActionsMatter. #MYActionsMatter asks every individual to look within themselves to examine ways one can question, call out and speak up against sexism and acts of gender-based violence.

The roots of gender-based violence are still widely perpetuated through our language, the media and the gender norms we teach our children.

Concrete steps that enforce gender neutrality are just one of the ways we can encourage ending gender-based violence.

Gender, sexuality and gender identity are protected characteristics federally and provincially, but we still have a ways to go. Even here in our very own Legislature, protections and reporting for women are in need of strengthening.

Madam Speaker, as the 16 days of activism commences, I encourage all members and Manitobans to think about actions they can personally take to end gender-based violence so we can work towards creating a world that is just and humane for all.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Further ministerial statements? The honourable Minister of Agriculture—and I would indicate that the required 90 minutes notice prior to routine proceedings was provided in accordance with our rule 26(2).

Farmer Appreciation Day

Hon. Ralph Eichler (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to acknowledge KAP Farmer Appreciation Day.

This morning, many members of this House, including myself, had the opportunity to celebrate the role agriculture plays in our province and to recognize the farmers who have made our industry what it is today.

Agriculture is a key economic driver for Manitoba, as well as a staple of our history, heritage and culture. Our farmers have made significant contributions to the health and prosperity of Manitoba. These contributions have not gone unnoticed.

The Keystone Agricultural Producers, otherwise known as KAP, works with farmers to develop policy, protect the environment and promote agriculture in Manitoba and throughout Canada. KAP members play a direct role in advocating for farmers and guiding agricultural policy.

The Manitoba government looks forward to working with KAP and our industry partners to continue to build on the solid foundation, relationships and tremendous success that has characterized this critical pillar of our economy.

I ask the House to join me in acknowledging the contributions of KAP and all of Manitoba's farm families as we celebrate Farmer Appreciation Day.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Ted Marcelino (Tyndall Park): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to say a few words in honour of Farmer Appreciation Day.

On behalf of the NDP caucus, I want to thank our farmers and farm leaders for the work they do for the province of Manitoba. Farmers provide safe, plentiful and affordable food, and we're proud to work with farmers and our farm organizations to keep a strong rural economy.

Farming and a rural way of life are a key part of the province's identity, and farming is also a key driver of the Manitoba economy.

Manitobans have good reason to be proud of their farmers. Whether in livestock, crops, poultry, dairy or other parts of the industry, our farmers compete at the highest levels with farmers around the world. More than 10 per cent of the jobs in our province are tied to agriculture and billions of dollars of our agricultural products are traded internationally.

One of those challenges—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, this morning, for the 14th annual Farmer Appreciation Day, we met, as MLAs, with farmers and those involved in the agricultural industry from all over Manitoba. It was an opportunity to learn about the outcome of this year's activities and the challenges and opportunities ahead.

Today we recognize and thank Manitoba farmers for the work that they do in producing food and in their stewardship of the land. The MOU signed today between KAP, Fertilizer Canada and the Province marks to—continuation of efforts to achieve 4R stewardship—applying nutrients to the land from the right source at the right rate at the right time and the right place to achieve optimum crop production and optimum land stewardship.

I also talked with several farmers about the challenges and opportunities which can arise from a substantive approach to climate change, reducing the emission of greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide and methane, and increasing the storage of carbon.

On behalf our Manitoba Liberal caucus, I thank all the farmers and others in the agricultural sector who've come to the Legislature today and thank all those who are not here, because they all are contributors to our joint success.

Madam Speaker: Further ministerial statements?

The honourable Minister of Health—and I would indicate that the required 90 minutes notice prior to routine proceedings was provided in accordance with our rule 26(2).

Would the honourable minister please proceed with his statement?

Substance Use and Addictions Awareness Week

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): Madam Speaker, Manitobans know it is important to acknowledge and openly discuss substance abuse and addictions issues going on in our communities.

We know it can be a difficult issue for many people to talk about, but it is necessary if we want to raise awareness, challenge commonly held misconceptions and reduce stigma.

The impact that addictions have on individuals, families and communities is significant. Equally significant is creating opportunities to talk about the impacts and work together to promote recovery.

Manitoba recognizes the importance of raising awareness, and the government is committed to making improvements in our mental health and addictions system. We have opened Rapid Access to Addictions Medicine clinics across the province. We have added mental health and women's treatment beds. And just today, we announced olanzapine, an antipsychotic medication, to be approved for use by paramedics to treat methamphetamine users. This medication will reduce the level of agitation meth users feel and helps to prevent them from doing further harm to themselves, to responders and to others.

I also want to note that, for the very first time, this week on the calendar has been proclaimed Manitoba Substance Use and Addictions Awareness Week. At the event marking this proclamation earlier today, I had the opportunity to meet an individual who is recovering from substance use and addictions issues who told an inspiring story about his journey towards sobriety. I also met a number of people, family, friends or service providers of people who struggle with addictions.

While we are proud of the initiatives our government has brought forward to address addictions and mental health issues, I want these people—all of Manitobans—to know our work on this issue will not end.

We will continue to help Manitobans who are struggling with addiction by giving them the access to services they need to get help. We will continue to improve the co-ordination of Manitoba's mental health and addictions services and we will continue to bring initiatives to help communities battle the rising use of drugs in communities.

Manitobans expect their government to lend a helping hand to those who need it, and our government will continue to be up to that task.

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): Madam Speaker, addiction does not discriminate. It crosses all geographic, generational, gender, racial and socioeconomic lines. Substance Use and Addictions Awareness Week should be an attempt to raise awareness about the use of harmful substances within our communities.

Manitobans know all too well the harms of addiction. Our province is currently gripped by illegal opioid use and a meth crisis that this government has refused to acknowledge. Meth-related hospital visits, violent incidents in our hospitals and correctional facilities are up by a shocking amount. Communities across Manitoba are reporting an increase in crime, and everyone—including police, community agencies, addictions experts and others—point to the abuse of methamphetamine.

Behind these statistics are people's loved ones. Lives are at stake, and we need to take strong action to protect them.

Addiction is first and foremost a call for help, Madam Speaker. Government has a duty to help answer that call with investments in prevention and treatment, as well as services for mental health and stronger social supports.

* (13:50)

The best investment we can make is preventing Manitobans from becoming addicted to dangerous drugs like meth. Yet this government has done absolutely nothing in the way of prevention even as these issues have gripped our province.

Today, we have an opportunity to bring forward solutions, including but not limited to safe consumption sites that have been shown to work and which enhance the health and safety of our society. Manitobans struggling with mental illness and addictions need timely access to health and social services that meet their unique needs.

We need to create healthy and inclusive communities that are given the resources to identify and intervene in mental health and addictions problems early. We also need to address the intersection of addiction and poverty by investing in housing, employment support and justice.

Long-term supports and early addictions intervention and prevention are urgently needed. The previous minister of Health told me this government has no intention of reporting to Manitobans on its progress on implementing the recommendations of the VIRGO report. I urge this government to reconsider that position.

Manitobans need a government that takes this issue seriously.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Dougald Lamont (Leader of the Second Opposition): I rise today to speak to Manitoba Substance Use and Addictions Awareness Week.

Manitoba is experiencing a meth crisis, a crisis that followed on the heels of the opioid crisis that swept through our province less than a year ago.

A year ago, the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) and I travelled to Brandon, where we met with Kim Longstreet, whose son is addicted. She said, there and then, there was a crisis in Brandon—drugs, guns—and that Brandon was full up with people from surrounding areas getting treatment. People from Brandon had to go to Winnipeg. People in Winnipeg were going to Alberta.

We heard from treatment centres and the Main Street Project that meth use was breaking addicts and breaking families because people were taking out second mortgages to pay for private treatment. We travelled the province and in St. Theresa Point saw children's handmade posters against meth, heard that people were getting sick from dirty needles. We heard that the—from the Winnipeg chief of police that meth is driving up all kinds of crime: violent crime, property crime, even murder. Health-care professionals are getting assaulted.

There are—these are worse drugs and different drugs than we've dealt with in the past, and we need to adapt to deal with them. This government has talked about RAAM clinics, which are only open a few hours a week, and other measures that are all too little, too late. The VIRGO report had no mention of meth, and this government cut funding to AFM.

Manitobans are pleading with this government to do something because families are being broken. They want action because there are people who need treatment now and cannot possibly afford the cost of private treatment.

Addiction is cruel and insidious, yet this government has not done enough to contain this crisis or prevent people from taking drugs in the first place.

As Liberals, we have told this government what they can do to mitigate this crisis: a province-wide awareness prevention program, drug stabilization units, housing with mental supports, harm reduction across Manitoba and, critically, to fund diversion and jobs programs to keep people from ever taking meth or fentanyl in the first place.

The NDP have made suggestions and so have hundreds of service providers, families, former addicts and friends. Dr. Rush gave this government a 280-page document with 40 pages of recommendations, but what we're hearing is that yet another plan is in the works.

There is a real human cost to this government's inability to act on recommendations, Madam Speaker, and a real financial cost as well. The solutions are available and people who need help can't wait.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Assiniboia, are you—is the member seeking leave to respond to the ministerial statement?

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): I am seeking leave to respond.

Madam Speaker: Does the member have leave to respond to the ministerial statement? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Fletcher: The issue of addiction and mental health is a serious one, a huge problem, as had been previously stated. However, sadly, the government approach has been inadequate, incomplete and not based on empirical evidence.

Madam Speaker, in the heart of my riding of Assiniboia, the middle of St. James, the government, through the Manitoba renewal housing corporation, is bringing in a, quote, drug treatment centre, through the Manitoba Housing corporation. Why isn't Manitoba Health involved? This is an example of the government not looking at the continuum of care. There is no program to deal with detox with addicts. The government has failed. The government fails to meet the recommendations in the VIRGO report. The

government has failed to even regulate drug treatment facilities. The one that's going in the middle of St. James will have no government oversight, no regulation, no medical oversight, no professional standards.

Madam Speaker, this government's approach to addiction is flawed. We all empathize. Empathy should lead to good decision-making, not bad decision-making. This government is very good at bad decision-making. We need to do good decision-making for the most vulnerable people in our society, including those who are addicted to drugs.

Thank you.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Jeremy Vosburgh

Mr. Andrew Smith (Southdale): I rise in the Chamber today to introduce to you a constituent who is working hard to raise awareness for cystic fibrosis.

Cystic fibrosis is the most common fatal genetic disease affecting young Canadians. It is a multi-organ disease affecting primarily the lungs and digestive system. In the lungs it causes a build-up of mucus which can lead to infection, inflammation, and damage to the lung tissues. In the digestive tract, it makes it difficult to digest and absorb adequate nutrients from food.

The degree of severity differs from person to person; however, persistent and recurring infection in the lungs, along with related destruction of lung tissue and the loss of lung function eventually leads to death in the majority of people with the disease.

At present, there is no cure. It is estimated that one in every 3,600 children born in Canada has cystic fibrosis, and more than 47 per cent of all Canadians with the disease are over the age of 18.

In 1977 the median survival age for an individual with cystic fibrosis was 23, and today, due to increases in awareness, funding and breakthroughs in treatment, it is 51 years of age.

Much of this progress can be attributed to the diligence of individuals like Jeremy Vosburgh. He is 38 years old, works full time as a police officer in Winnipeg, is a husband, a father and maintains a high degree of physical fitness as an avid CrossFitter, runner, and hockey player; he also has cystic fibrosis.

Jeremy's current goal is to take part in the Cystic Fibrosis Canada's first worldwide version of its annual Walk to Make Cystic Fibrosis History in the spring of 2019. Taking place in Peru, there will be a three-day trek to Machu Picchu, in an effort to raise funds for awareness for cystic fibrosis.

In order to participate—the Walk to Make Cystic Fibrosis History: Peru Edition, he must raise a minimum of \$4,200 in donations for Cystic Fibrosis Canada. While he anticipates that much of the fundraising will come from friends and family members, he also planned a fundraiser at CrossFit Winnipeg—

Madam Speaker: The member's time as expired.

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave to allow the member to complete his statement? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Madam Speaker—is a fundraiser at CrossFit Winnipeg called CF4CF, co-organized with his wife Tara, where a group of local CrossFit athletes will perform one workout every hour for a total of six hours.

Madam Speaker, I ask the Chamber here to rise today and give Jeremy and his wife a shout out for the great work they're doing for cystic fibrosis.

Project Labour Agreements

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): Madam Speaker, project labour agreements have been used in Manitoba since the 1960s.

Project labour agreements built the Red River Floodway, which came in on time and \$38 million under budget.

Despite what this government is saying, PLAs have never required bidders or workers to be from a union. In fact, this Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade (Mr. Pedersen) was very firm when he said, and I quote: There is no forced unionization in a project labour agreement. In a project labour agreement, there is not a compulsion to join the union.

So accuracy is important in here, and I—let's be sure that we know what we're talking about on this; there is no forced unionization. End quote. *[interjection]*

PLAs ensure that—

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Lindsey: –productivity and quality are prioritized, not just price.

It was former PC Premier Duff Roblin, in fact, that brought in PLAs, and it was the same Duff Roblin that changed the tendering equation to consider cost plus quality. But now this Premier (Mr. Pallister) wants to scrap his predecessor's changes in order to cave in to private-interest lobbying.

* (14:00)

This government should not be putting the integrity of future construction projects and job security of Manitobans at risk just to save a few dollars in the short term.

The NDP supports Manitoba workers who will be affected by this legislation.

When will this minister and this government put the interests of Manitobans first? Throw out Bill 4. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Taylor Christensen

Mr. Bob Lagassé (Dawson Trail): Madam Speaker, I would like to bring our attention today to the story and memory of a very young Dawson Trail hero, Taylor Christensen.

Taylor was a kind-hearted little boy and well known for this willingness to help others.

He was a proud big brother to his youngest sister, whom he asked to bring to school as his show and tell, and he beamed with pride as he brought her—as he carried her into his classroom.

Taylor was also a huge sports fan and loved playing T-ball, soccer and, most of all, hockey. He was excited when his family made the decision to move to St. Adolphe so that he could play the game of his dreams, hockey.

Madam Speaker, when Taylor played hockey, or any sport for that matter, he gave it his all. His competitive spirit and dedication to hockey had him loving each and every practice he had—or, he attended.

Unfortunately, he never did get to play his very first game. In 2002, at six years old, Taylor was taken from us doing what he loved, playing hockey.

After his passing, Taylor's parents, Tim and Lori Christensen, along with the hockey board at the time,

started the Taylor Christensen Memorial Fund. Every year during the St. Adolphe Winter Carnival, a game is played in his honour. After the game, they pick two players that are registered with St. Adolphe Minor Hockey league who are sent to a school camp—school—sorry, excuse me—a school or camp of their choice.

Taylor's sister and her team used to play in the annual Taylor Christensen Memorial Game. Now, it is his brother's team.

In Taylor's memory, a No. 10 Timbits hockey jersey stays erect in the St. Adolphe Arena.

Madam Speaker, Taylor's parents, Lori and Tim, as well as his younger brother, join us in the gallery today.

Please join me in recognizing their generosity and honouring the memory of young Taylor Christensen.

Laws Affecting Workers

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): Manitobans are learning more and more how little respect this Pallister government has for working people.

This government has imposed a wage freeze on public servants, which is likely a violation of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The Premier (Mr. Pallister) told us last week that he doesn't like judge-made law; I doubt he'll enjoy the court decision he'll receive when the challenge to this legislation is heard.

This government is now forcing health-care workers already covered by collective agreements to vote on new representation, even though it was shown there were other alternatives available to this government.

