

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

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**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Forty-First Legislature**

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

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, June 3, 2016

*The House met at 10 a.m.*

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

Please be seated.

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

**Madam Speaker:** Introduction of bills? Committee reports? Tabling of reports?

The required 90 minutes' notice prior to routine proceedings was provided in accordance with rule 26(2).

### MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

**Madam Speaker:** Would the Minister for Growth, Enterprise and Trade please proceed with the ministerial statement.

#### Tourism Week

**Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade):** It is indeed my pleasure to stand and celebrate Tourism Week in Manitoba. May 29th to June 4th is Tourism Week, and we are just reaching the end of it now. It is an opportunity to celebrate what makes our country and province great.

Manitobans value trust, compassion, common sense, inclusion and teamwork. This is what makes our province great and what makes Manitoba an attractive place to visit. Just look at all the wonderful events we have hosted over the last few weeks. We had Centrallia in town last week, which I was honoured to speak at. We had the Liberal convention over the weekend. *[interjection]* I see there's some fans of the Liberal convention here this morning, Madam Speaker. And don't forget the VIEW Dance Challenge that was going on at the same time. There

certainly was a lot of activity at the Convention Centre with those events being hosted by Manitoba.

The activity rolled into this week where the Canadian Association of Municipal Administrators had their conference as well as the Federation of Canadian Municipalities conference, which is going on and continues this weekend.

There is also lots going on outside the Convention Centre as well this weekend and that I would like to inform the House about. The 2016 Manitoba Air Show is set for Saturday at the Southport airport, three kilometres south of Portage la Prairie. The last air show held at Southport was in 2009. So this is really a unique opportunity. And, of course, it is not too often that you can get the chance to see the Snowbirds in action. The Snowbirds will take off at 3:30 on Saturday, tomorrow. And that will wrap up the air show.

Tourism is a significant economic driver in our province. And visitors to our province spend money in restaurants, hotels, on entertainment and providing a significant boost to our local economy. In 2014, over 11 million people visited Manitoba and they spent over \$1.6 billion. That spending supports the businesses and the livelihoods of many Manitobans.

Madam Speaker, over 5,500 small businesses and almost 25,000 direct and indirect jobs rely on tourism in our province, and we want to help grow that number. Those small businesses and their employees have faced a lot of challenges over the past several years. But our new government is committed to helping the tourism industry. Manitoba ranked last amongst all provinces in tourism investment. And I am proud to say that our new government has moved to start closing that gap.

Our first budget on Tuesday showed our financial commitment to the industry as we committed to Plan 96/4 and increased the support to Travel Manitoba by over 40 per cent. Under the Plan 96/4 model, 4 per cent of all provincial tax revenue generated from tourism is allocated back to Travel Manitoba for tourism marketing purposes. This model was developed by Travel Manitoba and championed by many groups. And it shows that our government is one that listens to the concerns of stakeholders and is committed to working in

partnership with them. This increased investment is significant and will lead to almost \$300 million in economic benefits over the next five years.

We will be increasingly promoting the province and all it has to offer. We have wonderful golf courses, beautiful lakes and many opportunities to enjoy this summer. We also have amazing tourism attractions in the North. I have been fortunate to go to Churchill a couple of times and look forward to a visit in the very near future. And it is a very unique opportunity to see polar bears in their natural habitat.

I encourage all Manitobans to get out and explore our great province and what it has to offer not only this weekend during national Tourism Week but every weekend throughout the summer.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

**Mr. Kevin Chief (Point Douglas):** Madam Speaker, Manitoba is the centre of the country. We know it draws people from all over the world while sending a strong message that we're proud of who we are, we're proud of where we live and we're proud to give back. That's why it gives me great pleasure to speak in support of Tourism Week.

Manitoba's beautiful but fragile ecosystems offer some of the most epic experiences imaginable. Our incredible northern lights, our phenomenal fishing and our amazing campgrounds wouldn't exist without clean air, clean water and protected forests.

That's why we were proud on this side of the House to invest and stand with members of our community to protect and restore precious parks like Spruce Woods after the devastating 2011 flood. We were proud to stand with First Nations in their effort to make east-side Lake Winnipeg a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

We signed an agreement with Ontario government, in partnership with First Nations, to protect North America's largest intact boreal forest. We listened to the good people, the good folks at Lake Winnipeg Foundation, and committed millions for wastewater treatment to protect Lake Winnipeg. Anticipating the effects of climate change, we developed plans to protect polar bear habitat, critical to northern tourism but also critical to the North itself.

I've got to say, Madam Speaker, there were people who were somewhat disappointed to not hear the northern strategy was not included in the government's inaugural budget.

\* (10:10)

Manitoba's incredible arts and culture and sports communities thrive, in part, because of the smart partnerships and a willingness to work together.

Manitobans continue to celebrate and draw national attention to the Winnipeg Folk, Fringe and, of course, the Pride festivals, Madam Speaker, and that's just around the corner. We're hoping that we see all members of the Chamber at the Pride parade on Sunday. The Canadian Museum for Human Rights is a unique treasure that brought in close to twice as many visitors as expected in its first year, and Destination Canada called Assiniboine Park's Journey to Churchill a Canadian Signature Experience.

Smart investments and a willingness to always work together lead to incredible results. One example of many was last June's FIFA Women's World Cup. It generated—it generated close to \$13 million for Manitoba businesses and created over 300 jobs. The world got to know Winnipeg a little better when over 1,000 visitors arrived in Winnipeg to see an incredible soccer experience. We continue to be known as a place with world-class facilities that host world-class events done by world-class people: Manitobans, Madam Speaker.

I do want to say for the record that there has been some incredible momentum done by the good folks at Travel Manitoba and all of the partners that they work with. They've won 18 international and national tourism awards, and National Geographic had named Winnipeg one of the Best Trips of 2016, the only Canadian city on its prestigious list.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows):** Madam Speaker, I ask for leave to speak in response to the ministerial statement.

**Madam Speaker:** Does the member have leave? *[Agreed]*

**Ms. Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, as Manitobans we should be very proud of the tourism we have here in our great province. Throughout the years we have established unique institutions along with our natural wonders.

Tourism Week is a Canada-wide initiative that highlights the vital impact of travel and tourism here in the country. It was created in hopes of raising awareness about the value of tourism. It does this through recognizing the people, the places, the many

organizations and events that make Manitoba so special. It is a week designated to showcasing economic impact and social benefits. But even more than that, it is about issuing a call to action to decision makers from across the country. This enables us to provide visitors with the best experience possible.

Tourism here in Manitoba is a \$1.5-billion industry that creates just over 13,000 jobs. We have amazing tourism in the North, and we need a northern strategy. It is through tourism that we learn history and we gain a deep appreciation for other countries. I can speak from my own travels, and the tourism aspect of travelling gives a person real perspective and makes one's experience a great one.

I encourage all members to take part in Tourism Week.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### Memorial Cup

**Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West):** Madame la Présidente, il me fait grand plaisir de vous adresser aujourd'hui et féliciter la ville de Red Deer pour être hôte de la coupe MasterCard Memorial. Par tout compte, c'était un évènement qui a été bien organisé et qui a connu beaucoup de succès.

Madame la Présidente, premièrement proposée pendant la Première Guerre mondiale par le capitaine James T. Sutherland, en 2010 la coupe Memorial a été encore une fois dédiée pour honorer tous les soldats qui sont morts en combattant pour le Canada.

Cette année, une grande variété d'équipes se sont présentées au tournoi : les Knights de Londres, les Huskies de Rouyn-Noranda, les Wheat Kings de Brandon et, bien sûr, nos hôtes – les Rebels de Red Deer.

Madame la Présidente, la coupe Memorial a la réputation d'être l'un des championnats les plus difficiles à gagner, et cette année était non pas différente. Comme vous connaissez bien, je suis un grand admirateur des Brandon Wheat Kings et j'ai été dans un concours sur Facebook avec mon ami, Rob Saik, et que le perdant porterait le chandail de l'équipe vainqueur. C'est pour cela que je ne suis pas vêtu comme à l'habitude et que je félicite les Rebels de Red Deer qui ont défait les Wheat Kings dans un temps supplémentaire. C'était un match très compétitif par deux excellentes équipes.

Madame le Présidente, félicitations aux Knights de Londres qui ont gagné la coupe Memorial dans du temps supplémentaire contre les Huskies de Rouyn-Noranda. La ville de Red Deer était superbe comme la ville hôte, qui a sûrement créé des excellentes mémoires pour les joueurs et les admirateurs également.