This government's top priority now appears to be rolling back the clock to before the '60s by banning project labour agreements on public works.

But it isn't just this Conservative government attacking workers. Last week, the Liberal government, aided and abetted by the Conservative opposition, introduced legislation that will force striking Canada Post employees back to work without a new collective agreement in place. The bill passed through the House of Commons with barely any time allowed for review of the bill or debate.

Now the bill is in the hands of the unelected and unaccountable Senate, which is expected to pass the bill later today. All this after the Liberals criticized

the Conservative government for doing the very same thing seven years ago.

Canada Post has deliberately misled the public about the impact of the rotating strikes in a cynical attempt to manufacture a crisis. My NDP colleagues and I have been out on the picket line supporting striking Canada Post workers, who work under difficult and increasingly dangerous conditions. These workers are entitled to fairness and equity.

We're proud to stand with working people to oppose unfair and unlawful legislation.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Community Foundation of Swan Valley

Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River): Today I would like to recognize the community foundation of the Swan Valley. Since the inception in 2005, donors from far and wide created a pool of endowed funds in excess of \$2.9 million. This has resulted in funding in excess of \$573,000 for charitable projects within the Swan Valley and the—2018 seen two granting periods pay out \$90,000.

The Winnipeg Foundation, the first of its kind in Canada, was a natural choice for the community foundation Swan Valley to partner with. The foundation was started to provide a perpetual pool of endowed funds to support charitable organizations within the Swan Valley.

This came to fruition as a province-wide challenge from the Thomas Sill Foundation offered a two to one funding opportunity over a four-year period to communities starting a foundation and raising \$200,000. This challenge was accepted and achieved within one year.

Visionaries Doug Hinchcliffe, Rex Leach, Conrad Robinson and Beggie Palsson spearheaded the formation of a board of directors representing all portions of the Swan Valley. This group created policies and guidelines with assistance from non-board professionals.

A Founders Club of donors, made up of individual families, businesses, service clubs donating a—or, \$1,000 dollars each was the basis for the flourishing foundation.

The provincial government offered a matching program for creation of scholarship funds. In addition, the Sill Foundation offered a matching opportunity to create a Youth in Philanthropy program at the Swan Valley regional school.

The volunteer board meets monthly with support of a part-time executive director. The ultimate goal of the foundation is to grow and sustain an ongoing source of funds to support qualified groups within the valley and enhance the quality of life for all residents.

Madam Speaker I wish to congratulate the Community Foundation of Swan Valley, from the donors to the board of directors. This is quite an accomplishment. Thank you.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: Prior to oral questions, we have some guests in the gallery.

We have seated in public gallery, from Kildonan East Collegiate, 16 grade 9 students under the direction of Damian Tryon, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe).

On behalf of all members here, we welcome you to the Manitoba Legislature.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Changes to Health Services Impact on ER Wait Times

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): It was the Premier (Mr. Pallister) and the former minister of Health who, back in October 2017, decided to close the emergency room at the Victoria hospital and to close the urgent-care centre at Misericordia.

So we now have the data on the impact, one year's worth of data on the impact. And what has happened since the Premier has started closing emergency rooms here in Winnipeg? Was it a rapid improvement, as the former minister and the Premier suggested? Have wait times gone down?

No, Madam Speaker, not even close. Wait times have increased almost 20 per cent since the Premier started to close emergency rooms here in the city.

How long will the Premier watch his plan fail before he decides to cancel the next phase of his health plan?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): I appreciate the opportunity to stand and correct the record.

The member perhaps is holding the data upside down. Madam Speaker, we have shown a very significant reduction in emergency department wait

times, from an average of 2.3 hours just four years ago, and stuck there under the last year of the NDP, but then falling rapidly: 2.18, two and now hovering around 1.6 hours, an almost 25 per cent improvement in emergency department wait times.

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

Concordia and Seven Oaks Hospitals Request to Retain ER Services

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): So, Madam Speaker, what has happened since the former minister of Health and the Premier (Mr. Pallister) started to close emergency rooms? Again, the important benchmark here is October 2017 to October 2018. What has been the impact? What has been the net effect of those emergency room closures on the wait times here in this city?

Wait times are up in emergency rooms by 20 per cent, Madam Speaker, and now they are plowing through, continuing ahead, advancing their plans to close the emergency rooms at Seven Oaks hospital and Concordia Hospital.

Of course, not only are they closing those emergency rooms, but they're also continuing to cut funding from the Winnipeg health region. We've already seen a year's worth of the damage that this Premier's failing plan has caused to health care in the city of Winnipeg.

How long before he and his Minister of Health back off these plans and keep the emergency rooms at Seven Oaks and Concordia open?

* (14:10)

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): I'm almost uncertain which inaccuracy to address first, but let's try this again. Let's try a different metric.

Let's talk about the annual median wait time. I can tell that member that, under his former NDP government, that annual median wait time was stuck, unmoving, at more than 2.05 hours to get care. It fell in 2016 after our government took power. *[interjection]* It fell again in 2017—stick with me, member for Minto (Mr. Swan). We're getting there.

And where is it now sitting? It's sitting at 1.6 hours, a dramatic improvement in the wait times. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

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

Mr. Kinew: Well, the Minister of Health can keep digging through his briefing binder there, but he's got nothing to retort the fact that, under his watch, wait times are up 20 per cent since his government made the fateful decision to close emergency rooms here in the city of Winnipeg.

Now, of course, for the entirety of that year, people in Winnipeg have been saying, how are we going to have shorter wait times with fewer emergency rooms? People right across the city have been asking themselves, how am I going to be seen more quickly if I have to drive further to get to an ER?

Well, now we know that the people asking those questions, being skeptical of this government on health care, were, in fact, right, because since this government started closing emergency rooms in the city of Winnipeg, wait times are up 20 per cent.

How much more damage to the health-care system will this Premier inflict before he realizes he needs to change his plans and keep the emergency rooms at Concordia and Seven Oaks open?

Mr. Friesen: Madam Speaker, the member's question reads like a bad fairy tale. Let me try one more time for him.

Average annual wait time 2014, 2.07 hours; 2015, 2.07 hours; 2016, 1.85 hours; 2017, 1.77 hours; and, as of October 2018, the average wait time down to 1.6.

Tell the member to please turn the graph upside down. He's missing the story that every other Manitoban is grasping: wait times for emergency departments are on their way down.

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

B & L Foster Care Agency Awareness of Abuse Allegations

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Bottom line, since they started closing emergency rooms, wait times are up 20 per cent.

We're learning new facts every day, Madam Speaker, about a very—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: —troubling case in the child and family services system. According to a director of a

for-profit foster care company, they dragged their heels big time in failing to stop a child who was in their care from being victimized by sexual abuse. That's a pretty startling admission, and it is a failure to protect children.

Now, of course, last week, our colleague was calling on the minister to create an investigation, and initially she refused. The Premier (Mr. Pallister) followed that up on Friday by saying it wasn't up to him to order an investigation.

Of course, this government reversed course about 24 hours later and did call that investigation.

Now, it's important that they relented, but an important question still remains: How long did this government know about these allegations before they called the investigation?

Hon. Cathy Cox (Acting Minister of Families): First and foremost, our government takes the safety and welfare of all children very seriously, and after further information that we received late Friday evening, our government took immediate action by calling on the department to initiate and implement a comprehensive review into this provider to ensure that all children are safe.

The review will be led by the deputy minister, Jay Rodgers, and commenced immediately. The safety and protection, Madam Speaker, of all children is a priority for our government.

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

Mr. Kinew: Madam Speaker, the question is, when did this government first become aware of this issue?

It defies common sense to believe that the Premier and the minister only became aware of these allegations recently. It seems likely the agency and the authority would have informed the government some time ago.

So when, exactly, did the Premier and the minister become aware of these matters?

Now, we know that the issue here is very, very serious. An employee of the company responsible for the care of these children at B & L said on tape, and this is a quote: We literally just left those kids to sit there and be victimized. We just sat and allowed it to happen. End quote. Clearly, a very damning statement.

But the public ought to know, in order to have confidence in this government, when did the Premier

and when did the Minister of Families (Mrs. Stefanson) become aware of these allegations. I would invite the former minister of Families—*[interjection]*—perhaps, to chime in, as he appears to be interested in the topic. But the question that Manitobans want to know—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mrs. Cox: Our government will always, always put the safety and well-being of children first.

Based on the findings of the review, we will take whatever additional steps may be required under the circumstances. Our government will always focus on the best interests of children, and we will always ensure that the safety of children and the protection of children is first and foremost with this government.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Kinew: Again, the question remains: When did this government first become aware of the allegations that have emerged in these issues regarding B & L?

Now, we hear in the statement repeated today in the House, but also in the media, that the minister claims that she's ordering the review, and I quote, based on allegations reported in the media and information received by my department yesterday. And, of course, when she's saying yesterday, she's referring to Saturday, over this weekend.

But, again, it defies common sense that the government, the minister, the Premier, would not have been made aware of this issue sooner. It seems very likely that the agency, the authority, perhaps even the family, made the government aware.

So, in order for Manitobans to have confidence in the actions and the review and the investigation that this government has ordered, they ought to know: When did this government first become aware of the allegations against B & L?

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance): This government took the right action in terms of calling a review to make sure all the facts are on the table. That review will happen. Deputy Minister Jay Rodgers is involved in that. All the details and facts will be a part of that. Be premature to make comment beyond that.

I can tell you this government has taken great lengths to reform the child and family services system. For the first time in over 15 years we've had a reduction in the amount of children in care. We think it's important to invest in early intervention and prevention. That's exactly what we're going to do to fix the child-welfare system in the province of Manitoba.

B & L Foster Care Agency Number of Children in Care

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): It was good of the minister to stand up, but he certainly didn't answer the question of when he knew that these children were in this home being abused.

Families have been calling on this government to launch an investigation. This side of the House, we've been listening, and we've been calling on this government. And, certainly, we want to know when they knew, because that does matter.

We also need answers. Manitobans need answers. This family needs answers.

These children were allowed to stay in this home while this government—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Smith: —probably knew, possibly knew, that these kids were being abused.

Will the minister tell us today how many kids are in care of B & L?

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance): This government has taken solid steps to address this. In fact, in terms of getting to the bottom of this, we've appointed—or asked Deputy Minister Jay Rodgers to have all the facts. I think that's important, to make sure you have all the facts before any determinations are made. We think that it's important to have all the facts on the table, and that's what this review exactly will do, Madam Speaker.

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

Awareness of Abuse Allegations

Mrs. Smith: Again, diverting the question. We want to know when this minister knew about this.

Families and children and Manitobans deserve to know that when kids are in care that their kids are being taken care of, not going into a home and being abused while this government idly stands by and

does nothing about it until it becomes public and then they're called out.

When did the minister first become aware of the allegations concerning the allegations with these kids in these—B & L home? *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Fielding: As mentioned previous, that when all information came—further information came to us, we took immediate action as a government to call a review. That's exactly what we did. We called a review, and minister—*[interjection]*

* (14:20)

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Fielding: —Deputy Minister Jay Rodgers will be involved in that, as well as our CFS system. We want to ensure that children are protected as much as—as best as we can as Manitobans. We've taken strong steps to reform the child-welfare system.

We're making gains, Madam Speaker. We've reduced the amount of children in care for the first time in 15 years. We know what the NDP did in terms of when they were in office in terms of the number of children in care: they dramatically went up.

We don't want to make the same mistakes the NDP did, and that's why we're reforming the system, Madam Speaker.

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

Financial Support Inquiry

Mrs. Smith: This minister's answer clearly tells us that he was in knowledge of what happened to these children in B & L. Shame.

Manitobans deserve to know that their kids are—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Smith: —safe while they are in care, and it is this government's responsibility and it's their job to ensure that. They've clearly failed.

Once called out by the media—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Smith: —and this became knowledge, then they stand up? How long were those kids in that home allowed to be abused? Shame.

When will they stop contracts with B & L? Madam Speaker, \$10.5 million this government has paid to B & L while kids are being abused.

Are they going to continue to pay B & L while this review is going on?

Mr. Fielding: As referred to in the—my previous answer, the government has information; we've acted upon that. It's with Deputy Minister Jay Rodgers that we'll be doing a review. We want to make sure all facts are there, a part of it.

We know how long the NDP took to take action during the Phoenix Sinclair—in terms of the 'phoenclair' situation. In fact, there was numerous recommendations. In fact, I believe there's about 162 recommendations that the NDP did nothing about.

This government has introduced, Madam Speaker—in fact, implemented—over 90 per cent of the recommendations of Phoenix Sinclair. We want to reform the child-welfare system where they failed.

Family Conciliation Services Budget Reduction Concerns

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): The Premier's (Mr. Pallister) Throne Speech referred to outcomes for those on employment income assistance, but we know that transitional support services—helps hundreds of people get off EIA—were cut in the budget, Madam Speaker. It makes no sense.

Now, the Premier is saying that he wants to start planning to have a plan for family conciliation. These are supports that help families and children when parents are going through separation or divorce. I'll remind the minister, Family Conciliation Services were cut in the budget by \$350,000 this year, and the program was underspent by \$100,000 last year, Madam Speaker.

Why is the Premier destroying supports for Manitoba families?

Hon. Cathy Cox (Acting Minister of Families): Our government will always extend a hand up to Manitobans.

Government is committed to providing some more supports to all individuals involved with Employment and Income Assistance and transitional support services. We are strengthening employment training services and continue to provide clients with thorough, consistent and ongoing support.

Under the members opposite, we saw child care—children-in-care rates increase significantly. We saw the number of daycare spaces be reduced and that the waiting list for child-care spaces increased significantly. We're going to make changes so that Manitobans are better off here in Manitoba under this government.

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

Ms. Fontaine: Family conciliation is an important support to families while saving money in the long run, resolving conflicts that otherwise take up time in family court. But the minister cut these supports.

The minister has repeatedly challenged these facts, so I will table them today, Madam Speaker: \$350,000 were cut from the budget this year from conciliation—family conciliation, and the program, again, was underspent by \$100,000 last year. These are the facts.

Now, adding insult to injury, the Pallister government is pretending these cuts didn't even happen.

Why is the Premier destroying supports for Manitoba families?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Deputy Premier): Madam Speaker, we know, when it comes to reconciliation and helping those families who might be going through a difficult time, whether that's a separation or a divorce, there needs to be changes within our system.

The former government, when they were in government, they brought forward a bill in the dying days of their government, after doing nothing for 15 years. When I asked them as House leader then, as the opposition House leader, to prioritize that bill, they said they didn't want to. It wasn't important to them, Madam Speaker.

We've undertaken a review of the family law system. That review has been brought to government. Action's going to be taken, in terms of legislation, to ensure that those who are dealing with a difficult time for family reconciliation, divorce or separation, get the services they need, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for St. John's, on a final supplementary.

Ms. Fontaine: The Premier's cuts to family conciliation is causing real harm, Madam Speaker.

Justice Doyle said in family court in July, and I quote: There's a dramatic loss of resources in regard to Family Conciliation Services. They've lost assessors. It's dramatic. End quote.

He's right. It is dramatic. A cut in three—of \$350,000 in this year's budget, and last year's budget was underspent by \$100,000, resources that Manitoba families need. It makes no sense. Cutting family conciliation means more costs to the court system.

Why did the minister cut this year's budget by \$350,000 that Manitoba families depend on?

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I think it's important to point out the mess that was left by the NDP and the family law side of it.

That's why this government has engaged in a process to modernize family law, to make it less expensive, less cumbersome, less time consuming for families that are facing those challenging situations.

We're going to be 'fringing' forward new legislation, groundbreaking legislation across Canada, to help Manitobans out, and we certainly support that process. And you will see more money through Justice, as well, to support families in need in their times of crisis.

This government has taken action on the mess that was left behind by the NDP government.

Political Messaging Support for Legislation

Mr. Dougald Lamont (Leader of the Second Opposition): I'm pleased to introduce my first bill today, Bill 204, which is designed to make politicians and candidates for public office more accountable for what they say.

As it stands, during elections it appears that people who are responsible for signing off on messaging are financial officers. This may indicate that it's an official election expense, but it blurs accountability of who's standing behind and signing off on a message.

So, on the Internet, we know that people say terrible things all the time that they would not say otherwise because they are anonymous. The hope is—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Lamont: —that this bill will raise the level of debate by requiring that leaders and candidates take responsibility for the messages that go out under their own banner. Simply, communications would say approved by the leader or candidate, instead of by a financial officer.

So will the Premier (Mr. Pallister) and his caucus consider raising the bar of political discourse in Manitoba by supporting this bill?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Deputy Premier): Of course, our government, in a number of different ways, has always looked at the way to ensure that elections are fair, that they're transparent, that they're dealt with in a way that all Manitobans and all those who are voting can have confidence in the system, Madam Speaker.

We've seen too many examples over the years. I think back to the sponsorship scandal, Madam Speaker, under the Liberals in Ottawa, where there was a degeneration of the confidence in the electoral system.

I know that we're going to have a committee meeting with the electoral officer on Wednesday. I invite the member to the meeting, and we can certainly have a number of different discussions around The Elections Act, around the reports and any suggestions he might have, Madam Speaker.

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

Members of the Legislative Assembly Code of Conduct and Ethics Watchdog

Mr. Dougald Lamont (Leader of the Second Opposition): This government has brought forward legislation to address the issues of harassment at the municipal level, following a path blazed by the member for Kewatinook (Ms. Klassen), who introduced anti-harassment legislation earlier this year.

There's still a class of elected officials not covered by adequate legislation, and that is members of the Legislative Assembly. The bill asks municipal councils to have a code of conduct and sets out measures for the removal of councillors when no effective code of conduct exists for MLAs.

If the member for—'emberson' is any example, the process being used by the Premier is not very effective.

Will the Premier eliminate this double standard and bring in a code of conduct for MLAs, as well as a full-time, independence ethics watchdog with bark and bite to make sure it is enforced?

* (14:30)

Hon. Jeff Wharton (Minister of Municipal Relations): It was great privilege this morning to meet with a number of mayors, reeves and councillors at the 20th anniversary of AMM, Madam Speaker.

And I can tell you that Bill 2, code of conduct, was constructed based on all consultation with AMM, Manitoba municipal administrators and all stakeholders throughout Manitoba.

This bill is a result of that consultation that took place. We're looking forward to continuing consultation, Madam Speaker, as we build regulation to support code of conduct in Manitoba.

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

Need for Conflict of Interest Legislation

Mr. Lamont: Madam Speaker, I was pleased the government chose to reappoint the Conflict of Interest Commissioner and did so while removing the threat of being able to fire him, as we suggested.

The commissioner released an extensive report pointing out that Manitoba's conflict of interest laws are the oldest and weakest in Canada. When it comes to navigating the nooks, crannies and loopholes of Manitoba's conflict of interest laws, I will defer to the Premier's (Mr. Pallister) expertise.

However, he's made it clear that he's concerned about conflicts of interest in the public service, who face much tougher rules than MLAs and ministers.

On May 18th, 2018 the now-Justice Minister promised the government would be introducing new conflict of interest legislation in the fall. It didn't happen. It's not in the Throne Speech.

Again, we have the oldest and worst conflict of interest legislation in Canada. If this government really wants Manitoba to be the most improved, fixing the worst legislation in Canada would be a great place to start.

Does this mean the Premier has no intention of improving Manitoba's conflict of interest regime for MLAs? Is it just business as usual?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Deputy Premier): We also are pleased that Jeffrey Schnoor has taken on the capacity again as the conflict of interest officer. I think all of us have confidence in the work that he does, Madam Speaker.

We recognize that the conflict laws, when it comes to MLAs in Manitoba, is significantly behind other provinces. It was left to languish by the former government for many, many years.

We appreciate the report that's come from Mr. Schnoor. The government has been reviewing that review and we certainly expect legislation to come forward, Madam Speaker, prior to the next election.

New Mining Development First Nations Consultations

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): Any time a new development or project is proposed in Canada, the constitution of our land says that the Crown must conduct section 35 consultations with any affected local First Nation.

Well, a company named Canadian Premium Sand wants to build and start production of the largest frac sand operation in Canada this coming year, and yet no such section 35 consultations have even started yet with hollow 'watow' First Nation, whose reserve is right next door to the mine site.

Why haven't section 35 consultations begun?

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Sustainable Development): Well, Madam Speaker, as this member knows full well that if this project were to proceed, and if this proponent really wanted to proceed with his project, he would require a full and complete environmental assessment, which includes section 35.

To date we have not received any such application and if he were to proceed we would move forward with an environmental assessment and section 35 consultation.

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

Mr. Altemeyer: Madam Speaker, the minister's fundamentally wrong. A section 35 consultation is a separate and distinct process. It happens directly between the affected First Nations and the Crown, represented by this minister, who doesn't understand her job yet.

An environmental assessment process reviews all of the environmental impacts, which can touch on section 35 issues, but that is also a—
[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Altemeyer: —separate and mandated requirement.

Will the minister now commit to section 35 consultations with hollow 'watow' First Nation at the earliest possible moment and a full federal-provincial joint environmental assessment with a panel review and full public hearings?

Ms. Squires: Well, Madam Speaker, on a question like that, I'm going to just say that most of his preamble was completely false, and our government, we continue to ensure that we have a strong enforcement and compliance and we have a strong regulatory framework, which includes full assessments and environmental assessment and section 35.

That is exactly what we're going to commit to do, as well as cleaning up all the abandoned, contaminated sites left behind by the former NDP government that did not take this issue of compliance and enforcement seriously at all.

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

Mr. Altemeyer: Well, Madam Speaker, I didn't expect the minister to take my word for it. That's why I'm very grateful that members of hollow 'watow' First Nation, concerned citizens and members of boreal action network are here in the gallery today. They are clearly far more informed than the minister is.

I would ask the minister to please commit to meet with them at the earliest possible moment because this would be the largest frac sand operation in Canada, with enormous potential environmental and human health and safety issues, among them, for the workers, for nearby residents and up to 500 semi-trailer trucks of increased traffic on local undivided highways.

How can the minister do anything other than immediately launch the proper consultations so that all Manitobans can have their say on a project that could really detrimentally impact their lives and their communities?

Ms. Squires: I am very pleased that the community is here today so that they can hear some information that is factual and correct, as opposed to this member opposite clearly misleading them, clearly putting false information on the record so that he can score some cheap political points at the sake of the community.

And the community needs to know full well that we would proceed with a full section 35 consultation before any project would receive an environmental licence.

Mitchell, Manitoba School Expansion

Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye): Today the Minister of Education announced a major school addition in the community of Mitchell. The chair of Hanover School Division had this to say about our government's investment: This addition—
[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Smook: —will enable the school to provide an improved learning environment for many students, and we thank the government for recognizing this need.

Can the Minister of Education please inform the House about the details of the school expansion?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Education and Training): It's great to finally get a question on public education. I thank the member for La Verendrye for that.

It was a great morning in Mitchell as we announced that there's going to be a significant expansion of five new classrooms, a new library, a multipurpose room.

For too long, because of the NDP inaction, those students were getting taught in the hallways, they were getting taught in gymnasiums, they were getting taught in libraries, Madam Speaker, because there simply wasn't room.

In addition, of course, to that expansion—
[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Goertzen: —we have new schools coming to Winkler, Niverville, Brandon, two more in Winnipeg, Pembina Trails, Madam Speaker.

In fact, if the member for Minto (Mr. Swan) or the member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe) want to do a

tour with me, they can park the BMW, park the Lexus. I'll take them all round Manitoba and all the things we're doing.

Police Services Act Need for Amendments

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): When the Minister of Justice (Mr. Cullen) was questioned about the Independent Investigation Unit in The Police Services Act, he was quoted as saying, we haven't heard that outcry from Manitobans yet.

It's concerning that the minister would expect an outcry from Manitobans about a file that he, himself, had no idea needed reviewing and an official request for a full provincial audit of the IIU was not a red flag.

Madam Speaker, will the minister introduce the desperately needed amendments to The Police Services Act during this session?

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I will say to the member opposite, before we move forward on legislation, we're—actually are going to consult with Manitobans.

I know that's a novel approach for both the NDP and the Liberals, but we are putting together a framework, a terms of reference, in terms of moving forward with that and how we may consult with Manitobans to make sure we identify issues relative to The Police Services Act all across Manitoba, including the Independent Investigation Unit.

That's the approach we're taking. We made a commitment, and we're going to make that commitment count.

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

Independent Investigation Unit Minister's Briefing on File

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): Madam Speaker, if the minister would have been paying attention to his portfolio, he would've already done the consultation on this subject. The mandate letters received by every minister stated that their, and allow me to quote, responsibility extends to ensuring you are fully briefed and knowledgeable about your portfolio issues and obligations.

* (14:40)

It is very difficult to have confidence in this government knowing that our current and former

ministers of Justice were not even aware of the issues with the Independent Investigation Unit.

Madam Speaker, the IIU has had two years of missing reports, and they haven't been reviewed since its inception.

Can the minister explain to the House what he is doing to ensure that he is being fully briefed on his responsibilities?

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I do appreciate the question from the member.

I think the member has to remind herself that this is an Independent Investigation Unit. That is their role—they're outside of government—to act independently when issues are raised by police forces across the province of Manitoba.

I will say our government has complete confidence in police forces across the province. We have complete confidence that—the people at the Independent Investigation Unit. We as a government provide oversight. We made a commitment in the Throne Speech that would—we would review the legislation relative to the IIU, and we're going to do that. And the terms of reference will be provided to Manitobans very shortly.

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

Justice Department Oversight Plan

Ms. Lamoureux: The most alarming part about the issues with the Independent Investigation Unit is that it has had zero oversight from the Department of Justice.

Madam Speaker, years of issues without any reviews from the previous NDP government or this new Pallister government. This cannot be overlooked. This is about peoples' lives, and Manitobans deserve to have confidence in their government.

Will this minister do everything in his power to restore this confidence by immediately implementing an oversight plan and ensure that the Independent Investigation Unit are included in the legislative review?

Mr. Cullen: Well, Madam Speaker, clearly we as a government, and I think Manitobans, want to make sure that we have an effective system in place.

I know there's gaps in the system that were left by the NDP legislation. We've made a commitment to go back and review the gaps in the legislation. We're going to engage Manitobans all across the province in that regard. We think that's the right approach to do.

The terms of reference will identify issues 'across'—across police services. The terms of reference will also identify, specifically, the Independent Investigation Unit. And we will review all of those issues relative to The Police Services Act.

Workplace Safety Regulations Frequency of Hearing Testing

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): Late Friday afternoon, this government announced its latest kick at working people in this province when they announced that they were going to harmonize workplace health and safety regulations. They're going to cut protection for workers' hearing in workplaces in this province. They're going to reduce the frequency of hearing tests, start them later after an employee's hired, and cutting annual reports.

This is just plain wrong on the part of this government. Hearing loss occurs gradually over time and the longer between testing and reporting, the worse it's going to be for workers. Damage to workers' hearing is real. It's permanent.

Will this minister stop undermining the health and safety of workers in this province?

Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade): Madam Speaker, this Manitoba government is very adamant about harmonizing regulations all across Canada with other jurisdictions. What we are doing is we are now going to accept regulated hear—safety kits from other provinces here. No longer do you have to have an extra piece of gauze in order to have a safety kit approved at a work site.

The NDP promoted this idea that no other safety kit was good enough, except the one in Manitoba. We will work with other provinces, and we have assurances from other provinces that we're going to harmonize safety kits all across the country.

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

Mr. Lindsey: I hope the minister isn't suggesting that hearing protection is going back to the days when you stuck gauze in your ears. But that seems to

be where he's headed with regulation in this province, regulation that's been designed to protect workers.

Lowering standards for hearing protection for workers, changes to worker safety regulation—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Lindsey: —is wrong. And, once again, this government has shown that they don't care about workers. They're going to put profit ahead of safety once again.

They're taking a step backwards in time, Madam Speaker. These regulations that protect workers' hearing in this province are among the best in the country, and instead of going backwards, let's bring the rest of the provinces up.

Madam Speaker, cutting corners on these regulations—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Pedersen: Well, Madam Speaker, that explains it: the NDP had gauze stuck in their ears for the last 17 years. That's why they were opposed to harmonizing safety kits, harmonizing the high-visibility apparel, harmonizing compressed-air standards, secondary respiratory equipment, flotation devices.

We will work to harmonize all across the country. I was at the internal-trade meeting on Friday. There's a commitment from all provinces and territories to harmonize the regulations all across Canada.

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

Mr. Lindsey: The minister might like to make jokes about workers' hearing and workers' protection, but workers don't find it all that funny—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order. Order.

Mr. Lindsey: Now, one of the things that I've done previously is I've participated in tripartite committees that reviewed workplace health and safety regulations and the workplace health and safety act that made our regulations in this province actually protect workers and do the right thing.

I participated with a management guy on the tripartite committee who actually said: He's absolutely right; they've got to do what the regulation says, or else we're not doing it.

So will the minister back off on these cuts to workplace health and safety? *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pedersen: Well, Madam Speaker, maybe they should take the gauze out of their ears so they can hear that all provinces want to harmonize safety standards across the country. This is what all provinces agreed to on Friday. This is what we will do. We will not be out of step with other provinces like the former government was. They wanted to build their own little fiefdom here in Manitoba. We're about trade, and we're about developing industry all across Manitoba for the good of this province.

Madam Speaker: The time for oral questions has expired.

PETITIONS

Addictions Services— Brandon and Western Manitoba

Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows—
[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Allum: (1) Addictions are a health and social problem that require co-ordinated responses from the health-care, social services, education and justice systems.

(2) It is well known that the number of people addicted to alcohol, drugs and other substances is on the rise in Manitoba, with a notable increase in use of 'methamphetamine' and opiates, two highly addictive and very destructive drugs.

(3) Between April 2015 and April 2018, drug abuse and alcohol abuse were two of the top three risk factors identified by the community mobilization Westman HUB when dealing with persons with acutely elevated risk.

(4) Recent Brandon Police Service annual reports show a steady increase in calls for service for crimes against property and person.

(5) In Brandon and western Manitoba, individuals seeking addictions treatment and the families trying to help them do not have local access to the services or supports they need.

(6) There is no publicly available, centralized list of addictions facilities in Manitoba.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To request that the provincial government consider establishing a cross-departmental team to provide leadership on a culturally appropriate, co-ordinated response to the growing addictions crisis in our province that includes an aggressive, widespread education campaign on the dangers of using 'methamphetamine' and opiates, along with addictions education for front-line medical staff in health-care facilities.

* (14:50)

(2) To request that the provincial government consider providing additional addictions services in Brandon and western Manitoba across the continuum of care, including acute response, detoxification, long-term rehabilitation, transitional housing and support for managing co-occurring disorders.

(3) To request that the Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living consider establishing a publicly available inventory of all addictions facilities in Manitoba.