### Translation

*Madam Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to speak to you today to congratulate the city of Red Deer for hosting the MasterCard Memorial Cup. By all accounts, it was a very well organized and successful event.*

*Madam Speaker, the Memorial Cup, which was first proposed by Captain James T. Sutherland during World War I, was again in 2010 dedicated to honour all the soldiers who died fighting for Canada.*

*This year, a wide variety of teams participated in the tournament: the London Knights, the Rouyn-Noranda Huskies, the Brandon Wheat Kings and, of course, the Red Deer Rebels.*

*Madam Speaker, the Memorial Cup has the reputation of being one of the hardest championships to win, and this year was no different. As you know, I am a big fan of the Brandon Wheat Kings, and I was in a Facebook contest with my friend Rob Saik where the loser would wear the winning team's jersey. This is why I am not dressed as usual today, and why I congratulate the Red Deer Rebels, who defeated the Wheat Kings in overtime. It was a very competitive game between two outstanding teams.*

*Madam Speaker, congratulations to the London Knights, who won the Memorial Cup in overtime against the Rouyn-Noranda Huskies. The city of Red Deer was a superb host, which no doubt made for great memories for players and fans alike.*

### Andy Richard

**Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon):** As we celebrate Pride week here in Winnipeg, I'd like to highlight the great work done by Andy Richard, a grade 9 student who is here with her dad Harvey in the gallery today. They come from Flin Flon. Last year, Andy travelled with seven classmates to Winnipeg to take part in the Red River Heritage Fair. He chose to research the history of LGBTTQ\* rights in Canada.

As Andy noted in an interview with the Free Press, there was a time not that long ago when homosexuality was illegal in Canada. People who were gay, lesbian, transgender or other identities

faced institutionalization, legal persecution and discrimination.

Canada has come a long way in a short time. There is—what this week is about—that is what this week is about. Canadians today have more freedom to be who they are. But we still have much work to do. That's why Andy continues to do his part.

He has started a clothing swap to help trans kids across Canada find clothes that they can be comfortable in. Andy is selling pride bracelets to raise money for this, and the Hapnot college's equity, social justice Gay Straight Alliance is helping out as well. For anyone who would like to donate money or clothing, including members of this House, you can email [transkidsclothingswap@gmail.com](mailto:transkidsclothingswap@gmail.com) to learn more.

Andy's work has earned him the Canadian Young Citizen Award and for good reason. Thanks to people like Andy, our communities are becoming places that do not fear diversity, but instead celebrate and thrive on it.

Thank you, and thank you, Andy.

#### **True Patriot Love Foundation**

**Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Madam Speaker, I'm honoured to rise in the House today to bring well-deserved praise to the efforts of the True Patriot Love Foundation.

True Patriot Love is a national charity founded in 2009. The foundation's mission is to honour the sacrifices of members of the Canadian Armed Forces, veterans and their families in both times of peace and conflict. The foundation has four areas of focus for funding: family health and support, physical health and rehabilitation, mental health and well-being and, finally, research and innovation in order to discover new treatment options and accessibility to programming.

The foundation's strategy is to grant funds to establish military charities that have the infrastructure and expertise to deliver effective programs to our military veterans and families. Since 2009, TPL has committed over \$15 million to these military charities as well as toward research and new treatment programs.

On Wednesday of this week, I was delighted to be a part of the True Patriot Love tribute dinner at the Convention Centre. The evening was a spectacular success and saw over 900 people in

attendance and raised in excess of \$1 million to the foundation.

Madam Speaker, I ask that all members of the House join me in applauding the exceptional efforts of the executive staff and volunteers of the True Patriot Love Foundation. As Manitobans and Canadians, we are all appreciative of the—and indebted to our veterans and their families. Their sacrifices have provided us with the freedoms we enjoy today and in the years to come.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

\* (10:20)

#### **Pride Run**

**Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris):** Madam Speaker, in our world, there are 86 countries and entities in which the death penalty or imprisonment await an LGBTTQ\* individual. I share this tragic fact to emphasize that no matter how far we have come as a society in terms of LGBTTQ\* rights, we cannot take those gains for granted.

As an LGBTTQ\* ally and legislator and parent, I take my role to maintain and enhance these rights seriously. Just last weekend I was joined by the MLAs for Tuxedo, Kildonan, Riel, Fort Rouge and Point Douglas at the second annual Pride run. As nice as it was to be joined by my legislative colleagues, I am more proud that my partner, along with our three children, ages 10, nine and seven, joined us, not because they had to, Madam Speaker, but because they asked to, because they saw the value in the event.

Madam Speaker, Pride week concludes this Sunday with a rally and march, and it will be a historic day in the province of Manitoba as it will be the first time a Lieutenant Governor, in this case, Her Honour Janice Filmon, will be in attendance and the only second time a sitting Premier will be participating, in this case, the honourable member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Pallister).

Madam Speaker, to the organizers of Pride week, one of the largest such events in Canada, I hope the week so far has been a success. I encourage all members and Manitobans to embrace the Pride theme of Be Authentic, to be true to yourself, to celebrate your uniqueness unapologetically, for it is our combined diversity that makes our province and country the envy of the world. Let us work together to promote understanding, diversity and pride.

Thank you. We'll see you Sunday.

**Sisler High School–Network  
and Cyber Security Academy**

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows):** Madam Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise today to pay tribute to Sisler High School. On May the 12th—*[interjection]* Thank you.

On May the 12th, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau gave Charles Bazilewich the Prime Minister's 2015 award for excellence in teaching. This was attributed to his work with the Sisler High School Network and Cyber Security Academy. I am sure the other members present have heard of it, but the Sisler Network and Cyber Security Academy is a leader in the country and was founded five years ago by Charles Bazilewich and Robert Esposito. These teachers teach grade 9 to 12 students about the use of information technology with a focus on cyber-security to prepare them for jobs in the field right out of the classroom.

Even further, this program thanks partnerships with the University of Winnipeg and Red River College. They can also gain school credit from it. This is extremely beneficial if they want to pursue further post-secondary education, and we need more programs such as this.

This program makes use of national and international competitions for students to use what they have learned in an extracurricular setting to facilitate a transfer of learning. Since they were the only Canadian team to qualify for the 2016 Cyber-Patriot competition in Baltimore, they are clearly bright and educated students who are enjoying what they are learning. We should be very proud of this. As a fellow Spartan, I know that I am.

I do want to take a moment to emphasize that Sisler High School, a leader in this country, is also located in the North End of Winnipeg. What has been accomplished here is remarkable. I hope all honourable members will join me in congratulating their success.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Introduction of Guests**

**Madam Speaker:** Prior to oral questions, I'd like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us today Mr. Ken Waddell, who is the guest of the honourable member for Riding Mountain (Mr. Nesbitt).

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

**ORAL QUESTIONS**

**Freedom Road Construction  
Government Commitment**

**Ms. Flor Marcelino (Leader of the Official Opposition):** The former government introduced legislation to expand the mandate of the East Side Road Authority to build Freedom Road and provide families living in the Shoal Lake 40 First Nation with all-season access.

When the Premier talks to the Prime Minister today, will he ensure Manitoba remains committed to completing this project without delay?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** Thank you to my colleague for raising this important issue.

We're very committed to restoring the relationships with various levels of government, and not limited to the federal government, that have been put to the test in recent years. I look forward to meeting with the Prime Minister later today to discuss issues of great importance to all Manitobans, and certainly the issues that the member has raised, the specific example she's raised, are important issues to many Manitobans and will be raised in our discussions, among other topics.

I look forward to sharing with, of course, the consent of the Prime Minister, the results of some of those discussions at the earliest opportunity with members opposite and our—all members of the House.

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

**Ms. Marcelino:** I thank the Premier for the answer.

Madam Speaker, it's not just this project that the Premier has been unclear about. One of his first acts in government was to dismantle the East Side Road Authority which provided good jobs to many communities along the east side of Manitoba.

When he meets with the Prime Minister today, will he commit to ensuring the interests of those communities are met with good local employment?

**Mr. Pallister:** Well, we shouldn't confuse the elimination of unnecessary overlap in the delivery of services to our people around the province in every region and every part of the province with the actual projects themselves.

And so I want to be clear that in bringing the management of projects such as infrastructure

projects, which the member opposite has alluded to, into a more cohesive and co-ordinated fashion within existing departments of government, we are actually making sure that the greater investment in the projects themselves is assured, that more resources are made available to do the things like build roads, like repair and maintain the existing infrastructure we have and expand it, where appropriate. In this way, we're serving the needs of Manitobans better.

And so the unnecessary overlap that was created by the previous administration in respect of setting up separate agencies to deliver on services that existing departments have done—have delivered on very effectively and well for a long time is going to allow us to fill more potholes, build more roads, do more drainage, build more bridges and create better infrastructure that will serve the needs of all Manitobans in all parts of our province.

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

**Ms. Marcelino:** Madam Speaker, we are really unclear about this Premier's commitment to economic development, particularly for those along the east side of Manitoba. His budget includes big commitments to \$122 million in cuts.