(4) To request that the Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living consider providing supports for the families of people struggling with addiction, including counselling, patient navigation and advocacy, and direct access to free naloxone.

Madam Speaker, this petition is signed by Brenda Eamer, Jeff Elliott, Margie Irwin and many other Manitobans.

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

Vimy Arena

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The residents of St. James and other areas of Manitoba are concerned with the intention expressed by provincial government to use the Vimy Arena site as a Manitoba Housing project.

(2) The Vimy Arena site is in the middle of a residential area near many schools, churches, community clubs and senior homes, and neither the

provincial government nor the City of Winnipeg considered better suited locations in rural, semi-rural or industrial sites such as the St. Boniface industrial park, the 200,000–20,000 acres at CentrePort or existing properties such as the Shriners Hospital or the old Children's Hospital on Wellington Crescent.

(3) The provincial government is exempt from any zoning requirements that would have existed if the land was owned by the City of Winnipeg. This exemption bypasses community input and due diligence and ignores better uses for the land which would be consistent with a residential area.

(4) There are no standards that one would expect for a treatment centre. The Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living has stated that the Department of Health had no role to play in the land acquisition for this Manitoba Housing project for use as a drug addiction facility.

(5) The Manitoba Housing project initiated by the provincial government changes the fundamental nature of the community. Including park and recreational uses, concerns of the residents of St. James and others regarding public safety, property values and their way of life are not being properly addressed.

(6) The concerns of the residents of St. James are being ignored while obvious other locations in wealthier neighbourhoods, such as Tuxedo and River Heights, have not been considered for this Manitoba Housing project, even though there are hundreds of acres of land available for development at Kapyong Barracks or parks like Heubach Park that share the same zoning as the Vimy Arena site.

(7) The Manitoba Housing project and the operation of a drug treatment centre fall outside the mandate of the Manitoba Housing renewal corporation.

(8) The provincial government does not have a co-ordinated plan for addiction treatment in Manitoba as it currently underfunds treatment centres which are running far under capacity and potential.

(9) The community has been misled regarding the true intention of Manitoba Housing as land is being transferred for a 50-bed facility even though the project clearly falls out of Manitoba Housing responsibility.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to take the necessary steps to ensure that the Vimy Arena site is not used for an addiction treatment facility.

(2) To urge the provincial government to take the necessary steps to ensure the preservation of public land along Sturgeon Creek for the purposes of parkland and recreational activities for public use, including being an important component of the Sturgeon Creek Greenway Trail and the Sturgeon Creek ecosystem under the current designation PR2 for the 255 Hamilton Ave. location at the Vimy Arena site, and to maintain land to continue to be designated for parks and recreation active neighbourhoods and communities.

Madam Speaker, this has been signed by Cindy Preston and a lot of Manitobans who have worse handwriting than me.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Just a reminder to the member that when he is reading names there is not to be any additional information put into the names, as the member has just done. The member is just to read three names and then may say: and other Manitobans. But there's no—to be no other additional information put into that.

Medical Laboratory Services

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly:

The background to this petition is as follows:

The provision of laboratory services to medical clinics and physicians' offices has been historically and continues to be a private sector service.

It is vitally important that there be competition in laboratory services to allow medical clinics to seek solutions from more than one provider to control costs and to improve service for health professionals and patients.

Under the present provincial government, Dynacare, an Ontario-based subsidiary of a US company, has acquired Unicity labs, resulting in a monopoly situation for the provision of laboratory services in medical clinics and physicians' offices.

The creation of this monopoly has resulted in the closure of many laboratories by Dynacare in and around the city of Winnipeg. Since the acquisition of Unicity labs, Dynacare has engaged in anti-competitive activities where it has been—it has

changed the collection schedules of patients' specimens and charged some medical offices for collection services.

These closures have created a situation where a great number of patients are less well served, having to travel significant distances in some cases, waiting considerable periods of time and sometimes being denied or having to leave without obtaining lab services. This situation is particularly critical for patients requiring fasting blood draws as they may experience complications that could be life-threatening based on their individual health situations.

Furthermore, Dynacare has instructed that all STATs patients, patients with suspicious internal infections, be directed to its King Edward location. This creates unnecessary obstacles for the patients who are required to travel to that lab, rather than simply completing the test in their doctor's office. This new directive by Dynacare presents a direct risk to patients' health in the interest of higher profits. This has further resulted in patients opting to visit emergency rooms rather than travelling twice, which increases cost to the health-care system.

Medical clinics and physicians' offices service thousands of patients in their communities and have structured their offices to provide a one-stop service, acting as a health-care front line that takes off some of the load from emergency rooms. The creation of this monopoly has been problematic to many medical clinics and physicians, hampering their ability to provide high quality and complete service to their patients due to closures of so many laboratories.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to request Dynacare to reopen the closed laboratories or allow Diagnostic Services of Manitoba to freely open labs in clinics which formerly housed labs that have been shut down by Dynacare.

To urge the provincial government to ensure high-quality lab services for patients and a level playing field and competition in the provision of laboratory services to medical offices.

* (15:00)

To urge the provincial government to address this matter immediately in the interest of better patient-focused care and improved support for health professionals.

Signed: K. Holowec, Nidene Johnson, Cathy Fielding and many others.

Flin Flon General Hospital Obstetric Services

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to the petition is as follows:

(1) Access to quality health care is a fundamental right of all Manitobans, no matter where they live.

(2) The Premier has 'slashed'—slashed budgets and cancelled projects for northern communities, making it harder for families to get the primary health care they need.

(3) The budget of the northern regional health authority has been slashed by over \$6 million, which has negatively affected doctor retention programs and the Northern Patient Transportation Program.

(4) With limited services in the North, the Premier is forcing families and seniors to travel further for the health care they need.

(5) On November 6th, 2018, the northern regional health authority announced that obstetric delivery services at the Flin Flon General Hospital would be suspended, with no discussion regarding when they will be reinstated.

(6) The result of this decision is that mothers in Flin Flon and the surrounding area will have to travel at least an hour and a half to The Pas, creating unnecessary risk for mothers and babies.

(7) The people of Flin Flon are concerned for the health and safety of mothers-to-be and their babies, including the extra physical and financial stress that will be placed upon them by this decision of the provincial government.

(8) There has been no commitment from this provincial government that mothers and their escorts who have to travel to The Pas will be covered by the Northern Patient Transportation Program.

(9) Flin Flon General Hospital is a regional hub that serves several communities on both sides of the Manitoba-Saskatchewan border.

(10) Because this provincial government has refused to invest in much-needed health-care services in The Pas, the hospital in The Pas may not be able to handle the extra workload created by this decision.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to reinstate obstetric delivery services at Flin Flon General Hospital and work with the government of Saskatchewan and the federal government to ensure obstetric services continue to be available on a regional basis.

And this petition has been signed by Robert Allard, Amanda Dumas, Sharon *[phonetic]* Caribou and many other Manitobans.

Addictions Services— Brandon and Western Manitoba

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): Madam Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Addictions are a health and social problem that require co-ordinated responses from the health-care, social services, education and justice systems.

(2) It is well known that the number of people addicted to alcohol, drugs and other substances is on the rise in Manitoba, with a notable increase in use of methamphetamine and opiates, two highly addictive and very destructive drugs.

(3) Between April 2015 and April 2018, drug abuse and alcohol abuse were two of the top three risk factors identified by the community mobilization Westman HUB when dealing with persons with acutely elevated risk.

(4) Recent Brandon Police Service annual reports show a steady increase in calls for service for crimes against property and person.

(5) In Brandon and western Manitoba, individuals seeking addictions treatment and the families trying to help them do not have local access to the services or supports they need.

(6) There is no publicly available, centralized list of addictions facilities in Manitoba.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To request that the provincial government consider establishing a cross-departmental team to provide leadership on a culturally appropriate, co-ordinated response to the growing addictions crisis in our province that includes an aggressive, widespread education campaign on the dangers of

using methamphetamine and opiates, along with addictions education for front-line medical staff in health-care facilities.

(2) To request that the provincial government consider providing additional addictions services in Brandon and western Manitoba across the continuum of care, including acute response, detoxification, long-term rehabilitation, transitional housing and support for managing co-occurring disorders.

(3) To request that the Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living consider establishing a publicly available inventory of all addictions facilities in Manitoba.

(4) To request that the Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living consider providing supports for the families of people struggling with addiction, including counselling, patient navigation and advocacy, and direct access to free naloxone.

This petition is signed by Sheila Atkinson, Jennifer Tegg, Bonnie MacKay and many other Manitobans, Madam Speaker.

ORDERS OF THE DAY GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

House Business

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader): Is there leave of the House to sit this Thursday morning to have private members' business?

Madam Speaker: Is there leave of the House to sit this Thursday morning for private members' business?

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

An Honourable Member: No.

Madam Speaker: Leave has been denied.

THRONE SPEECH (Third Day of Debate)

Madam Speaker: Resuming debate on the motion of the honourable member for Southdale (Mr. Smith) and the amendment and subamendment thereto, standing in the name of the honourable member for Radisson, who has 15 minutes remaining.

Mr. James Teitsma (Radisson): Madam Speaker, \$1 billion—\$1 billion—that's where I left you all last week, Thursday, when we were responding to the

Throne Speech. And just by way of reminder, I'm going to rewind.

Why did I say \$1 billion right at the end of the day there? Well, some of you may remember, but for those who don't, I did begin my remarks with a brief olive branch to the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Kinew) and letting him know that in one small respect we did find agreement as we discussed this Throne Speech. And that agreement was on the basis of governing is about making choices.

Mr. Doyle Piwniuk, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

We need to make choices of—as government. They're making their own choices as opposition. That's indeed what governing is about and I believe that the choices we're making on this side of the House are the right ones.

And I'm pleased to be part of a team that's interested in making choices that are in the best interests of Manitobans, because ultimately, that's how we have to measure the quality of our choices.

It's not about whether or not we achieve electoral success, as the member for Minto (Mr. Swan) seems to be very, very concerned about, but rather, that we are doing what is right; what is right for the people of Manitoba today; what is right for the people of Manitoba tomorrow; what is going to be right for the people of Manitoba for the years to come so that our children and our grandchildren have just as prosperous or even better of a province to enjoy; so that our children and grandchildren have a health-care system that they can use, that will continue to function, that won't explode out of control as it was doing so under the NDP government.

Now, at the end of I—remarks last week Thursday, which is now four days ago, I did reference that I had written in the local paper a brief missive as I am wont to do and as member for—the member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) and I always like to write, I think, in sometimes in the same papers, and it's a good time when we're both in there together.

But in any case, my last article—I believe it was in the Transcona Views—talked about for the first time in 15 years—that was the title of it—and it talked about how, in the first time in 15 years, a particular voter that had contacted my office was pleased to receive a callback from his elected member.

So he said that this was the first time that he had received a callback in 15 years. I was a little

skeptical at first, I'll admit, thinking that, well, maybe he didn't ask for callback in 15 years, but he assured me that wasn't the case.

In any case, it has been the first time in 15 years for him, but sadly, it's also the first time in, actually, forever—and I get back to my one billion now—it's the first time in forever that the interest payment that we have to make on Manitoba's debt has exceeded \$1 billion.

Now, when you hear numbers like that, they kind of make your head spin. Honestly, they're so huge it's really hard to put it into context, and I think it's really important to understand how significant that is, and how massive it is, especially when we compare some of the other priorities that our government might have on this side of the House, or that our opposition members like to bring forward.

* (15:10)

So to help my readers put this in perspective in the Transcona area, I explained that that's enough money, that \$1 billion is enough money to build 10 new schools, 10 new 120-bed personal-care homes—so 1,200 beds. You could reduce the sales tax—the PST—from 7—or, from 8 per cent to where it belongs at 7 per cent. We could cover the entire cost of the planned 90,000-square-foot Concordia health and fitness centre. We could raise the basic personal exemption by \$2,000. We could buy 100 new electric transit buses. And we could build 1,000 new daycare spots. All of that. All of that for \$1 billion.

But unfortunately, we can't because we have to send that money away. Where are we sending it? Well, I guess we'll send it to Toronto or New York or wherever these big moneylenders are that are happy with all the debt that the previous government raised upon them.

And I think it's especially important for Manitobans to remember where the debt was before the member for Tyndall Park (Mr. Marcelino) took his seat in this House, where the debt was—I was going to say the member for Elmwood, but that's so long ago, I can't remember what the debt was back then. But only 10 years ago, the debt was less than half of what it is today. Only 10 years ago. Six, seven maybe, years of Selinger NDP government led to the doubling of the debt.

Now most of you, I think, are good enough at math to understand that if you're going to double the debt, you're going to double the interest payment. And that's not to say what might happen if you, you

know, get a bond credit rating agency downgrade, which, of course, we received and received again. No, this is beyond that. Yes, thank you to the NDP for that, but there's no thanks because this is harmful. It's harmful to Manitobans today and it's going to be harmful for—to Manitobans for some time to come until we can improve that bond rating, until we can get our interest rates lower and, ideally, start to pay off this massive, massive amount of debt.

So—but I just want to remind everybody that that \$1 billion annually that I described, that could buy all these things. You know what? It could buy another 10 schools. It could. It could build another entire health centre. You could buy another 100 buses. And you could do that every year, year after year after year after year, with this money because those kind of payments don't go away until you eliminate the debt.

And so, year after year, this burden has already been placed on Manitobans, and it's placed—it's borrowing money not just from Manitobans today, from—Manitobans for decades to come are going to have to shoulder this debt. They're going to have to drag this ball and chain along as they try to move Manitoba into the future. And half of that—fully half of that burden is a cause of mismanagement by the previous Selinger government.

And I think that—when I explain that to voters, let me tell you, they really, really start to understand just how damaging the previous NDP government was and just how much pain and suffering they have put on the backs of Manitobans. And for what, six years of mismanagement?

And how long will it take us to pay off the 12, 13 billion dollars of debt that they accumulated over those six years of poor mismanagement? The sad answer is: A lot longer than six years. And that's a troublesome thing, and that's something that I think should give us a sense of seriousness in this House about the work that we do.

But I was getting the—I'm going a little bit abroad here. We're talking about the Throne Speech. We're talking about government making choices. We're talking about the choices that the opposition is making—the leader of the opposition is making, the choices that our government is making and how they contrast against each other.

Now, our government is willing to make the difficult choices—the necessary choices to improve our health-care system so that it will be here not just

for us today and next year, but for decades to come; so that it won't grow to become the only department in the entire government but, rather, will be able to be sustainable. That's the kind of changes that—and those are the kinds of choices that our government is making.

Now we, as candidates—individual candidates, too—when we go out and we campaign, we have choices to make there, too. And I'm happy to talk about those kinds of conversations. I know that the member for Southdale (Mr. Smith) and myself, and many others on this side of the House, we regularly talk with our—talk with voters. We go out door knocking. We have things to say to voters. And, more importantly, we have ears to listen.

Now, what we don't do is we don't try to use fear. We don't try to use fear to intimidate or to bully people into voting. And the number of reports—honestly, I lost track of the number of reports I heard in the last election of that exact tactic being used by members of the opposition. It was quite sad.

I know even, you know, the member for Minto (Mr. Swan), perhaps he's listening, and I can reflect that my constituency assistant, Belinda Squance, ran against him as a—she was the Progressive Conservative candidate in that area. She had voters contacting her, telling her that the NDP had told them that they were going to die if a Progressive Conservative government was elected, that the NDP had told them that they would have to leave the country if a Progressive Conservative government was elected.

That's the kind—when I talk about fear mongering, I know the member for Minto likes to accuse me of fear mongering—or, sorry, of accusing him of fear mongering, rather, and I do, but that's the kind of thing I'm talking about. I'm talking about total distortions of the truth. I'm talking about manipulations that are intended only to produce one outcome with the voters and that is fear.

And to use fear rather than to use hope, to use that kind of negativity, that's a choice that the member for Minto makes, that's a choice that the member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Kinew) makes, it's a choice that the members opposite have made, is that they want to use fear. That's the way they like to govern.

They want to use division. They like to talk about Manitobans and each individual little pocket and divide them up and say this is your special

interest, this is your identity and this is the way we're going to treat you and intimidate you or make you afraid enough to vote for us.

That's not the way we, on this side of the House, like to operate. Our Throne Speech reflects that. Our attitudes at the door when we're knocking on doors, talking to the electorate, listening to what they have to say, addressing their concerns, that's not the attitude that we use on this side of the House. I'm—and I'm certain of that.

Now, another choice that we have to make as elected officials is whether or not, or how we, rather, are going to interact with voters, and I think it's so important to listen, to truly listen, to engage people, to draw them out, to understand what they really feel and what they really—what really concerns them.

When I do that, I find that I get great responses from the people in my community, that they're genuinely surprised for the first time in, oh, 30-something years, they have a Progressive Conservative representing them in the Manitoba Legislature, and they're quite surprised. They find it strange to—that I would actually be interested in what they have to say because their previous elected representatives, unfortunately, weren't so interested.

So, as I began with government's about making choices, governing is about making choices, but I think, first and foremost, we have to understand that the ultimate choice comes to the—comes to Manitobans. Each and every individual Manitoban has a choice to make and they made their choice in the last election and they made their voices heard loud and clear, and it would be well for the members of the opposition to remember why that choice was made, because it wasn't about our platform per se. It wasn't about their platform per se. It was about integrity, it was about the way they conducted themselves, whether or not we were a team together or they were divided amongst themselves. That's really what determined the results of the last election, and I'm convinced that's going to determine the results of the next election, too.

But I'm prepared to listen to Manitobans and I hope all of us here in this Chamber are, and I just wish that the members opposite would show the same respect for Manitobans as we, on this side of the House, do.

Thank you very much.

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): Well, once again I am pleased to get up to put some words on

the record in respect of the Premier's (Mr. Pallister) Throne Speech.

I don't know if actually pleased is the right word, actually, to be honest. It actually is, in some respects, super depressing every time to get up, you know, every Throne Speech, and look at some of the things and try and put on the record things that are missing in the Throne Speech and certainly things that the Pallister government has done in the last—well, since the last Throne Speech.

And, actually, I'm going to spend a little bit of time, similar to the member for Radisson (Mr. Teitsma), who said, you know, he wants to contrast what they're doing with what we're—we did.

* (15:20)

I will put a couple of things on that. I think that the member for Radisson and his constituents should know the difference between the PC conservatism, the NDP, and certainly I would suggest, too, that one of the most important things—the contrast between the PC government and the NDP government, when we were in power, was—is certainly that we continuously, Deputy Speaker, stand on the side of Manitobans. We stand on the side of Manitoban families; we stand on the side of Manitoba nurses; we stand on the side of Manitoba workers; we stand on the side of Manitoba children. We stand on the side of Manitobans' rights to have a health-care system that is not one based in chaos, which is what we've seen in the last bit since this new government took office.

I do want to—before I get into a couple of those pieces, I do want to just spend a couple of minutes, if I might, just thanking members of the NDP caucus who get up day in and day out, executing their roles as legislators in this House, and that is to say, again, standing up and fighting for what is right and standing up, fighting day in and day out for Manitoba families. I want to particularly highlight my colleague, the MLA for—the member for Minto (Mr. Swan), who I just want to give—I did this last time around to him personally, but I do just want to say, for the record, miigwech for all of the support that you always offer me in executing my duties as House leader. And then certainly want to acknowledge the member for Point Douglas (Mrs. Smith).

Madam Speaker in the Chair

It is quite something to be able to work with someone that you have an enormous amount of

respect and consider a soul sister. And we're really blessed that we're able to—that both of our constituencies are side by side, and so we do so much of our work together, and I would suggest that, you know, Manitobans and, certainly, our constituents really recognize the importance of having MLAs work together. And, you know, the member for Point Douglas (Mrs. Smith) and I attend so many different events together but also put on events, but also hear from so many different Manitobans.

And, certainly, one of the things that we are hearing that was not reflected in the Premier's (Mr. Pallister) Throne Speech at all was the amount of stress—and I've actually brought this up in the House several times, and I'm going to bring it up again because I think that it warrants more discussion and it certainly warrants to be brought up here in an official capacity—the amount of stress that Manitobans are under, particularly civil servants and workers, and I want to highlight, Madam Speaker, actually, the stress that nurses are under. While the government tries to pretend that everything is hunky dory in the chaos that they've created, it's not.

We hear constantly from nurses who are on the front lines at the stress that they're under because of this government's changes to the health-care system that came without warning and certainly came without consultation.

Nurses are overworked. They are tired. They are worried for patient care. They are confused and fearful of what's going on in the province. And I actually heard from one nurse recently, who I thought made a really good point, that. And this nurse shared that every time there was a Conservative government that is in power in Manitoba, one of the first groups of folks that they target are nurses.

We saw that during the Filmon years, with—I mean, I'm not even sure, the number is so high how many nurses they fired. And certainly we're seeing—*[interjection]* Well, that's not true, actually; there was a quite a bit of nurses that were fired under the Filmon government.

An Honourable Member: More than 1,000.

Ms. Fontaine: More than 1,000. I know that the members opposite want to kind of chime in; they'll have their chance, don't worry. They'll have their chance to put fake news on the record in respect of

what they're doing in creating chaos in the health-care system.

And then this nurse went on—and the members opposite should actually listen to what this nurse shared with me. I know that they don't want to listen to anybody except for their Premier because they're kind of scared, they have to be able to just listen and do as he says, but they should listen to nurses that not only take care of Manitobans but actually take care of their families as well.

Like all of—*[interjection]*—I don't know what the members are blabbing on about, but it would be respectful, Madam Speaker, if they would just stop speaking for a minute and allow me to continue on with my Throne Speech. As I said, they have their opportunity. They'll get their time.

So this nurse went on to say that—again, let me reiterate, because the folks back there are spouting off fake news here—that every time the—every time there's a Conservative government that's in power in Manitoba, one of the first sectors that they attack are nurses.

But what's interesting, Madam Speaker—and here we are, we're in the midst of another attack against nurses, deleting 'dobs', all kinds of, you know, making sure or ordering mandatory overtime for nurses—but what's interesting about this is that it's important to see what's going on with nurses in the province of Manitoba as what's also going on with women in the province of Manitoba because, as most people should know, the vast majority of nurses are women.

And so this nurse went on to say, you know, I'm sick and tired of every time a Conservative government gets in and they want to execute their austerity measures and care more about money than they do people, the first people they attack are nurses, which are predominantly women.

This nurse went on to say: I'm absolutely sick of it. I'm sick of that the first people they go to and attack are nurses. That affects our families; it affects our well-being—and you know, affects overall their satisfaction and desire of staying in Manitoba. Why would you want to stay in a province that disrespects you and doesn't value you or value your work or your expertise?

And so a good illustration of that is what we saw in respect of the mature woman's centre, and I've brought that up in the House many, many times here. And I want to share that, again, when the Premier,

the Pallister government decided—for Lord knows what reason.

Here was a best practice across Canada, having a mature woman's centre where women could go with a variety of different issues, medical issues, and seek medical care as they get older, a one-stop shop. And here the Premier (Mr. Pallister), in his wisdom, because he knows so much about women's health care, decided that it would be the—in the best interests of Manitoba women to break that off and have it in different places and not—at other hospitals.

But I don't know if the Premier knows—or if he did know, he didn't care—that actually there were two specialist nurses that were employed at the mature woman's centre and one of them was the only nurse of her specialization that she took training in—I can't remember if it was Toronto—the only nurse of her kind in Manitoba.

And then there was another nurse that was specialized in—and I can't remember, something to do with, like, pharmacy or something like that—and another—so two nurses. And, when I apologized to them, when I said to them, I'm so sorry that this is happening. You know, I just want you to know, as a woman to other women here, I said, I'm really sorry that this is happening. Both of those women, Madam Speaker, started crying.

And I know that members opposite are chirping on, and they just kind of dismiss every time that we get up on this side of the House. And, in particular, you know, when we talk about women, they chirp on. They dismiss concerns of Manitoba women. But those two nurses were crying. Their lives were affected by the changes from this Premier.

An Honourable Member: So was Tara's.

Ms. Fontaine: So—I think it is so disrespectful that the member for Morris (Mr. Martin) is bringing up things and spouting off people's names in this House. I mean, you would imagine—I don't know how long the member's been an MLA, but you would imagine that at some point he should know that that's just not right, and just disrespectful. I don't know why he can't just—

* (15:30)

An Honourable Member: If it's not right, talk to your leader.

Ms. Fontaine: It really is a testament to him, Madam Speaker, and nothing else, nothing more, that it is a

testament to, really, just how disrespectful and low the member for Morris wants to go.

Ms. Fontaine: So, as I was saying, Madam Speaker, the Premier's chaos that he is creating in the health-care system off the backs of nurses in ERs that have been closed down and all of the different scenarios that they've put out there is creating a lot of stress for nurses. The Premier's, in his—the Premier's wisdom closing down the mature woman's hospital affected nurses, including two nurses that specialize in something that nobody else has in the province.

We see that the Premier, again, in his wisdom on women's medical care, decided that lactation consultants weren't needed. And, you know, we've spoken on this and stood in the House in respect of 'lactating'—lactation consultants and how important they are in respect of women's abilities to nurse their children.

So I think it's important to put those facts on the record because every time that the members opposite get up to talk about what's going on in the health-care system, they omit all of that; they don't bring that up because they don't want to bring that up.

Somehow, I think that they think that their constituents aren't going to understand what's going on or they're not going to remember what's going on in the last couple of years when the 2020 election comes on. But I can tell you, certainly, without a doubt, that Manitobans will remember and actually will still be dealing with the grave consequences of the chaos that the Premier has single-handedly created in this province.

And, you know, for all the chirping that goes on by members opposite when we get up in the House, I can tell you that actually one of the strongest forces in the next election, in 2020, will be Manitoba nurses and will—I imagine will stand on the side of right. And, you know, I'm going to be honest, Madam Speaker. I'm not going to be sad to see some of the members opposite not get elected again in 2020. That is an absolute given.

So it is—so on—note Monday, November 26th, 2018, so that people can go in Hansard, the day after the election in 2020, undoubtedly, definitively, there will be members across the way that will not get elected again in 2020. And the reason why, respectfully, Madam Speaker, is because, while their boss, their Premier, their leader, was creating chaos

in the lives of Manitobans, they stood by—they stood by—and did nothing. They didn't stand for Manitoban women. They didn't stand for Manitoba nurses. They're not standing for Manitoba workers. They just sit there collecting their paycheque while their Premier is creating chaos in the lives of Manitobans.

So, on this day, Madam Speaker, and I'll enter into a wager bet with anybody about the—that there will be members opposite that will not get election, that will not get elected, and I, for one, am pretty pleased about that, I got to say.

And, actually, you know, there will be members opposite who will not be elected and will be replaced by NDP MLAs, and that is something that—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Ms. Fontaine: That is a given. The members opposite can laugh all they want, but that will be a good day, the day after the 2020 election when we have more NDP MLAs here.

So, you know, if it's not enough to attack Manitoba women, Manitoba nurses, Manitoba women's health care, the infrastructure that the NDP built up for women and girls because we recognize that the unique needs of Manitoba women and girls' reproductive health and the specialized medical care that they need.

If that wasn't enough, then the Premier (Mr. Pallister), again, now in his infinite wisdom, has decided to look at streamlining the services of CancerCare Manitoba. Like, who does that? Who looks at CancerCare Manitoba, again a renowned facility across Canada, that was built up and supported in partnership with the NDP, led by the expertise of the folks that work there.

And, you know—who attacks or looks to cut CancerCare Manitoba? It is—well, the thing is here, Madam Speaker, is that, look, let's not be shy; let's not put, you know, again, fake news on the record. It is a given that every time the Pallister government, the Premier decides that there's going to be a review, that is code for cuts. They've—and the Premier already cancelled construction on the new facility for CancerCare, so you—it—one plus one is two, and certainly they're going to be looking at more cuts for CancerCare.

That's why they're doing the review and they're going to come out with some nonsense again, and what will it—in respect of why they have to have these cuts for CancerCare. But I remind folks, and I

remind members opposite, that CancerCare is filled with amazing individuals who work day in and day out in a very loyal, dedicated and committed way to working with Manitobans who none of us would want to be in that situation, who are basically in the midst of the biggest fight of their lives.

And what does this Premier do? He decides to look at streamlining those services. Instead of actually giving CancerCare more support and more infrastructure, we can guarantee that there's going to be cuts there.

And, when we look at the RFP, and I think that this is super telling, Madam Speaker, when we look at individuals where bids, you know, so what do we see? What are the companies that we see that are bidding on this? Well, BDO Canada, Deloitte management services—I'm not sure what kind of cancer expertise that Deloitte has; Ernst & Young. I'm pretty sure that every non-profit I've sat on, there's always these accountants there, so I'm not sure how that's going to work for CancerCare Manitoba and for the patients that rely on that expertise.

IBM business consulting services—I'm not sure about that; KPMG, which seems to be the Premier's, like, best friend, because every RFP goes to KPMG—almost—almost every; Meyers Norris Penny, and we could go on, Madam Speaker.

I wish we actually each had an hour to speak on the Throne Speech because we have lots of information to share with Manitobans, and I look forward to sharing that information with Manitobans and making members opposite accountable for just standing by while their Premier created all of this chaos.

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to discuss our government's recent Throne Speech. This Throne Speech outlines a clear vision for the future of Manitoba. It shows Manitobans how our government plans to fix our finances, repair our services and rebuild our economy for the benefit of our children and grandchildren, but it also lays out a blueprint for making our communities safer for Manitoba families.

Since my appointment as Minister of Justice and Attorney General in August, I have been all across our great province listening to front-line service providers about crime and public safety. These

front-line staff include police, correction officers, sheriffs, protective service officers and many others.

* (15:40)

Madam Speaker, what I have heard from them, time and again, is that our government inherited significant challenges when it comes to crime and public safety. Incarceration rates nearly doubled between 2005 and 2015 under the previous NDP government. The year we took office, in 2015-16, Manitoba recorded the highest adult incarceration rate among any province in Canada.

But despite locking up more offenders, the NDP failed to make a dent in crime. Under their watch, Manitoba had more homicides per capita than any other province, the second-worst violent crime rate among the provinces and the highest robbery rate throughout the entire 21st century.

Madam Speaker, it is clear that the NDP did not make public safety serious. And they still don't. In their entire alternate throne speech, they don't mention police, justice or public safety at all. And the Liberals are no better. We are taking a different approach.

In March, the previous minister announced our Criminal Justice System Modernization Strategy, which is built on four key pillars: crime prevention, targeted resources for serious criminal cases, more effective use of restorative justice and responsible reintegration of offenders leaving custody. This strategy is already producing meaningful results. Serious matters are going to trial more quickly and more resources are being provided to reduce recidivism through restorative justice and probation services support.