Can he make clear what his intentions are for Freedom Road and economic development along the east side of Manitoba before he meets with the Prime Minister?

**Mr. Pallister:** Well, of course, economic development and growth is essential, and on an individual and a collective basis, we want to—all of us here—want to see better economic progress for the people of Manitoba. We want to see better jobs. We want to see more opportunities for families to grow together here and to make their homes here in Manitoba. We've for too long seen a departure and out-migration of people from our province that exceeds the levels of all other jurisdictions in the country, and that has expanded in recent years under the management of the previous administration.

And so making sure that we achieve better economic growth by reducing the constant increases in tax that Manitobans had to endure under the previous administration is very important, the fastest growth in taxation burden of any Canadian province in the last six years. These are the types of things that will leave more money in the hands of Manitobans all around our province, give them more purchasing power, more security. And a better run government

will help us achieve those things as well. One does not work in isolation from the other.

These things work together, and I hope to work together with members opposite as we find great progress will be achieved in so doing.

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

#### **Minimum Wage Earners Cabinet Ministers' Salaries**

**Ms. Flor Marcelino (Leader of the Official Opposition):** This week it has become increasingly obvious just how cynical the Premier and his government have become. Day after day in question period, they keep talking about the things they opposed when they were in opposition, the same things they kept in this week's budget.

\* (10:30)

They don't want to talk about the freeze to the minimum wage or the PC clawback of money from seniors or the increase of up to 36 per cent in Cabinet salaries.

Why won't the Premier recognize just how out of touch he and his government have become from everyday Manitobans in such a short period of time?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** Well, I appreciate—I do appreciate the question the member raises. The cynical tone and the skepticism are hurtful, and I would not—

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

**Mr. Pallister:** I would not—no, but I would not want the member—I would not—

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

**Mr. Pallister:** I cannot let it lie, Madam Speaker, that what, essentially, the leader, the interim Leader of the Opposition, has just done is accuse myself and our government of being like the NDP. That is what she has said, and that is hurtful.

That is hurtful because it is the—true that the previous government betrayed the trust of Manitobans when it promised it would not invoke new taxes on Manitobans and then did, proceeding to hurt many, many groups in our society by limiting their ability to support themselves. In particular, the changes that the government introduced previous impacted severely on lower income Manitobans, people living on fixed incomes.

These changes are changes we are cognizant of. We're committed to working to build a stronger relationship of trust with all Manitobans. We will pursue that course of action, Madam Speaker, with enthusiasm.

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

**Ms. Marcelino:** The Premier will do virtually anything to deflect attention away from the fact that he and his Cabinet are getting major increases in Cabinet salaries at the time when the actions of his government are hurting everyday Manitobans.

The Premier says that the minimum wage is symbolic, yet the spectacle of the Premier and his ministers taking a nearly 40 per cent increase in salary is symbolic of a government that is out of reach with Manitobans.

How does the Premier justify taking a feast and not even giving minimum wage earners crumbs?

**Mr. Pallister:** I would strongly encourage the member to do scientific research and not jump to the instant conclusions of cure-all observations.

The reality is that we have—the reality is that the members opposite represent a small rump of the former representation in this Chamber of the NDP. And the reason they are that small rump is because of the fact that they stopped listening to Manitobans, disregarded their wishes and totally put themselves above Manitobans' best interests in every respect, including but not limited to their strong efforts—including going to court to fight against Manitobans' right to vote; their strong efforts, including raising the PST when they had promised not to and including but not limited to their internal rebellion, their fractiousness which caused a dysfunction which resulted in our deficit rising to an incredible and unprecedented level.

We face major challenges here. We will do so united as a team with the best interests of Manitobans always at the forefront.

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

#### **Seniors' Tax Rebate Impact on Manitobans**

**Ms. Flor Marcelino (Leader of the Official Opposition):** The Premier doesn't get it.

On budget day, he said that giving seniors a tax credit whose household incomes are as low as

\$40,000 per year was taking money from our children, taking money from our grandchildren. That's not what he said in the election.

Why won't the Premier recognize that his arrogant comments about our seniors and his actions are an insult to the people who built this province?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** Madam Speaker, we've taken steps to demonstrate in a clear way to Manitobans our commitment to set a better tone at the top, one they haven't seen for some time. We've reduced the—

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

**Mr. Pallister:** We have reduced by 30 per cent the size of our Cabinet. We have reduced by \$4 million per year the cost to Manitobans of servicing the needs of that Cabinet.

But more importantly, Madam Speaker, our government plans to earn its money. The members opposite like to get credit for a small token rebate, but they penalized every Manitoba family. Every Manitoba family paid an additional \$1,600 in broken-promise taxes. That includes seniors and it includes all Manitoba families struggling to make ends meet.

The total disregard from the previous government for the best interests of Manitobans resulted in this noisy rump on the other side, but they don't seem to get it, Madam Speaker, and that's a shame. It really is.

#### **Hog Transportation Regulations Emergency Protocol Changes**

**Mr. Mohinder Saran (The Maples):** *Punjabi spoken. Translation unavailable.*

On May 26th Manitoba's sixth case of porcine epidemic diarrhea, or PED, virus was confirmed, the first new case of this deadly swine disease since January of last year. Madam Speaker, federal regulators had recently relaxed regulations for hog transport.

Today I ask: Will the Minister for Agriculture tell us what he is doing to support the chief veterinarian, the Manitoba Pork Council and other industry groups to lobby the federal government to reverse this decision and restore the emergency protocols that had protected the integrity and safety of our hogs?

**Hon. Ralph Eichler (Minister of Agriculture):**—question.

I have talked to the federal minister, Minister MacAulay, and our Chief Veterinary Officer has been in touch with CFIA, and I can tell you that every step has been taken to ensure that every step has been made sure that the case that we're talking about has been looked after. And, of course, I know that Manitoba Pork has taken a lead role as well and we thank them for that, along with our staff. They've been doing their due diligence to ensure that every animal is protected.

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

**Mr. Saran:** Madam Speaker, this minister's mandate from the Premier (Mr. Pallister) shows a wrong-headed obsession with deregulation, directing him first and foremost to focus on cutting so-called red tape.

Will the minister admit that a focus on weakening the regulatory framework that protects our livestock producers is irresponsible and might put producers' livelihoods in danger?

**Mr. Eichler:** I do want to thank the member for the question. And, very clearly, we have been making sure that every red tape that we've been talking about in my department is going to be beneficial to all animals, not only just the pork industry, but the pig industry, the poultry industry and so on.

What we want to make sure is also, as the members opposite, what they did with Bipole III, they didn't take biosecurity clear enough. We will make sure those steps and checks and balances are in place. Hopefully, the members opposite will join us in that.

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

**Mr. Saran:** Madam Speaker, PED has killed millions of piglets in the US. With strong regulations and farmer support, PED had been virtually kept out of Canada until last week.

Can the minister please explain how he believes cuts and deregulation will protect the safety and livelihood of agriculture producers in Manitoba?

**Mr. Eichler:** We, on this side of the House, very clearly have a good ear with the farmers across this province, not like members opposite. Just recently the farmers have had a hard time trying to get their crops in the ground, trying to ensure that that food will be safe for all Manitobans.

We also, on this side of the House, take it very seriously that biosecurity is important. We also want to make sure that, in regards to the PED, the trailers are being washed as they come back into Canada. We ask members opposite to join us and help us ensure that CFIA and those checks and balances are in place. Get on side with us.

\* (10:40)

### **Women Earning Minimum Wage Need for Wage Increase**

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** We see this government felt that their own ministers should be given a raise before hard-working, minimum wage earners got one. Perhaps the issue is that they don't know who minimum wage workers are. The biggest misconception is that teenagers living with their parents' house are the largest group of minimum wage workers.

In fact, the majority of them are adults and 40 per cent of them are work full time. And, of course, women make up 38 per cent more minimum wage than—minimum wage earners than men.

I ask the Minister responsible for the Status of Women if she agrees there is a pay gap between men and women.

**Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister responsible for the Status of Women):** Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the question, and I thank my—the member for St. Johns for the question.

And our government does—we respect the principle of providing equal pay for equal work. And we know that there are—there is a lot of disparity in wages between men and women. And typically, across all sectors in our province, women are receiving less pay than their male counterparts.

And I look forward to working with all of our counterparts for solutions on how to reduce this disparity. And to that end, I look forward to the federal-provincial-territorial summit later on this month, where I can work with my federal counterparts on solutions to this problem.

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

**Ms. Fontaine:** Madam Speaker, I'll remind the minister that Manitobans living on part-time wages or EIA don't benefit the—from the tax exemption increase, because their tax bracket is far too low, that this government on the other side keeps referring to.