Our approach is also helping reduce incarceration rates after they spiralled out of control under the previous government. This means that more offenders are getting support in the community to address the root causes of crime and put a stop to the revolving door of our criminal justice system.

Madam Speaker, unlike the members opposite, we recognize that crime is a problem and that Manitoba families expect us to support our police officers in their work. And we are doing just that. In Budget 2018, we increased support for provincial policing by \$6.8 million, including 5.3 more for the RCMP; \$1.2 million additional money for First Nations community policing; \$211,000 for Manitoba First Nations and another \$32,000 for First Nations safety officers.

But this is not the only investment our government is making in front-line policing. This year, Manitoba Justice is providing \$45.7 million to the City of Winnipeg from the community safety basket. This includes nearly \$20 million in unconditional funding directly to the Winnipeg Police Service.

On top of these substantial investments, our government is committed to using the Criminal Property Forfeiture and proceeds of crime funds to give police the tools they need to keep Manitobans safe. Over the summer, our government announced that police can access up to \$500,000 from the proceeds of crime fund to pay for—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Order.

There's a number of conversations going on on both sides of the House and I'm asking everybody if you could take those conversations to the loges or to the back chairs, please. I am having some difficulty hearing the member in his debate, so I'd appreciate everybody's co-operation.

Mr. Cullen: The call for the applications has since closed and we will be announcing recipients in the coming weeks.

Over the last month, I have personally announced over \$1.4 million in funding for police and community agencies across Manitoba, with a focus on enhancing front-line responses to drug crime. These investments include nearly \$350,000 in specialized training and equipment to help the Winnipeg police combat the drug trade; \$310,000 in new mental health risk assessment tools for police across Manitoba; \$109,000 for the Brandon Police Service, including \$76,000 for ballistic vests and other equipment for their tactical response unit.

Madam Speaker, the members opposite claim we don't care about the meth issue that is plaguing our communities, but it is investments like this that help make the incredible work our police officers do every day possible. In fact, several weeks ago, I had the opportunity to join members of the Winnipeg Police Service Organized Crime Unit and the RCMP to announce the results of Project Riverbank, a major organized crime investigation that resulted in the arrest of 10 suspects and the seizure of \$2.7 million worth of drugs, guns and other illegally gotten assets. These are 10 people who will no longer be working to destroy our families and our communities.

We also understand the importance of strong civilian governance and oversight of police work,

which is why we have committed to engage in a comprehensive review of The Police Services Act.

While it is important for us to apprehend and prosecute offenders, we must never lose sight of the fact that there are victims of crime who need our support, and we put those victims at the centre of everything we do.

I was honoured today to attend the grand opening of Candace House, a safe refuge for families and victims to receive information, resources and support as they navigate the criminal justice system.

Candace House is the fulfillment of a dream by Wilma and Cliff Derksen who have become strong advocates for victims after tragically losing their daughter Candace to homicide in 1985. We are proud that our government supported investment in Candace House and also supporting agencies across Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, our Throne Speech further commits our government to supporting victims with pilot projects, including an innovative family support worker program, and will assess victims of domestic violence as they navigate the family court system.

The final point I would like to make about the Throne Speech—our commitment to stand up for Manitoba families each and every day. I know the NDP introduced the family law reform bill several times but never did get that bill passed.

Madam Speaker, we have assembled a committee of legal experts, judges, community leaders to study our family law system and provide recommendations.

We have released that final report, and, Madam Speaker, we look forward to further modernizing family law system here in Manitoba. I'm confident these changes will make our families and communities stronger for generations to come.

Madam Speaker, in closing, I want to express how honoured I am to serve the people of Spruce Woods as an MLA and serving all the people of Manitoba as the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

I'm also incredibly proud to be part of this great Progressive Conservative team.

Madam Speaker, I can assure you in this House that this team of people will never back down in our fight against crime and criminal activity. We will

continue to work every day to create safer communities and ensure timely access to justice for all Manitobans.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: In the rotation I have listed here a Liberal member speaking, and I wonder if the member for Kewatinook (Ms. Klassen) is going to move forward then with her speech. Yes?

Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook): Rather than continuously go on with listing all the stuff that was neglected for my riding, I would just want to implore the PCs to, you know, truly think about what they're doing to my people. We've struggled with so many things over the years, and it's very heart-wrenching to continuously bury your people when we have all the solutions and we have all the answers because we would really like—we really know what we need for our area. We would like jurisdiction over our own lands. We would like jurisdiction over our own children. We would like to be given the opportunity to shine.

Day after day we continually bury our people due to all the policies and regulations in place that lord over us, and we're tired of it, and we're looked at as though we cannot even, you know, comprehend these policies that are in place.

We've asked for jurisdiction over our children. We have nearly 12,000 kids in care, and it would be so simple for us to take control and to start implementing processes because we did it once before, before the settlers came to the community. We took care of our kids. We were able to do it, and we can be able to do it yet again, you know.

I can't even—when we're trying to do economic development in our communities, we can't even begin the process because we need permission for every single little thing, and it's so unfair and it's keeping us back and it's making us spend our precious dollars.

* (15:50)

Everybody knows in Canada how underfunded we are. Everybody knows what underfunding leads to, and yet here, time and time again, I go to these round tables, these discussions with all the chiefs: the AMC group, which encompasses every First Nation; the MKO group, which encompasses the northern communities; and the SCO group, which encompasses the southern communities. And still, time and time again, all these solutions that are

presented, it's the same arguments, it's the same asks, and it seems to be that it's—it has been done repeatedly throughout, ever since we entered into those treaties. And it's unfair and it's unjust, and it's us that are suffering, and it's us that are dying needlessly because of it.

I would love to be announcing new businesses, new partnerships, but everybody likes—everybody is so used to the status quo; everybody wants to remain there. No one—it seems like no one wants to progress past the status quo. You know, we fund the hospitals because we're always the ones that are mostly sick. We fund the jails because it's largely our people in there. And it's—it has to end.

Our people have to be listened to. We make up 18 per cent of the population here in Manitoba, and yet when we ask for provincial dollars to try and build up a community, we get no—we get the runaround.

We get told, go see our federal cousin. I get told, go see your federal cousins when I already have, and they've said they've designated money and given it—it's been put on the table; meanwhile, the progressive government doesn't want to pick up that money, which would help us out so much.

And just to give you an idea of how bad it is, I fought—I fight every year for our winter ice roads through Berens River First Nation, all the way up to St. Theresa Point First Nation. This cuts out nearly 10 hours of travel time. Right now, under the NDP government, we had to go all the way up Highway No. 6, through Norway House, through Ponton, then Norway House, and back to down to Wasagamack, down to our First Nation, a total of 18 to 20-plus hours, at a cost of almost \$3,000 extra per semi load.

And when that happens, we get less for our community, and then our communities run out, and then it's the provincial government that ends up having to fly in fuel on an emergency basis or having to fly in other goods on an emergency basis. And it's our First Nations that end up paying for that.

And, you know, the struggle to always try and find the funds that weren't given to them, weren't—they were—they're never properly funded, to try and struggle, and then they get—the leaderships of these communities always come under fire because those bills need to be paid, and yet there's never any matching for emergencies for First Nations.

That forest fire, we're still waiting on \$50,000 to be approved for my First Nation alone. There's the

other Island Lake communities that submitted—have crossed every I or dotted every—however that saying goes. But still a large portion of the finances that they had spent from their own band funds to cover what was needed because Red Cross, you know, I don't want to put them down, but there are some things that they just didn't do that we direly needed and that our First Nations footed the bill for in hopes that they would get covered.

And it's frustrating because that \$50,000 for my own community had to come from somewhere; it had to come from the general revenue, the general—not revenue; I wish we were at that place, but the general pot. And so, you know, we couldn't afford to send so many kids out to school and we couldn't afford to buy an extra couple of textbooks for our students. You know, it really hurts the First Nation when these kinds of things happen.

I would love to be bragging about economic development in our community, but we can't even cut down trees in our back yard. We sit on the largest, most beautiful area in the world, and we can't even access our own materials to build our own houses.

We would love to all have housing developments happening. We are chronically underfunded in that respect. Walking into—going door knocking, it's so hard to see generations of people living in the same house that's all wrapped pretty much in plastic.

Hydro bills at \$750, up every month because you just live in a plastic trailer—plastic-wrapped trailer with no end in sight. Grandparents using the whole of their OAS, old age security, their GIS, just to keep their grandkids warm; generations of families living together; 28 people—plus to a home.

And yet we're surrounded by nothing but wood that we can utilize to build our own homes and fix our own housing crisis. But we're not allowed to access our lumber. We can do small operations of home heat, but through CMHC housing and all their programs and regulations and laws that they impose upon us, we can't even have wood-burning stoves in our home to combat the high prices of heat that we have to pay for, leading to buying un-nutritional food.

You know, it being cheaper to feed your child a drink and a chocolate bar rather than buying even something as non-healthy as bologna and bread.

And there was an image shared recently on Facebook—a Black Friday sale there in Garden Hill First Nations for a loaf of bread. It went from \$4.89 a loaf to \$4.99 a loaf. And only that can happen in our communities. That's not even a sale; it went up 10 cents.

And so when you're trying to feed your children—you know, when we first moved out from St. Theresa Point First Nation, even though I had a laundromat—a successful business—I was never going to progress more than my income. It was never—it was just going to be stagnant that entire time because 97 cents on every dollar that enters a First Nation community leaves that First Nation, especially in Kewatinook.

When we look to the successful First Nations, they have been given those rights to be able to self-build, and I'm so honoured that some of our communities are—in Manitoba are progressing and were given those rights. But they were favoured by certain people, which is unfair. They had to get rid of some of the rights that their community members will now never get to enjoy, because they had to make compromises, and they had to yield their rights, which is not fair.

Mr. Doyle Pivniuk, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

And us independents trying to make sure that the generations unborn get to live off the rights that they're fully entitled to—that's what we're going for. We want our own rights over our—and to make sure those rights are protected for our—those yet unborn. Because it's not us to up—not up to us, the present day, to determine what the future will lead—will need.

* (16:00)

And I've heard the—this own Premier (Mr. Pallister) saying that as well in regards to the Metis. And so he does recognize it, and yet at the same time he does not want to fulfill it, which is quite ironic.

When I was speaking of the—how much that they want to claw back, you know, I fought for that winter road to go from Berens River First Nation to my First Nation. We won the contract through INAC, INAC approved it—I mean, I—Indigenous Services Canada.

And the Province wasn't putting one red penny in that deal, and yet what they wanted was \$30,000 to be taken off of Berens River's contract. And here,

you know, they weren't even putting one red cent to this winter road proposal, and here they wanted Berens River to forgo \$30,000 off of the proposal that they had submitted.

And I'm still waiting for MIT to give me a list of reasons as to why that has to happen. That proposal was based on last year's proposal, in which we fought and we were awarded that straight route.

You can be in my reserve after you leave Berens in five hours, as opposed to going all the way around. And we have a lot of sick people out here that we like to visit. We like to visit with one another during our winter road seasons.

And, you know, I'm still waiting for those answers as to why that \$30,000 was cut. So is Berens River First Nation. And I did go up to the minister's office, Minister Schuler, and I asked him to be—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

I just want to remind the member to rather use the portfolio or the constituency name.

The honourable member for Kewatinook (Ms. Klassen).

Ms. Klassen: I apologize. The Minister for Infrastructure, I went to that office and asked him to be present at the meeting with the Minister of Indigenous on December 3rd, because I know what's going to happen. I know that they're going to pit the First Nations against one another, and they're going to send them off to Minister of Infrastructure's (Mr. Schuler) office, rather than having both there to address the concerns and to answer the communities right then and there.

Because I've seen it so many times, you know, with our fire plan that we're trying to do. We're trying to make sure that we don't have—this Province doesn't have to spend a million or however much they spend on the evacuations, because there was more than one evacuation. You know, why not mitigate that and have a real plan in place so that our province is not on fire the way it was?

And so we were just being tossed like a football, you know, or a hot potato. The federal government said go and see the Province. Province said go and see this department, and we went to that department. Go and see this other department. It's tiresome, and nobody wants to table exactly who has responsibilities for who.

And, when we're talking about the Throne Speech, we see nothing, you know, in the way of saying, okay, indigenous people want jurisdiction over their own. And I think that's where we need to start working towards. You know, just because the Bible says the poor will always be amongst us doesn't mean we just accept. As Christian people, we should realize that that is our challenge, and it's up to us to uplift.

And so, when we're talking about the budget, I could go on about how underfunded my people will be yet again, but I don't want to. I still have hope. I will always have hope. My people have always had hope—150 years of hope that we will be recognized as human beings; we will be invited to those tables. We have the solutions. Just come to us and ask.

Megwetch.

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for allowing me to stand up today and put a few words on the record in regards to our fantastic Speech from the Throne, which happened this—just this past November 20th, 2018, delivered by the honourable Lieutenant Governor of the Province of Manitoba, Mrs. Janice Filmon.

And I am going to put a few words on the record in regards to the highlights of the speech to the throne. And some of the speech to the throne—and in regards to some of our promises which we made in the 2016 election.

The—our Progressive Conservative government, who won 40 seats—unprecedented 40 seats, historical landslide victory—for over 100 years. I was sure proud to be part of that winning team in April of 2016 with many of our new members on the PC caucus side. And that's another thing I just can't stress enough, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is how incredibly fantastic, talented and diverse our team is on our side of the House.

Now, some of the promises that we made in 2016, Mr. Deputy Speaker, where we were going to fix the finances; we were going to repair our services, and we were going to rebuild our economy. And I'll tell you what we're not going to do.

I know—I'd like to thank my colleague, the member from Kewatinook, for getting up and speaking just before I did. But what we're not going to do is we're not going to do what the NDP did, and that is put \$600 million into the East Side Road Authority and to build just under 50 miles of road.

We're not even talking—I've been up there, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on more than one occasion. And I know that the member from Kewatinook represents that area as well, because she's my neighbour just to the north. That is a super highway, but \$600 million—do the math; that's over \$10 million for every mile. What could—of the communities that the member from Kewatinook spoke—speaks about and my communities on the east side of the lake—what could those communities have done with those types of dollars invested into their communities and to bring the well-being of those constituents of not only the member from Kewatinook's, but mine as well?

It goes to keeping promises. I know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, back in 2011, when I had the—when I was fortunate enough to win and become an MLA to represent the great constituency of the Lac du Bonnet—of the Lac du Bonnet constituency, I know that many of the members from the NDP side at that time who—were in government.

And then they managed to hoodwink some Manitobans in regards to some of their promises. And I know that, you know, they had their challenges between 2011 and 2016 in regards to a few rebellions and that. And there was—rebel five. And I know that one remains standing as well or representing his caucus—or, his constituency here in the Legislature.

I know that throughout the Chamber, Mr. Deputy Speaker—and I know that probably prior to the member from Kewatinook getting up to speak—I know that the member from Flin Flon was stretching and getting ready to—you know, taking sips of water to get ready to enlighten us over the—over his 20 minutes that he's given to speak.

* (16:10)

But you know what, there's something that I really do feel that I need to share with the Chamber. And that is, speak briefly about the former member for Flin Flon, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Mr. Clarence Pettersen, who left this Earth too quickly, and he was the rebel five plus one. He was the one who stood beside some of those rebels in the dark days of the Selinger government and stood against that premier, and I would like to say that Mr. Pettersen, as a colleague of mine, as a teacher for quite a few years, he will be sadly missed. I'm not going to get into the situation that he had to endure, not only battling cancer but also battling his own like-minded people,

his own NDP party, that did not treat Mr. Pettersen very well.

I know that he spent many years and he was highly regarded in the education field out in Flin Flon, and I know, I mean, he passed away just this past March, March 28th, and I don't remember the present member from Flin Flon or anyone else standing up, and I know that they have no problems making private members' statements in regards to certain things off the cuff and whatever else, but I don't remember any tribute being over to—Clarence himself.

I know that often he spoke about getting on the love train, and I'll never forget that booming voice in this Chamber on how he would just hammer that out and—get on over to the love train, he says, and it was—unfortunately, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as one of my colleagues said here in the Chamber, that love train has left the station and I know that come—I know that a couple members of the NDP side, including the member from St. Johns, mentioned the election coming up in 2020. It is going to be a very interesting election in 2020 as I think that we'll bring that love train back home, and we'll make it a Tory PC blue up in the Flin Flon constituency.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know that we've made considerable progress over the last two and a half years. Much work remains to be done, but our government isn't afraid of making those decisions necessary to create a more efficient and well-run government. We continue to make progress toward returning to balanced budgets while also providing tax relief for Manitoba families and small businesses.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we take a look at where we would have been if Manitobans wouldn't have saw through the falsehoods put forward by the Selinger government. And they elected us in 2016, so, luckily, the Manitobans saw through that and if they would have continued to govern they would have been seeing, in the year of '19-20—not 1920, but in the fiscal year of 2019-2020—they would have saw a deficit of \$1.7 billion, and we're already on course to correct that by at least \$1 billion.

We're looking that soon we're going to be hitting a deficit of \$500 million and some people on the NDP side say, well, you know, those are cuts. Well, no; we're spending less money that we don't have, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I want—did want to make a few highlights here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in regards to the Throne Speech

and I'd like to list some of our highlighted key government priorities that came out of the Throne Speech.

We're going to bring forward a new referendum act to restore the rights of Manitobans to vote on major tax increases and provide a framework for calling and conducting a referendum, something that the NDP team—the so-called team, the Selinger team, took away from Manitobans, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

We're also going to implement a plan to reduce wait times for procedures such as joint replacement, cataracts and diagnostic imaging. A great announcement just the other day by the member for Morden-Winkler (Mr. Friesen), our Health Minister, on increasing the amount of surgeries that are going to be seen here in the great province of Manitoba in the year 2019.

We're going to develop Manitoba's first ever provincial clinical and preventative service plan. We're enhancing supports for victims of domestic violence with two new pilot programs and introducing legislation to pilot a first-in-Canada family resolution service.

Mr. Acting—Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's going to be very interesting to see how the NDP—the new NDP, the so-called NDP, which is really the old NDP—on how they're going to support that legislation on domestic violence because I know, internally, they're having some struggles, as well, on that topic.

We're going to establish a lead entity to support economic growth and development in the North, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I know that the member from Kewatinook mentioned on more than one occasion in her speech, the North, and we've mentioned the great relationships that we've built in the North, and we're going to expand on that.

In addition to that, and I know that many of my colleagues would like the opportunity to get up and put a few words on the record in regard to this great Throne Speech, again, that was delivered on November 20th, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but I did want to touch base—touch on one more topic out of the many, many, many great priorities that we've seen in the Throne Speech, and that is we are going to launch the commission on kindergarten to grade 12 education, and conducting the first in-depth review of Manitoba's child education system, which has not been done for decades—for decades. *[interjection]* And I know the member from St. Johns, it sounds as if she has a few more words that she'd like to put on

the record, but I think she basically had—
[interjection]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Ewasko: —had tapped out that time, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And I guess—so, the member from St. Johns is, I guess, thrilled with the fact that her government had left Manitoban children on a deficit in their education, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We were ranked third—third in Canada in 2002-2003, when it came to numeracy and literacy. Where did the member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine) and her NDP team put us? Dead last, dead last in numeracy, literacy and in science. And, matter of fact, so far dead last—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Ewasko: —that we're further behind ninth.

Well, here we go. We're launching the K-to-12 review this coming January, early in the new year, under the great—the Health—the Education Minister, former Health minister, from Steinbach, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

With a few words on the record, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we know that the NDP are going to tell interesting stories about us, and I can't use the L word here in the Chamber, but I know how we combat that. We combat it by telling the truth about them.

We will stick to our work. We've got a lot more work to do. Lots of progress has been made in two and a half years, lot more work to do over the next four terms.

So thank you very much for the opportunity to stand up today and put a few words on the record, on this great Throne Speech, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): You know, I was somewhat disappointed when I discovered I only had 20 minutes to tell the world what's wrong with this Throne Speech, instead of the 30 or 40 that—or 50 or more that it would take to actually point out all the deficiencies with this government and with all the deficiencies of the plans that they're going to have.

This Throne Speech, which I'll try and focus on, the Throne Speech as opposed to everything else, you know—well, maybe not so much.

This government has said, well, everything you've said is made-up statements of—we didn't lay

any nurses off in the 1990s. Well, I beg to differ. And I would invite any one of those members opposite to come and talk to my constituency assistant, who used to be a nurse until she got laid off when these guys were in charge, Mr. Deputy Speaker. [interjection]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Lindsey: So you want to put some truth on the record, that's truth, that's upfront, that's personal, and she'll be more than happy to enlighten any one of them about what truth is when it comes to nurses getting laid off.

* (16:20)

But, before I go and get myself all worked up about what they've done in the past, which they've always said, you know, you're fear mongering, because everything that we're afraid they're going to do, they've done: cut, cut, cut, cut, cut, cut. And this budget, this—excuse me, this Throne Speech shows that they're not done yet.

Because any time they focus their attention on reviewing something, as the former minister of Health reviewed health services in the province and cut. Now, he can say, and the current minister can say, well, there was never any cuts, but I beg to differ. Clearly, their own budget documents show, the Northern Health Region, for example, the budgets were cut.

The current Minister of Health stands up and says, we did heroic efforts to try and 'abstract' obstetric services back to Flin Flon, but if you look on the government websites, the northern regional health—once you're able to follow all the various clicks that are required now to find out what doctor positions are advertised—one would find, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there's not one obstetric position advertised for the Flin Flon General Hospital—not a one.

Now, that's the kind of heroes that this government really is. They stand up, put misinformation on the record and claim it as fact, when in fact, there is an obstetrician position advertised for the Thompson General Hospital. But I suppose, you know, a lot of these members opposite don't know the difference. It's somewhere outside of the perimeter. So they get confused and lost when they get outside the Perimeter.

So, you know, they've talked about, many times, their Look North strategy.

An Honourable Member: Yay.

Mr. Lindsey: And they'll all cheer and clap and yay, look at us, we have a strategy. Well, not really. Not really. Well, not in any way, shape or form do they have a strategy for doing anything in the North.

We know that Thompson has gone through massive job losses this year while the member from Thompson sat on his hands and said nothing. We know that Flin Flon is slated to lose most, if not all, of its mining jobs by 2021.

Now, this government has a plan to do what? Well, a plan to do nothing. That's the only plan they've got for the North, is let's continue to do nothing. They've done nothing to try and encourage mining in the North. They've done nothing to try and do anything, Mr. Deputy Speaker. *[interjection]*

I see the member from Thompson finally woke up. He's got some things he wants to say now. Perhaps he should go back to his own constituency and tell the people in Thompson what he's done for them, which is nothing.

Now, let's get back to talking about the Throne Speech. *[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Lindsey: We've talked a little bit about what they haven't said for the North, which, really, it's the same old, same old, just a plan to have a plan to have a plan, but let's focus on some other things.

They, you know, were all in favour of MTS being taken over by Bell. I'm not sure why, what gain they saw for that, and I'd hate to speculate, but they—Bell said, well, we're going to spend all this money in the North, in the province.

And we consistently see their own members say, well, there's areas that we have pretty spotty cell service, and they should spend their money there and put a tower up.

And you know, really, when I take a drive up No. 6 highway, which heads north, I recall we used to have cellphone service pretty much all the way to junction of 60, where I turn across. That's not the case anymore. So they're partly right. Cellphone service has become more spotty, to use their term.

But, once I go across 60, I have no cellphone service. And, if I go north of Thompson to visit the rest of my constituency, I have no cellphone service anywhere. It's not spotty; it's non-existent. And again, the minister—or, the member from Thompson is sitting there, has got lots to say now, but has he

stood up in his own caucus and said we need to do something about cellphone service in the North—we need to have affordable cellphone service—we need to have actual service? No, probably not. I don't see anybody over there nodding that, yes, he stood up and said that, so I'm going to assume that he did not, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And, you know, let's talk some more about education. This government has said nothing about looking after small class sizes so that children actually get education.

This government hasn't done anything to try and attract teachers to the North. There's a school in Sherridon, Cold Lake, that their last teacher quit. Left.

Now, the superintendent of the division was successful in finding some retired teachers to come in and fill in 'til Christmas time, but has been unsuccessful in procuring anyone after Christmas, so I guess those kids just go without an education.

So this is kind of a shame that that's going to happen to kids. But it's just kids in the North, and this government's priority has never been about anything in the North. Whether it's education or health care or pretty much anything else, they have a plan to have a plan to have a plan, but really the plan is to do nothing.

So what have they done that—what have they talked about in this Throne Speech? Well, they've talked about, you know, how they're going to look after their friends more. The business world is going to benefit.

You know, one of the things they sprung on us late Friday night—or, late Friday afternoon, to be fair—it wasn't Friday night; it was Friday afternoon—was that they're going to start gutting workplace health and safety regulations in this province. And, you know, they're—I see the Minister of Health has got all of a sudden a renewed interest in workplace health and safety, that—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Lindsey: —he thinks we should go down to what some other jurisdiction that, unfortunately, was governed by right-wing Conservatives for way too long, that the current NDP government of Alberta hasn't had a chance yet to fix all the ills that that PC government placed on them. And it will take us a

long time to fix all the bad things that this PC government is going to do to us.

You know, once upon a time, a PC government—the P actually stood for progressive. It doesn't stand for that anymore. I don't know what it does stand for, because there's nothing in this Throne Speech or nothing with this government that's progressive in any way, shape or form, Mr. Deputy Speaker, which is really too bad.

So, you know, back to education, because I realize that the Minister of Education really has some things to say about everything except education.

An Honourable Member: Seven new schools.

Mr. Lindsey: Oh, seven new schools, he says. You know, Mr. Deputy Speaker—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Lindsey: —those are all illusionary schools. They're make-believe. And that's obviously where the minister lives, is in a land of make-believe, because he hasn't actually built one new school. He's talked about it. He's taken credit for a lot of things that previous governments committed the money to and built, whereas this government has talked about pretend schools.

So, you know, if he could show me some bricks, some mortar somewhere—he can't do that. He talks about make-believe things instead of reality.

Tuition. If a person wants to go to post-secondary education, this government has now made it harder for people to get post-secondary education. They've made it hard enough for people in the North to get any education, but now if they do successfully graduate—and I'm happy to report that there's more people graduating from grade 12 than there used to be.

People in the North—communities in the North are trying harder. They're understanding the importance of education to prepare their young people for the future while this government makes it harder for those very same young people to actually grab the future and hold on.

* (16:30)

There's less jobs going to be in the North and the government does nothing. Now, well, let's try and get an education so we can get a job somewhere outside the North. Well, now this government is going to make it harder for those very same young people to get that education, once again denying them the

opportunity to participate in a future that involves people from all over this province.

You know, I'm left to wonder just who does this government care about but I don't have to wonder very long because all I have to do is look at the groups of people that this government has either ignored or attacked. Some of the very first things they did when they came to government was to attack working people, and that attack continues.

Whether it's front-line health-care workers that have seen budgets cut, whether it's nurses at St. Boniface Hospital that see the amount of overtime that they're forced to work in order to try and care for people, whether it's workers in the North who see their jobs disappearing while this government does nothing, whether it's people on minimum wage that were some of the first people to see the attacks by this government when their increases were stopped for a year, and then such meagre increases that a person trying to live on minimum wage is forced to work two and three jobs just to try and put food on the table.

This government continues to attack the people that need a government's help the most, people that are sick. Well, what have they done against them? What do they have against sick people? Well, let's see: They cut the special drug program. You know, that was a program that should have been expanded.

In fact, what they should do is go to a complete Pharmacare program that covers everybody in this province so that they can get access to the drugs, medical equipment, that they need.

But they don't do that because they continue to cut away at things that people have taken for granted so long, that health care would be there when they needed it, and it's not anymore.

If people—I don't know—in Flin Flon, decide they want to start a family, this government has cut, cut, cut. You can no longer have a baby in Flin Flon. If you're lucky you can have it on the side of the road in an ambulance. Maybe you'll get to The Pas; maybe there'll be room for you there. They haven't begun to address what the people on the Saskatchewan side of the border will do, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and what this government fails to recognize is that Flin Flon actually is a regional centre. It goes beyond just the imaginary borderline that is there.

The Flin Flon General Hospital services so many people on the Saskatchewan side that this government fails to take into account. Now, one of

the things we've said in a petition is that they should sit down with the Saskatchewan government and the federal government and try and do their best to come up with a solution to this problem, and we've read that petition every day in this House since we've come back, and this government has not once—not once, Mr. Deputy Speaker—has this government stood up and said, we met with our counterparts in Saskatchewan; we met with our counterparts in the federal government—not once have they said that. Not once have they stood up and said that they've actively working towards a solution.

What they have said, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and what the northern regional health centre has said, is that they're waiting for a review of women's health to take place sometime later next year.

We don't know what that means. It means that we can expect more cuts because review, with this government, is the code word for cut.

So we know that once the obstetric service in Flin Flon is gone, particularly if it's gone for any length of time, it's gone for good, and I will do everything in my power to make sure that doesn't happen.

You know, I said to the Minister of Health that he doesn't have to listen to me, and there is no law saying he does. But he should probably listen to people that live in the region, people that are impacted by these cuts that have been foisted on them by this government. And this government should soon start listening to the voices across Manitoba, not just in Flin Flon, not just in the North, but across Manitoba, that have seen ambulance stations close down.

Well, in fact, now ambulance stations are the side of the road in rural Manitoba. So I don't know if they expect an ambulance attendant to sit in their vehicle on the side of the road waiting for a call as opposed to being in proper facilities, which were growing and expanding under our government, which now see being cut. *[interjection]*

And once again, the Minister of Education seems to have lots to say about things that he did wrong when he was the minister of Health, about the cuts that he actively and gleefully took part in that affects all of Manitobans, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And the current Minister of Health continues on that same line of what can we cut next. Who doesn't need services? Who doesn't need health care? Or who does, but we'll just cut it anyway.

So it's in that light and those few things that I've had an opportunity to put on the record that this Throne Speech, once again, failed the people of Manitoba. This Throne Speech, once again, has nothing for the North. And I recognize that the mining industry is hoping for the best. They came out and said, well, you know, there's maybe something there. They're hoping because they want to—when you come out and say there really is nothing there, because this government, then, will cut even more.

So, you know, I would actively encourage all the members opposite to start listening to all of the people of Manitoba, to start listening to all of those voices that are starting to be raised, all of those voices, whether it's people that have accessed health care that—or tried to, it isn't there—whether it's people who realize that the cuts to education are affecting their children's future, whether it's people that have had minimum wage jobs that can't get ahead, whether it's people that don't have jobs at all because this government doesn't have a jobs plan, there just is absolutely nothing in this Throne Speech that should give Manitobans a sense that this government is going to do anything for them.