Madam Speaker, a Cabinet filled with men who ignored child-care centres in their budget while topping up their own salaries clearly don't have the best interests of female workers.

Does the Minister responsible for the Status of Women agree that in order to close the pay gap between women, the government must immediately increase the minimum wage?

**Ms. Squires:** Madam Speaker, I appreciate the question.

And our government is committed to working with all women in this province. And I look forward to working with our federal counterparts and our provincial counterparts.

Our government has a history of making improvements for the lives of women. We know that when women are earning less they have a greater dependence on staying in abusive relationships. And our government has brought in many measures on helping combat domestic violence. And there's a lot more issues that we're going to do to address this piece and helping women achieve equality in this province.

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

**Ms. Fontaine:** Madam Speaker, I will remind my colleague opposite that one of the ways in order to fight poverty, inequality and domestic violence, all of these things that she mashed into there, is to actually increase women's wages.

So we know that predominantly women, sometimes single mothers, who need and spend every dollar they earn on rent, groceries and child care, make up the majority of those that are on minimum wage. They spend it in Manitoba, creating jobs and growing our local economy, yet single mothers working full time on minimum wage earn \$8,000 a year less on the poverty line.

We owe it to these women to make life affordable for them.

So, again, I ask the Minister responsible for Status of Women if she will fight—

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

**Ms. Squires:** Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the question.

And as a former single mother who once lived in poverty and who struggled to raise my children and

raising children on a very limited fixed income, I can tell the House that one of the things that hurts women the most are tax increases.

And I know that a lot of people that I spoke with on the campaign trail most recently were saying that they had—they were struggling between, should they buy, you know, basketball shoes for their children to keep them involved in sports and on the straight and narrow, or do they buy groceries.

And those choices are becoming reality for Manitoba families for some of the previous administration's tax increases. Where they failed, we're going to succeed.

### **LGBTQT\* Families Fertility Treatment Tax Credit**

**Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview):** Madam Speaker, for many people in the LGBTQT\* community, getting help from a fertility clinic is essential to starting a family.

Can the Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen) assure the House today that he will keep the family—sorry, the fertility tax credit for all families, including those families in the LGBTQT\* community?

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living):** I appreciate the question being raised. It is an important issue.

We know that there are many people in our society in Manitoba who struggle with the ability to have children and it's a very difficult time. I have personal experience with that within my own family. I know the heartache that it can be for those who are having that difficulty, and we certainly know that it's a priority and we'll continue to make it a priority to help all of those who want to have a family and to enjoy the experience of parenthood, to make that dream become a reality for them, Madam Speaker.

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

**Mr. Allum:** Well, Madam Speaker, I know the Minister of Health's heart goes out to all families, but I didn't hear a yes in that particular answer.

So I'll ask him again: To be very clear to the House today, will he continue the fertility tax credit for all families, but especially for LGBTQT\* families? It's that simple, Madam Speaker.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Well, again, Madam Speaker, this is an important issue.

The difficult time that so many families have having children is probably not comparable to any other heartache. For so many Manitobans, it is a dream for them to have children, to be able to have a family and to know the experience of having parenthood. We believe that everyone has the right to experience that. We've committed already to ensuring that the tax credit remains in place, and we'll do that for all Manitobans, Madam Speaker.

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

**Mr. Allum:** Madam Speaker, that sounded like a qualified yes from the Minister of Health. It's always hard to follow what he's saying. Never has a member said so much and yet said so little, all at the same time.

So what I want to ask him today then: Will he—our government had committed to actually increasing the fertility tax credit to 50 per cent this year. Will he continue—will he confirm for the House that he will confirm our commitment to ensuring there's equality for all families here in Manitoba?

**Mr. Goertzen:** So I can understand why the member is a little bit confused, because when the NDP were in government, they never gave clear answers in question period.

I said yes; that's a clear answer, Madam Speaker.

#### **Federal Seniors Income Supplement Provincial Supplement Reduction Concerns**

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows):** Madam Speaker, last Tuesday I asked the government about the provincial 55 Plus supplement program, a program that helps some of Manitoba's poorest residents. Shortly after asking the question, the government introduced its 2016-17 budget. Unfortunately, the spending projected for the 55 Plus Program remains constant.

With this in mind, my question is simple and it should be easy to answer. Regarding the federal government's dramatic increase to the Guaranteed Income Supplement to Manitoba's poorest seniors, will this government commit to not reducing the amount paid to the current recipients of the provincial 55 Plus Program?

**Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Families):** Madam Speaker, I appreciate the question.

In the essence of answering questions fully today, I can confirm that the increase in the federal GIS will not impact 55 Plus benefits.

\* (10:50)

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

#### **Low-Income Seniors Elimination of Ambulance Fees**

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows):** Madam Speaker, I am very, very happy to hear that.

The government said that they would reduce ambulance fees by 50 per cent in the first year, but it appears to have turned into a four-year project. This is not what Manitobans were expecting. We expected ambulance fees to be cut in half the first year. That's what the government said during the election, not just by 5 per cent.

For the sake of my question today, I'd like to focus on low-income seniors. Manitoba's poorer seniors do not need 50 per cent off ambulance fees four years from now. They need free ambulance services now.

Madam Speaker, my question is: Will this government commit to having free ambulance services to Manitobans who are on the provincial 55 Plus Program?

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living):** Madam Speaker, I appreciate the question.

And we have committed to lowering ambulance fees. And we said during the campaign that we'd reduce it by 50 per cent over our first term in government. I am proud that the Finance Minister has already started on that goal, Madam Speaker.

Unlike the NDP when they were in government, we make promises and then we actually deliver on them, Madam Speaker.

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

#### **Pharmacare Costs**

**Ms. Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, during the campaign, one of the biggest concerns I heard at the door was that prescription medicine costs were too high.

There are too many low-income seniors here in Manitoba that are having to make decisions between eating healthy and being able to afford their prescribed medicine. This is a false cost savings because seniors who are unable to take their prescribed medicine usually end up in hospitals.

Madam Speaker, can the current Minister of Health tell Manitobans what his government is doing in a tangible way to support our seniors in being able to afford the high costs of prescription medicine?

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Madam Speaker, the member is correct. One of the great challenges that we have in health care is, in fact, the high cost of prescription drugs.

I'm glad to be able to continue the work in dealing with the federal government to ensure that we have a national Pharmacare and purchase program so that we can get the best prices when we're buying prescription drugs right across Canada.

I suspect there might be some additional savings that we can also garner with the New West Partnership, Madam Speaker, because we believe that working in partnership is actually a solution, unlike the NDP, who always wanted to go it alone.

#### **Tourism Promotion Funding Increase**

**Mr. Jeff Wharton (Gimli):** Madam Speaker, this is the end of Tourism Week.

Tourism is not only a great way to promote our wonderful province, but also a great economic driver for Manitoba.

My constituency of Gimli is home to beautiful beaches, vibrant shops and restaurants, world-class recreation opportunities. Tourism is a vital part of our local economy.

Can the minister share with us his great plans—our great plans of a new government to help grow the tourism industry?

**Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade):** Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Gimli for that question, and I think it's a really good opportunity to remind all members of the House of the great tourist attractions in that riding of Gimli.

Madam Speaker, I'm proud to say today that in Tuesday's budget we committed to Plan 96/4, which

will ensure that 4 per cent of all tourism revenue raised in the province goes right back to marketing tourism here in our province. This will increase spending by over \$300 million in the province of Manitoba over the next five years.

Madam Speaker, that was a promise this government made. This is a promise fulfilled by this government.

#### **Tec Voc High School Expansion Commitment**

**Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto):** On Tuesday, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen) told Manitobans that important capital projects for Manitobans are now under review.

We've already heard this Minister responsible for Crown Services say that although he won't interfere with Liquor & Lotteries, he's already called up board members of the newly appointed board to tell them what to do. He's going to send them a letter telling them what to do. And he expects them to report back and he'll tell them what to do.

We know that other capital projects are now at risk with this new government.

Could the Minister of Education advise whether the expansion of Tec Voc High School in the West End of Winnipeg will proceed as planned without delay?

**Hon. Ian Wishart (Minister of Education and Training):** I'd like to thank the member for the question.

As he referred to, we are always reviewing whether our investments are in the right place, the right time. And in particular for education, we are trying to get the best results for Manitobans from a well-invested dollar.

So we are certainly reviewing, and we will continue to do. That one in particular is in process.

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

**Mr. Swan:** Madam Speaker, the expansion at Tec Voc was announced last year, and it's intended to provide a new wing for students in the welding program and the aviation and aerospace technology program.

Tec Voc students come not just from the West End but across the Winnipeg School Division, and they are in high demand by employers such as

StandardAero, Magellan, Boeing and Air Canada. It is Aerospace Week in Manitoba, and these students represent the future of aerospace in Manitoba.