Everything in this Throne Speech is predicated upon that which this government has already done, and it's going to be more of the same going forward; it's going to be more cuts; it's going to be more cuts, and it's going to be more cuts.

What will be left at the end of the day, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Well, I guess if you happen to be one of top 1 per cent, one of the rich people that this government actually listens to, maybe it'll be okay. The rest of us will suffer with this government.

Mr. Nic Curry (Kildonan): It's always a pleasure to be here and speak on behalf of the good people of Kildonan, northwest Winnipeg. It's been some time, now, almost two and a half years, that I've been able to represent the good people in that area.

Certainly, we've heard about some new faces after elections. This Legislature saw over half of its members as new faces; I'm happy to represent as one of those rookie members.

I was joined very recently, and I'd like to put on the record, by the member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine) and the military envoy, the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Reyes), at McGregor armouries. I won't try to pronounce the name of the new armoury there, but my great-uncle, Stan

Buttersworth [*phonetic*], was able to unveil the new name—of that building's wonderful 94 years young. I have to say he stayed in the mess longer than me, and anyone who understands what that means should be impressed at his abilities there.

And it's wonderful be able to represent people in North End, and we have a diversity of experiences and backgrounds that is something that I cherish. I cherish that I'm able to go the Philippine Basketball Association where they're excited to hear about the new schools.

* (16:40)

I know the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Lindsey) says it's some magical fantasy that these schools are going to be built. Well, Seven Oaks School Division is getting a new school. It'll be on Templeton, very close to Pipeline. Those designs are in. They expect to begin construction next year. We're looking forward to that. For so long we have needed that.

So the Seven Oaks School Division last year needed 46 portable classrooms to present education to the students—46 portable classrooms. You drive down Jefferson, you go through Maples area, Amber Trails area and you see they're already getting ready to add new portables because the demand is there. And this government sees the need for that additional school.

There's also a new school being built in Waterford Green area. And the kids are excited when they got to see the designs. This is something that the area needs. It is growing. It is something our government recognizes is necessary because we care about the need to go away from the old style of teaching in hallways, teaching in portables. Just not a desire—anyone wakes up ready to learn and they get to go to a construction trailer. Just a sad state and we're affecting—we're addressing that deficit of infrastructure.

My old high school, Miles Macdonell Collegiate—when you go there, you can see where the cracks in the ceiling in that gymnasium that I used not too long ago, but that as it turns out, the member previous myself, Mr. Dave Chomiak, he would have used that same gymnasium roof.

And you know what? When he went to high school, it was the exact same roof that I got to use when I went to high school. If anyone knows the age difference, that is decades of failed infrastructure assessments. That roof needs to be replaced. And this

government recognizes that there's investments in that school—[*interjection*]

I can hear that the members opposite are very excited for the new education infrastructure. We can go on with that. Of course, this is something that they cared not for when they were in government.

They kept parading around and talking about the fantasies that the member for Flin Flon talked about, this—fictitious announcements. Oh, they like to parade around places. And there were so many promises. And when I was elected, I was able to communicate with many of these groups. And they showed, oh, look at this promise we got, this promise letter. Well, it was photocopied.

And even the signature was photocopied. I said, oh, well, this doesn't really look very official. Oh, well the previous minister said no, no question. Is there any other documents? No, there's really nothing else. Oh, do you have anything else on record? No, it was just this photocopied letter; they said, oh, we're going to build it. Trust us. Trust us one more time.

Well, of course, Manitobans didn't trust them one more time, despite the fear mongering. Members opposite talk about many people in the health-care system as if they're the only ones who get to communicate with our wonderful workers. I speak with physicians, nurses, health-care aides. And one of them—it's a very sad story.

During the election two years ago, they said, oh, well someone came to my door, it was the NDP candidate. And they said, well, you're a nurse. And the person said, oh, how do you know I'm a nurse? Oh, forget about that. That doesn't matter; I must have guessed it. Oh, but because you're a nurse—you're a nurse, right—okay—you're going to be fired if the PC government gets in there. You won't have a job anymore. Oh, they'll take your house, everything. It will be over, over. Oh, it'd be done.

Well, luckily that person does have a job, of course, because there are open positions at this moment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the fear mongering that goes on the other side is, well, something that must make them feel content. When you look around and they see so few of their own members, their depleted ranks, what else can make them feel good about coming in to work? Oh, I know, we'll rile up and try to scare people, because some people must get some

joy out of that. I don't know why they can't see anything in this.

One thing that really struck me, though, as critical—beyond our communities, of course, our province needs the Lake St. Martin outlet channel. This is something—I don't know why the opposition wouldn't bring this up. It was mentioned in the Throne Speech. They must think it's a fantasy, too. Everything's imaginary to them, like balancing books. No one could toss a fantasy—only in fiction novels could you ever try to be fiscally responsible. And that's something, though, that we're beginning the process.

The designs are in for the Lake St. Martin channel. Why would we even need this? What's the point of having something so far away from major population centres? Well, I was there on the banks of the Assiniboine River in 2011.

We got to see, as former Premier Selinger flew around in a helicopter and assessed, like, oh, where can we put a Tiger Dam here? Or whatever he was saying. I can't guess because I was on the banks of that river where we were looking at houses that potentially could have been washed away.

You know, this is no one's fault. Floods happen. We live in a flood plain. This is why our soil is so fertile, that we are the breadbasket of the world. But the Lake St. Martin channel will help protect those communities on the edge—on the lake shore of Lake Manitoba. And this is something that—they were devastated in 2011.

And for years and years, those families languished, not knowing what was going to happen, if they could ever return home. And projects like this are things that will help not just the communities that are directly affected by this flooding on the lake 'sait'—excuse me, Lake Manitoba, Lake St. Martin areas, but also, of course, downstream in the city of Portage la Prairie, cities of Winnipeg and everything downstream into the Red River basin.

This is something where we can see that these floods have the potential, like 2011, that was devastating, and having this channel will help assist flood mitigation. We have a track record in Manitoba of being able to be excellent water stewards.

I can't believe members opposite would just read past that. Of course, they already have all the hateful, fearful things they want to say, and they're going to fire all the teachers and they're going to, you know, put people—take away all the medications.

Well, this is interesting, that they always need to go to these fearful things and then claim, salaciously, there's nothing good in here at all. Well, I hope the next member for the opposition stands up and says, yes, we do need a Lake St. Martin channel. We can all get behind this. We can advocate and lobby the federal government as a real partner in making this done. Of course.

We can agree on many things, like when myself, member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine) were able to participate in the unveiling ceremony at McGregor armouries, former McGregor armouries.

Again, despite being of part-Scottish ancestry, the member—the—Harcus, and his last name is very difficult. Maybe the member for St. Johns can help me, but it was a very difficult name, and that is the new name of the armouries, but this is something we can join together.

This is—why is it this desire of constant fear and angst and derision? It's unnecessary. It is something that we can look to the future and collaborate on these projects.

I can't see why members opposite would also say the increase of the Manitoba Scholarship and Bursary Initiative—again, nothing, won't help anyone. They don't—they must not know anyone who's ever been helped by a scholarship. I hope they know me. I was helped by a scholarship.

Now, member from Flin Flon said, oh, well, those guys are going to stand up for the 1 per cent. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is something—my entire life, it has been, often looking to the next paycheque, if that's going to be enough. And when I was in—getting ready to go to school, go to my parents, okay, time to get ready to go to school. They said, yes, you should get ready.

I wasn't able to go to school when I was 18. I delayed until I was 21 years old. I saved some money, had a bit of help from my parents, but at the end of the day, when I got there, I noticed that they were able to help me 'puy'—excuse me, buy my books for the first semester. This was helpful, but scholarships and bursaries helped me advance to gain my post-secondary degrees.

And this is something I'm sure the members opposite, they can see that. And they see, oh, this is some—more bursaries and scholarships for post-secondary students. And they can have the vitriol and the fear-mongering for everything else. I can't believe they can sit there and say, more

scholarship and bursary money for the over 13,000 students who can access this—oh, it's fictitious. Doesn't matter. Who cares?

If one more person is able to access a scholarship, if that one additional person is able to move on in the fields of medicine, engineering, maybe she is the person who can find us the cure for cancer. Maybe that fellow is going to be the one who finds a better way we can build bridges more sustainably. These are things that the education system can unlock, the best in us.

Members opposite must say, waah, you know, whatever, who cares about that? It's just smoke and mirrors, like so many other things they don't care about. The people who are going to university now are very excited for the—those advances.

And I do want to—I will give to Hansard, again, the name for the new armoury. I know this is wrong, I think it's Strachan. It's pronounced something else entirely. And just quick, at the battle of Cambrai led a contingent of the last 'calvary' charge in the British Commonwealth.

Of the three Victoria Cross medals that were awarded to 'calvary' soldiers of the Canadian army, he is selected as the new name for a wonderful armoury in the North End there, and so I'm very happy to have been there. And again, thanks to the member opposite.

Just there, we saw collaboration in this very Chamber. Very grateful for it, and this is something where—this is—I'm very enthused that we get to participate in this democracy.

I will finish, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that at the end of the day, we can disagree on the ways that we want to solve our problems as a society, but I do hope the members opposite recognize that we all have—like, I recognize in them a desire to advance those changes, that we can work together on these efforts, and on major projects.

I cannot stress enough that our province needs a Lake St. Martin channel. I do not want to see friends of mine have to deploy if military intervention is needed in the next flood. I hope we can have this channel done. Hope Ottawa knows that this is a priority for Manitoba, and it's something that will make a better future for everyone.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

* (16:50)

Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to begin by echoing the same theme that my sister from St. Johns started off her speech with. Normally in the Chamber we get up and said we're pleased to put a few words on the record. But I, like her, am not all that pleased about having to get up and speak to the Throne Speech today for the very simple reason is that it's not worth talking about.

And, if you need proof of that, you only have to see that this afternoon alone four members of the government side have already gotten up and spoken, and not one of them can speak for the full 20 minutes. In fact, not very few of them can.

The member for Radisson (Mr. Teitsma) had two shots at it. He started off on Thursday and then he had Friday, Saturday and Sunday to prepare and still he could only get through 18 of 20 minutes.

The Minister of Justice (Mr. Cullen) got up today. He couldn't fill even 10 minutes. He ended off at eight minutes.

The member from Lac du Bonnet got up earlier and he did no better. I think he might have got over the 10-minute mark but just by the—by a nose, and then the member for Kildonan (Mr. Curry) got up and he spent most of his time trying to pronounce something that we couldn't quite understand. He could only do 11 minutes.

So I think the government side likely agrees with our side, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this is a Throne Speech that is not worth talking about and utterly, utterly forgettable. I spoke to some friends over the weekend and, of course, you talk to them and you say, well, what did you think of the government's Throne Speech earlier this week? And I was met with the blankest stare you could possibly imagine.

What Throne Speech, was the response back. It made so little impact on them, which was followed, then, by the next question: Well, what are they cutting next? And that seems to be the theme of the government and that's why the Throne Speech, to me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was vapid in its intent. It was vacant of its—of any presence.

I'm not the first of our members to remark on how dead the building was during the Throne Speech. My friend from Minto pointed it out as well. They couldn't even fill the gallery for their own Throne Speech. It was as if oxygen had been sucked right out of the air of the Chamber, so dead was it in here and there was no feeling of enthusiasm, no

feeling that anything productive had happened during the Throne Speech. It was, in fact, more of the same, and the government continues to offer very, very little.

Madam—Mr. Deputy Speaker, it took the Lieutenant Governor, I think, something in the order of about a half hour to 35 minutes to read the Speech from the Throne, and I admit I'm going to paraphrase now, but I'm going to do it all in about two minutes because that's really what the content of this speech is.

It starts off by talking about its dedication, the government's dedication and devotion to austerity. It talks about all of the useful euphemisms that government goes along with in terms of streamlining and harmonizing, all of which we know to be code for cuts to the programs and services and the infrastructure that Manitobans depend on every day.

The government says it's going to continue to cut the public service. It says it's going to introduce a new public service act which will be designed to cut more jobs from the public service. It says the current system for the management of Crown lands is ineffective, so they're going to auction them off to the highest bidders and corporatize all of our Crown lands.

It's going to reintroduce a bill to ensure that student—that workers have lower wages, less benefits and fewer health and safety regulations by ensuring that the public sector—what do they call the public sector—agreements that we have for big construction projects will not have a project agreements, that's right.

It goes on to talk about the many cuts that will happen in health care, and then it goes on to talk about the many cuts that will happen in education. It goes on and proceeds to cut about the many cuts that will happen with respect to infrastructure and to—and that was one of the really funny things in the speech, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The government at one point says that it's going to continue its infrastructure spending at the rate that it's been doing since 2016, which, we know, is something less than a cut of about \$350 million that's even got the heavy construction industry calling for a referendum on the provincial sales tax for the simple reason that Manitobans are not going to have a voice and not going to have an opportunity to ensure that we continue to renew and build our infrastructure across this great province.

The government continues to talk about its looking for the North strategy. They can't seem to find it. They tried to cut the North once from the map of Manitoba, and now they're simply down to cutting the programs and services that northern Manitobans rely on.

There's further discussion about cuts to tourism, cuts to—oh, let's see, what else?—cuts to agriculture, something about cuts to municipalities for the programs that they deliver to Manitobans.

The fact of the matter is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this is a Throne Speech that is replete with references to the cuts to the programs, services and infrastructure that Manitobans rely on. And it's not surprising, then, that it was such a dud of a speech. It landed with a thud, and it has left absolutely no impression on the people of the—on the people Manitoba, other than to suggest that this is a government that's intending to continue to cut programs at an alarming rate and to really take no action to address any of the critical issues facing our province, facing the good people of Manitoba and—the result of which is that we have a government that has simply abandoned and 'abdicated' its responsibility to govern on behalf of the people of Manitoba.

Now, a lot of the blame for this, I would suggest—and others have said this on our side of the House—belongs to the government backbenches who continually look the other way as the Premier (Mr. Pallister) and the Cabinet take advantage of them in every possible way. And they continue to abdicate their sovereign responsibility as members of the Legislative Assembly to hold their own government to account for the very severe damage that it's perpetrating on the province.

And yet they are silent in that respect. And in no speech have we heard to date has any of the members of the government benches taken any responsibility for any of the devastating impacts of government decision making on the things that Manitobans rely on.

So a lot of the responsibility goes to that. But then there's—a lot of responsibility, as well, is placed on the Cabinet. And we know from listening to ministers try to give answers every day that most of them are inadequately prepared to do their job. They don't understand the substance of what their ministries are about. Most of them are entirely irrelevant to the governing process, and that's a shame.

Now, the Premier (Mr. Pallister) does have a few henchmen at work. We know, for example, that the Minister of Education—former minister of Health—we used to—we think of him as the—on this side—as the axe man because he took a hatchet to the health-care system in Manitoba. He's like the Paul Bunyan of clear-cutting health care. He left devastation behind him. And, when he was done with that, he didn't look in the rear-view mirror to see what damage he'd done. Instead, he said, well, I'm finished doing my work, Premier, what else can I do? And he said—the Premier said, well, why don't you take that same huge axe, that same hatchet to the education system? And the Minister for Education, the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) says, yes, I can do that.

And so he's now announced his decision to engage in a K-to-12 exercise, all with the intent, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of cutting education, education supports.

If he thinks for a moment he's going to produce better outcomes for 'Manitoba's' students by cutting his way to that outcome, he's—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

When this matter's before the House, the honourable member for Fort Garry-Riverview (Mr. Allum) will have 10 minutes to remain.

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, November 26, 2018

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