Can the Minister of Education give a clear answer to whether this expansion will occur as planned or whether Winnipeg students and families have to wait for this government to calculate an acceptable return on investment?

**Mr. Wishart:** I thank the member for the question.

After 17 years, perhaps you should learn to be patient because you certainly have shown little results. This is Aerospace Week. There are many partners involved in that program, and we're in the process of building relationships with those same partners to make sure that any dollar that's invested on behalf of Manitobans is one that is well invested and that we get the best results.

I certainly am well aware that our aerospace industry is a significant contributor to Manitoba, and we want to invest wisely so that training in aerospace can actually be positive in the process.

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

**Mr. Swan:** Well, I agree with the member that the aerospace industry is important. It's an industry that is important to my family and important to friends of mine.

The member needs to understand that students at West End schools like Sargent Park and General Wolfe and Isaac Brock are now making choices about which high school they're going to attend and what programs they're going to take.

The aerospace program at Tec Voc High School draws students from the West End and beyond, and the co-op and the apprentice programs, which the members opposite never talk about, are popular with students and also with employers in Manitoba.

I'll ask the Minister of Education again, one more time, to give comfort to students, parents and the aerospace industry in Manitoba: Will the expansion proceed as planned?

**Mr. Wishart:** And I thank the member opposite.

I would remind him that every student is reaching a point where they are making decisions regarding where they are going to go for their high school education, every one of them, and that—so that I think it's important that we do a good job of making

sure that the money is invested for the benefit of every Manitoban for maximum benefit.

So we will work and have been working and will continue to work with the aerospace industry to make sure that money is well invested in training to get the best benefit for Manitobans.

### **Surface Water Management Act Reintroduction of Bill Request**

**Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley):** I missed you guys too.

Madam Speaker, could the minister please inform the House when she will be reintroducing The Surface Water Management Act?

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

It's a question that's very important to all of us on this side of the House. It's one that's still up for discussion and consultation, and we will continue to—*[interjection]* Yes, obviously we are a government that believes in inclusiveness, honesty, transparency, and that is what we plan to do with regards to that act.

Thank you.

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

**Mr. Altemeyer:** The minister, of course, being new to this House, may not be aware that it was, in fact, her political party that blocked the passage, repeatedly, of that excellent piece of legislation just before the start of the next election.

\* (11:00)

We offered, on multiple occasions, to sit additional time to pass that excellent piece of environmental protection. Ducks Unlimited, very disappointed; Lake Winnipeg Foundation, very disappointed.

Now we know why. They don't have the money to invest in the implementation of it. They want money for salaries.

When will the minister be reintroducing the water—The Surface Water Management Act?

**Mrs. Cox:** Thank you so much for that question again.

Wetlands and water resources, water management, is ultimately important to this government on

this side of the House. As the government opposite for 17 years, you failed to act on that important issue. And we will consult, we will talk to stakeholders, and we will remain transparent in those consultations.

Thank you.

**Madam Speaker:** I would just like to caution all members that when posing questions and answers that one do it through the Speaker and not personalize comments with the word you. So if you could please direct it through the Speaker in a third-party manner, thank you.

The honourable member for Wolseley, on a final supplementary.

**Mr. Altemeyer:** We can now add the word ultimately, apparently, to the recycled adjectives that this government is going to be throwing back in response to perfectly legitimate questions asked on behalf of the betterment of all Manitobans.

If the minister wants to try and claim to be better, I note that in the budget there's no provision for the \$100 million we had allocated to help the City of Winnipeg stop dumping sewage into our lakes and rivers.

Where's the money? Is she going to talk to the Finance Minister, maybe it's the Premier (Mr. Pallister), maybe it's the House leader?

We're missing legislation. We're missing action. When will she take action?

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living):** I appreciate the member asking me this question as House leader, as he did, Madam Speaker, and I'm surprised that his memory is so short because it was only a few months ago that I sat on the other side as the Opposition House Leader and I asked—no, actually, I begged, actually, then, we all demanded that their government bring forward the bill so it could be debated.

And day after day they refused to bring forward the bill, and now, suddenly, they want to have it debated. How could he have forgotten in such a short period of time, Madam Speaker?

#### **City of Winnipeg Downtown Development**

**Mr. Ted Marcelino (Tyndall Park):** My question is for the Minister responsible for Crown Services.

Revitalizing downtown is very important. Does the minister agree?

**Hon. Ron Schuler (Minister of Crown Services):** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for the question, and I would like to answer this in a fulsome way.

The answer to that question is yes.

#### **Liquor & Lotteries Corporation Headquarters Construction**

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for Tyndall Park, on a supplementary question.

**Mr. Ted Marcelino (Tyndall Park):** To the same minister: Is his intention to cancel the project of constructing the headquarters of Liquor & Lotteries downtown?

**Hon. Ron Schuler (Minister of Crown Services):** Well, Madam Speaker, I'd like to thank the member for the question.

What we plan on doing as a government is respecting the Crown corporations and what they do and who they are and what they represent.

Madam Speaker, by respecting the Crown corporations, we respect the ratepayers of those Crown corporations. And we will not politically interfere in the Crown corporations like was done for 17 bitter, long years.

**Madam Speaker:** The time for oral questions has expired.

Orders of the day, government business.

Resuming debate on the budget motion of the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen)—*[interjection]*

Yes, I've been reminded that we have to go back to petitions, so I will call for petitions.

#### **ORDERS OF THE DAY GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

#### **BUDGET DEBATE (Fourth Day of Debate)**

**Madam Speaker:** Resuming debate on the budget motion of the honourable Minister of Finance, and the amendment and subamendment thereto, standing in the name of the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Bindle), who has 15 minutes remaining.

**Mr. Kelly Bindle (Thompson):** Madam Speaker, education is an investment in a better future for our children and our province. Budget 2016 provides support for new initiatives to improve our children's ability to read and write. It also increases the resources available to at-risk students.

Budget 2016 also commits to support the full implementation of the master's of social work indigenous knowledge program at the University of Manitoba in 2016-17. This program focuses on development of social workers whose skills are rooted in indigenous knowledge.

In addition, Manitoba's new government is proud to fulfill our commitment to the Child and Youth Mental Health Strategy.

Our strong fiscal plan is the foundation for a strong economy which is vital to ensure Manitoba is well positioned to continue to make investments in schools and better education.

Madam Speaker, as I was saying yesterday, I was born and raised and I still live in Thompson. And, like both my parents, when the time comes for me to retire, I plan to stay in the North.

My father was born in Dundurn, Saskatchewan, where he grew up on the farm. And he ended up fighting in World War II as a mine-on a minesweeper for the Canadian Navy. My mother was born in Austin, Manitoba. And her father was killed in World War II in Ortona, and so she never got to know him. I never got to know my grandfather.

In fact, her uncle, who was 18 years old, was sent overseas and was part of the first—the Winnipeg Grenadiers that landed in Hong Kong as an outpost and were actually captured by the Japanese at the outbreak of World War II. In fact, her uncle, my great-uncle Doug Pearson, died in a POW camp in Japan.

So our family is connected to Canada in a heartfelt way to this land.

I'm a second generation white settler, as I mentioned yesterday. And we live on land where indigenous people have been for hundreds of generations. British colonization and the doctrine of terra nullius and institutionalized racism and institutionalized discrimination have resulted in terrible injustices being committed against indigenous people since colonization.

They've had their land taken from them, their social safety net of family, language, culture

and identity eroded through residential schools, the '60s scoop and child and family services, leaving them marginalized, many without hope and many in poverty and despair.

I've worked hard, taking advantage of opportunities. And, as I mentioned earlier, I've been lucky to grow up in a family, never have to worry about—never having to worry about a roof over my head, getting a good education, and I never had to worry about meals. And, in fact, I was supported throughout my life for education. I went to Red River Community College, Lakehead University. I never had much trouble finding work. And I had plenty of opportunity that a lot of people haven't had.

\*(11:10)

I've worked hard, taking advantage of these opportunities and no one should be ashamed of working hard, taking advantage of their opportunities, but when I work hard, I get ahead and I advance.

Indigenous people, they work just as hard, if not harder, just to survive. The only difference between the indigenous person on the street and me is skin colour. I was given all the opportunities I've had because of my skin colour; these are generational opportunities that my parents have also had because of their white skin colour. In fact, Bindle is a Austrian name, and when my father's parents came to Canada through Halifax, the immigration officer added an e on the end—there was no e—because he was aware that that would give them more advantage in an English society, and I've benefited from it ever since.

If indigenous people were given the same opportunities that I've had, with the exact same family and social situation, and I was discriminated against the same way that they are, through past and present institutionalized discrimination, without family support, an indigenous person would be standing here in my place and I would be homeless on the street. This is the embryonic lottery of our system today; it is based on skin colour, it is shameful and we must take steps to reconcile it.

Incidentally, I heard a member the day before yesterday mention the only term of reconcile he's heard is the accounting term, but reconcile is the best term we have for it, reconciliation, even though it's not true reconciliation because reconciliation is between friends, friends that have a falling out; they reconcile, they get back together. I don't believe that

indigenous people were ever—ever wanted us as friends or were friends with us because of the way they've been treated since we colonized. But that's the word we're going to go with, reconciliation. *[interjection]* Well, yes. Well, and it—at first, it was friendly and, in fact, our Metis generation is proof that they were friends at first.

Systemic racism has been in place since colonization. It's caused the problems that we have today. It's systemic, it's generational and solutions are going to have to start with the young generations and they're going to have to continue.

Today, indigenous people need more than a handout; they need a hand up from a government that works beside them, understands their past and present situation and is willing to do all it can to reconcile the past, restore cultural and social pride and identity, and create real opportunities for them to learn, succeed and contribute. Past and present institutionalized and internalized discrimination is responsible for people being discriminated against on the basis of skin colour, not only skin colour but gender, religion, sexual preference, age, disability and physical appearance.

Because I have had the opportunities I've had and benefited to the point I can make a difference, I sincerely believe it is my duty to do all that I can to create opportunities for those less fortunate in our society. This is my belief, this is my conviction and I'm asking you to join me because this province cannot succeed unless we all succeed equally together. Teamwork is how past generations have survived on this land; teamwork built this province to what it is and the North to what it is and teamwork is required to build a better province. Only through teamwork can we achieve the goal of equality, and only then will we be able to clearly see the true beauty of the scenery, recognize the true spirit of the people and know the true potential of this province.

My father was a pioneer of the North and of Thompson, and my mother volunteers at the Heritage North Museum in Thompson. I suggest members take time to visit the museum when touring the North where they can find memoirs, such as the following one from my father, Community Memoirs from Otto Bindle: Otto Bindle was one of Thompson's earliest residents arriving in June, 1959, as part of a group of hotel entrepreneurs based in Saskatoon. He was designated by the group to take on management of the Thompson Inn. At that time, he was completely unaware of Thompson's existence. The inn,

Thompson's first, was under construction with the beer vendor, serving area and few rooms—with a beer vendor, serving area and a few rooms completed, he recalls that the rest of the building was a beehive of activity at the time. As the only hotel in town for several years, the premises were very much in demand for community functions, banquets, wedding feasts and so on.

Otto tells of the first New Year's dance. The serving area was to be used for dining and dancing, so the liquor licence had to be suspended in order to decorate and ready the room for the occasion. Many stories of the early days of the Thompson Inn abound, some of which have been slightly exaggerated with the passage of time. One of the favourites was that customers would buy a box of beer and then sit on it while the contents were imbibed.

In the beginning, the Royal Bank operated from the Thompson Inn. When it was time to move to another location a crane was hired to move the safe. Unfortunately, the weight of the crane plus the safe were more than the floor could take, and it collapsed, causing extensive damage.

The inn hosted many dignitaries over the years. Of course, some of these visits required extra security. While Pierre Elliott Trudeau was a guest, he apparently wasn't too happy about having his every movement restricted. He had snuck out of the hotel through the kitchen and went for a walk, causing great consternation for those who were in charge of guarding him.

Because of the town being in the middle of the boreal forest, fires were always dreaded. Otto remembers being on the roof of the hotel armed with a hose to extinguish any wayward sparks. Otto was a founding member of the Rotary Club in Thompson and was very active in other service clubs, such as the Legion and Elks. His efforts gained him the Paul Harris Award for exemplary community service. The Spirit Way Slide has been named after him in Thompson.

When his work at the hotel ended, Otto started a second-hand store of bargain furniture, which he felt served the needs the many families who arrived in Thompson with not too much cash in their pockets. Otto retired, following his used furniture venture, spending most of his time at the family cottage at Paint Lake.

Otto was a curler, but his first love was fishing. He commented that conservation officers didn't do too much checking in the early days.

When asked about the changes that he had observed in the community, Otto said he had no wish to go back to the way things were. He appreciated the many amenities that were added as the town grew and progressed.

Otto passed away in February 2009. He will always be remembered for his sense of humour and his true pioneer spirit.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto):** Madam Speaker, it's always an honour to rise and to speak about the budget. I won't put on the record that it's a pleasure this year, because for the first time since I've been elected to this House, I'll be speaking against the budget, and I guess I can tip my hand and say I'll be voting against the budget that this new government has brought in.

However, it is a pleasure to listen to what other members have to say. For the 57 of us, we all come from different communities. We have different backgrounds; we have different priorities. And it is—it's often useful to listen to what others have to say, maybe even to have a look at the Hansard the next day and read over what it is members say.

And, you know, I listened really carefully and I read over carefully the speech that the member from Morris gave just two days ago, and I was flattered that I was mentioned in his speech three times. Of course, that was more times than he mentioned his own leader and the Finance Minister combined in his speech for those of you keeping track at home. Of course, three mentions is three more mentions than were contained in the budget speech for certain words like the North, reconciliation, minimum wage, Brandon, or agriculture. In fact, that was two times more than words like innovation, more than mentioned poverty, mentioned workers.

But I don't want to start my speech off on a negative foot. The member from Morris and I actually have a fair number of things in common. In terms of age, we're not that far apart. I don't know exactly how old he is, but we find ourselves in the same five-year age bracket when both of us toe the line at a race, as we did just last month.

The member from Morris and I both ran once unsuccessfully before we were elected the first time—

me in Sturgeon Creek in 1990, the member from Morris ran in Kildonan against Dave Chomiak back in 1999.

I would—of course, I would point out that neither the member from Morris nor I are in Cabinet, but that wouldn't be very nice, so I won't.

We're both runners. We both seemed to have slowed more than a bit in the last few years, but that's the way it goes. And, of course, the member from Morris and I, we each love our own families and we both discovered when you have kids you learn a lot more about some things than you ever thought you would, and I'm sure other members in this House would agree with that sentiment.

And, you know, Madam Speaker, the member from Morris and I, we both love Manitoba, and I would hope nobody would ever question that, and I know sometimes we do throw around words in this House or elsewhere. I do believe that every single person who's elected to this Legislature loves Manitoba, and, even though we may have differences of opinion and differences in interests, I pledge to stop others who may suggest otherwise.

\* (11:20)

Now, frankly, if the member for Morris (Mr. Martin) and I find ourselves at an event, as sometimes happens, we do have a lot of things we can talk about and a lot of things we can agree upon. And I hope it will be that way with all members of this Legislature, whether we find ourselves seated next to each other at a formal event, whether we see each other at the—at a Bomber game or whether we happen to be shoulder to shoulder at a Folklorama pavilion this summer.

Well, there's much we—but you know, there's much that we don't agree upon, the member for Morris and I, and that's pretty clear from what he had to say Wednesday and what I'll have to say about the budget this morning.

And, you know, we can disagree on things. It might be more about our background than we might like. He grew up in rural Manitoba; I grew up in Winnipeg. It might be our families and what we were told. There's other ways, though, that we come to our views.

Prior to the election, before being elected back in 2004, I'd spent my entire working career as a lawyer, all of it a large law firm downtown. I practised family law. My job was to help people negotiate and

weather separations and divorces. My clients, by and large, were folks who would consider themselves part of the middle class: nurses, mechanics, teachers, social workers, Hydro workers, accountants. And that may have solidified some of the views—my views of the world.

And we know from the member for Morris (Mr. Martin), his formative job was acting as the director of provincial affairs for the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. And we certain—we know it certainly impacted his views then. And, from the speech he gave on Wednesday, we know it certainly affects his views now.

On Wednesday, he spent a lot of time reflecting on comments I gave in this House back in what must have been no later than 2009, but I still remember them well. And I presume the member for Morris, then the director of policy for the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, was listening in.

And he had lots of time to listen in because, of course, for businesses in Manitoba, we were lowering not just corporate and personal tax rates, but we were well on the road to eliminating the small-business tax rate entirely. And, in fact, we became the first province to do so, taking a tax rate that was 8 per cent back in the days of the Filmon government down to zero. So I'm not surprised the member for Morris had time to listen in to the debate as I was speaking about important things to Manitobans.

Now, I've got a friend who's a chartered accountant. And he does the tax returns for another good friend of mine who's a dentist in a community not far outside of Winnipeg. And every year when he was doing my friend's returns, he would send me messages from BC, marvelling at how low our small-business tax continued to go even as the maximum threshold for that lower tax rate increased.

As an aside, my accountant friend always asked each year, and still does ask each year, why BC's medicare premiums, payable by every family in the province, never seemed to be taken into account when we compare tax provincially. But I digress.

Madam Speaker, the issue that seemed to have the member for Morris stirred up came about after questions in Estimates from the then-member for Carman, now the member for Midland (Mr. Pedersen), about minimum wage. And I recall those Estimates clearly.

I had several critics in my time as a Cabinet minister. And I found my time with the member for Midland actually very pleasant. And the member asked me in this House whether I had ever been to Carman. And that kind of fits in with the Tory myth that, well, you know, no member of the New Democratic Party ever travels or goes anywhere.

And I remember Gary Doer used to talk about this. And he used the line—and he used to talk about the members of the Progressive Conservative Party—*[interjection]*—like the member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon) who's chattering away—holding on to their belt buckles, swaggering into the coffee shops. And it's true; and, of course, Gary Doer always used to say that farmers voting for Progressive Conservatives was like the chickens voting for Colonel Sanders. But, again, I digress.

The member for Midland did ask me a question about Carman and whether I ever stopped for lunch in the town of Carman. And I looked across and I said, well, yes, as a matter of fact, I do. When my family and I are travelling through Carman on our way down to visit family in Morden or elsewhere in southern Manitoba, we'll usually stop at Syl's. Syl's is a great place. It's on Highway 3 on the road into town. I have a weakness for ice cream, I can admit, Madam Speaker, and it may be a contributing factor to my race time slowing down. But of course we stop.

And the member for Midland was surprised, because it shocked his world view. And he said, no, no, no, no, I mean another drive-in restaurant in Carman. He gave me the name of the owner and he suggested that I stop in and have a chat with her.

And, as luck would have it, shortly after that exchange in the Legislature, I had the chance to go to Notre Dame de Lourdes for the official launch of PerLE, which was the French municipality's equivalent of BizPaL.

Well, BizPaL was a program which allowed current and prospective business owners the opportunity to go online in their own time, whenever they had the opportunity, to see what permits or licences were needed from all levels of government—federal, provincial and municipal—to start or expand their business, and with the kind of innovation that even the local director for the Canadian Federation of Independent Business had to admit was positive for his members.

And one of the reasons he had all kinds of time—and I'm glad the member from Morris agrees with that—it was one of the other reasons he had so much time to listen in to what was being debated in the Legislature in 2009.

And I remember the day going to visit Notre Dame de Lourdes. It was a beautiful Friday in the early summer and it was like the Manitoba landscape was coloured in with that little pack of Laurentian pencils that we all used to use in school. I know the Premier (Mr. Pallister) will tell us a story of him having to go in the woods and make his own pencils, but for the rest of us we had a small pack of pencils and the sky in the member's constituency is beautiful.

And I know the member for Midland (Mr. Pedersen) is very proud of that area, which he should be. And it was a great day. The sky was an almost unbelievable view. The trees and some of the fields were a verdant green and, of course, the canola fields were in bloom and they were blazing brilliant yellow. And we had a great time in Notre Dame and, indeed, the member for Midland was there.

J'ai fait une petite parole en français. J'ai essayé des blagues. Le député pour Carman n'a rien compris. C'était un jour formidable.

**Translation**

*I said a few words in French. I tried to make some jokes. The member for Carman did not understand a thing. It was a great day.*

**English**

And when the event was over, I turned to my assistant Greg—Greg Merner, and I said we should drop in at the restaurant that the member had talked about. And, while I always love driving the provincial road north of Notre Dame, that big drop down to Highway 2, we went back through Carman and we went to the restaurant. I bought my assistant lunch and I asked the teenage student who was working there if I could talk to the very person that the member had mentioned in his question. And the owner was surprised, but then she proceeded to tell me in front of all of her staff, most of whom were kids at Carman Collegiate or students who had finished their university term, how terrible our minimum wage increases were. She told me that there should be a lower minimum wage for workers under 18 and she told me there should be a lower minimum wage for anyone working in food services because of the tips they can receive.

And I'm glad the member from Morris reminded me of that day because, you know, there are moments in this Legislature where it's very clear which side you're on, and this is one of those examples. And I know the member for Midland and I know the member for Morris (Mr. Martin) and I know the other members of the PC caucus are on the side of that owner, and they gave that owner a gift in this budget by saying that they won't have to increase the amount they pay their employees for the first time in nearly 20 years.

And what about the young people who had to stand around in the restaurant and listen to their owner telling them that they weren't worth as much as somebody over the age 18, or they weren't worth as much because they were working the food services industry.

Well, what are we—what benefit are those young people going to get? Well, absolutely nothing if they're working part-time and still going to school. If there's anybody there working full-time, well, at 40 hours a week at minimum wage, well, they'll get a benefit in 2017 from the much-ballyhooed tax break that the PC caucus is talking about of a grand total of \$10. Ten dollars—not for the week, not for the month, but for the entire year. And I know the member for Midland's calling from his seat the \$10 that his government's big tax break is going to provide is not even enough for a retro burger, a fries and a milkshake at the very restaurant he's talking about.

However, someone earning \$60,000 a year gets seven times that benefit and, of course, we know if you're a Cabinet minister, in addition to your 38 per cent increase this year, there's going to be an even bigger benefit from indexing those—those tax—those tax rates.

A 50-cent increase in the minimum wage has been called for by working people in Manitoba, called for by our caucus, would provide a full-time worker more benefit in just three working days than this new PC plan gives them in the entire year.

And I thought about those kids standing around in Carman listening to their boss tell me how little they're worth, and I wonder how things have gone for them some seven years later. Well, I'm sure that those that were already in university or college are now finished their studies unless they're going on to a professional degree or getting a master's or a doctorate, and every one of those students enjoyed the third lowest tuition fees in Canada, and every one of those students staying in Manitoba is now able to

benefit from the tuition tax rebate which provides real tax relief to graduates just starting out in Manitoba.

\* (11:30)

And I know the member for Morris (Mr. Martin) doesn't want to talk about that, and I know the member for Midland (Mr. Pedersen) doesn't want to talk about that, but new graduates in Manitoba actually enjoy the lowest personal tax rates, in the entire country, for those six years. And, at least for this year, there's some satisfaction the new government isn't prepared to mess with that rebate, although I suppose we won't know for sure until we see their budget legislation. And it's already abundantly clear this is a government where you're going to have to read the fine print.

And I still stop in at Carman but I'll stick to Syl's. It's on the main route anyway, but I thought about this very issue. It's a great example of whose side you're on.

If you freeze minimum wage, as the Filmon government did in the '90s for years and years in a row, employers are the ones who benefit, although they benefit maybe only in the short term. When you don't raise the minimum wage, there's less economic activity for everybody else. Minimum wage earners by necessity put the great majority of their earnings back into the economy, whether it's for food, whether it's for rent, whether it's for clothing, whether it's for tuition. And we know we always hear from a few loud voices, and indeed the member for Morris used to be one of the loudest, how minimum wage increases unemployment.

Yet not so in Manitoba where, despite raising the minimum wage every year for 17 years, and even the new government has to acknowledge this, we have the lowest or one of the very lowest unemployment rates in Canada, and it's been that way over the last many years.

When you don't raise the minimum wage, it means that governments wind up having to take on more and more of social costs, shouldering them instead of employers. And who hires minimum wage employees? Well, certainly, it's folks that run little restaurants across the province. It's also Walmart, it's also Best Buy, it's also all the stores at Polo Park where kids in my area find jobs so they can help out their families, so they can raise the money to go on to university or college and pursue their dreams here in Manitoba. That's why, not just in Canada, but

across the United States there are more and more voices joining the call to increase the minimum wage substantially.

And, in fact, a number of cities in the United States have raised their minimum wage to \$15 US per hour, and cities like Seattle have shown you can do that without there being any increase in unemployment, without there being any decrease in economic activity and, in fact, expanding the very kind of economic activity that creates jobs and creates wealth in this province. And, of course, what would the member for Morris say and the member for Midland, well, it might increase prices. Well, you know, it might.

And again on the ice cream theme, Madam Speaker, if it means increasing the cost of my Dairy Queen Blizzard on Sargent Avenue by a nickel, I'll pay it and I'll be happy to pay it, because the student behind the counter, Cristobel, who goes to DMCI, or Henry, who goes to Tec Voc, well, they get a fighting chance to get to university to become a pharmacist or a nurse or an architect, or maybe they've got a chance to go and become an aircraft mechanic like my dad was. Although just today, we have the Minister of Education now putting on the record that the very expansion at Tec Voc that would support the aerospace industry is apparently up for review.

And, you know, the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko) mused about what tuition rates should look like in Manitoba during the election campaign, and he said that maybe we should look at the Canadian average, maybe we should look at Saskatchewan to decide what our tuition policy should be. And what did the member for Lac du Bonnet actually say? Well, what he said is that he thought that would be a good idea and that tuition rates in Manitoba should increase, not by 5 per cent or 10 per cent, but 77 per cent to get to the national average. And I know the member's now calling across—*[interjection]* Yes, the member for Lac du Bonnet is now saying that he was misquoted in *The Manitoban*.

I'm a University of Manitoba graduate, and very proud of that, and actually I tend to accept what I read in *The Manitoban*, and if the member has a problem with what he said in *The Manitoban*, he should call their editorial board and straighten that out. Because I saw what the member said very clearly, and so did young people in my side of the province who know, with their parents, that getting

on to university and getting on to college is the pathway to building their dreams here in Manitoba.

And I do believe we got to the point, Madam Speaker, where we need to send a Snickers bar over to the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko).

And, you know, when daughter's friend, Maya, gets you a cinnamon bun at Tall Grass Prairie bakery, she gets up on a Saturday at 5 a.m. before the sun comes up, so she can save money to take global studies at University of Winnipeg this fall. Well, she knows which side members are on.

When my daughter's friend, Charlotte, puts together your Mexican food in Osborne Village this summer to pay for her dream of becoming a professional musician, and you'll see her at the Winnipeg Folk Festival this summer as a young performer, she knows which side members of this Legislature are on.

And, you know, when all of my daughter and her friends find, in a couple of months, that their \$25-a-month phone plans from MTS disappear and they're paying \$60 a month, \$35 more than they are now or more, well, they'll know who stood up for them and their phone plans. It was New Democrats. And who on—who was on the other side being cheerleaders for Bell Canada and destroying competition in this province? It was members of the PC team.

And one of the challenges, of course, is that after 17 years of regular minimum wage increases, many people began to take it for granted. And, you know, there's a lot of other things that people began to take for granted in this province, like stable funding for schools, stable funding for universities and colleges, funding for health care, for social services, greater protection for workplace health and safety, the environment and the protection of our food and water. And those people are going to discover very soon that those things aren't guaranteed, because as soon as you bring a PC government into power, those things are put at risk.

And, you know, the member for Morris (Mr. Martin) and I used to have conversations about red tape. In fact, getting back on the running theme, we had a conversation at mile 10 of the police half marathon one time about red tape. And he used to come in and tell me, on behalf of CFIB, that there were just too many regulations in Manitoba.

And, you know, whenever I met with him, I always had time for the member for Morris, as I still do, for the reasons I put on the record at the start, and I used to ask him which regulations it was that his members had difficulty with, because, of course, if there was something you could point to, we'd be more than happy to deal with it. And, you know, I'm still waiting—still waiting—seven years later for this member to pick out one single regulation, because that's the way that this new team talks. They'll talk about waits. They'll talk about regulations, but they won't actually point to anything in particular.

Those are some of the reasons. And I could go on for so much more. Those are just some of the reasons why I'll be voting against this budget.

People know which side they're on. I know that my team is on the side of ordinary Manitobans. And we're going to keep fighting for them in the next four years. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

**Mr. Len Isleifson (Brandon East):** Thank you, colleagues, and thank you, Madam Speaker. To start my inaugural address in the House, I would first of all like to congratulate you on your election as Speaker. I know you'll do a fine job in trying to keep all of us in line as the years progress.

I would also like to congratulate all the MLAs in the House today on their recent success in the election. And also, as we say that and we celebrate our successes, I also would like to pass along the appreciation to those who ran unsuccessfully and wish them the best in their endeavours as they move forward, Madam Speaker.

This recent election was historic in 'nasture' and I'm humbled and honoured to be standing before you as a member of the Progressive Conservatives representing, for the first time in history, the great constituents of Brandon East.

Madam Speaker, Brandon is Manitoba's second largest city. And it is an estimated population of over 50,000 residents, is a place that I have proudly called home for the past 53 years.

Brandon is a major juncture for trade and commerce, in western region, and has an exciting history and partnership with trade, with the broader population of over 100,000 people covering southeastern Saskatchewan and northern North Dakota.

Some may find it interesting, Madam Speaker, that it—had it not been for a failed business attempt

and a flood, Brandon would not exist where it sits today.

General Thomas Rosser had first looked at land in Grand Valley just slightly north and west of the current city boundary. In May of 1881, Mr. Rosser's offer to purchase this land was declined by the owners at the time. He then moved southeast of that location, crossed the banks of the Assiniboine River and chose the Aspen Parkland eco-region of the Prairies as this new site to establish the Canadian Pacific Railway.

Because of the rich soil and the vast quality of land, folks from across this great country of ours arrived en masse. People arrived at such a fast pace, Madam Speaker, that Brandon never did attain the status of a village or a town, but became a city overnight.

\* (11:40)

During the election campaign, Madam Speaker, I worked hard every day to get to as many doors as possible and meet every residence in Brandon East. However, I could certainly not do it alone. We all understand and appreciate that creating history cannot be accomplished by any one individual and is only as successful of the team that it assembled to do so.

Madam Speaker, part of this team was my biggest supporter, my best friend, my wife, Chris, who is up here today. She has been my rock and my soulmate for over 38 years, and for the past eight months prior to the election we said goodbye to each other in the morning as we went to work and hello to each other as we came home late at night and just went straight to bed to sleep and get ready for the next day. She has been nothing but understanding, supportive and has showed great pride in me as I've worked hard to reach my dream of representing the constituents in Brandon East.

I am positive that each of us here today feel the importance of family in everything we do. Family is the driving force in any community, and along with my wife I am blessed to have two adult children who support my ambition to be an MLA. My son, Andrew, my daughter-in-law, Amanda, and my seven-year-old granddaughter, Marika, live 16 hours away in Hythe, Alberta. Unfortunately, while they were not be able to attend the election itself, we were in constant contact throughout the entire campaign with their love, their support and their words of encouragement.

My daughter, Natasha, who lives in Grand Prairie, Alberta, arrived home just a few days before the election, Madam Speaker, and she had joined me in knocking on doors and speaking with constituents. It was a joy to share this experience with her and her assistance was invaluable.

I'm going to change this, so it's a little bit easier to flip the pages.

Entering this House as an MLA has special meaning to me, Madam Speaker. Approximately 70 years ago as a member of the TUXIS and Older Boy's Parliament, my father sat in this very House. To this day, he watches question period on a regular basis. His passion for the process and governance of this great province was not lost on him. He has led by example, and I can only hope to be half of the man he is.

Madam Speaker, at the young age of 83, I would like to acknowledge and recognize that, along with my mother, my father is in the House today watching over all of us as we proceed here.

Madam Speaker, my entire campaign was about family and community and the importance of building a society that shares love, appreciation and respect. My parents, Bob and Doreen Isleifson, and my in-laws, Vic and Rose Hercun, instill these values in both my wife and I, and as I move forward in my political career in representing not just Brandon East residents, but all Manitobans, I will continue to carry these values forward with me.

Madam Speaker, as we look around the House today we see teams. I'm honoured to be a part of the Progressive Conservative team of 40 MLAs as we work together to build a better Manitoba.

Speaking of teams, I'd be remiss, of course, if I did not mention the team that started this journey with me and worked tirelessly over the past number of months, and that would be my campaign team. I was honoured to have Mr. Jordan Sisson as my campaign manager. Jordan's passion, dedication for community was extremely evident as we spent hundreds of hours together creating strategy, preparing plans and knocking on doors. I want to thank him for his hard work and his dedication and, at the same time, I want to thank his fiancée, Katelyn Remple, for sacrifices that they both made during this campaign.

As I've already stated the importance of family, I want to again thank my father for running my campaign office and my mom for those amazing

peanut butter-marshmallow squares that just never seemed to run out and we enjoyed the other day.

I also would like, Madam Speaker, to pass along my appreciation to Jordan's father, Keith Sisson, who was and is my official agent. Keith has worked tirelessly for the past number of months and is still working to finalize the financial requirements for Elections Manitoba.

To my brother, Wayne, he worked his regular job daily and then arrived at the campaign office just in time to turn around and travel around Brandon East and his own—with his own designated sign crew, including my father-in-law, Greg, and a friend named Wayne.

To Jeff Nykoliation and Corey Roberts, their assistance was invaluable as they chaired the various teams needed to win this election. The long days extended into long nights but they never stopped. One young man in particular, Mr. Chris Scott, worked what seemed to be like 23 hours each and every day. Together, our team knocked on every single door in the constituency at least twice, sometimes three times.

All this work makes a person hungry, Madam Speaker, and, with the great work of my mother, my mother-in-law, my sister-in-law Debbie, Althia, Cheryl, Judy and Velma, we always enjoyed plenty of eats and the office was always staffed.

I also want to thank both Randy and Heather Robleski. These two great friends of mine spent hours dropping flyers, knocking on doors, making hundreds, if not thousands, of phone calls. With over a hundred volunteers, I could spend an hour listing names, Madam Speaker, but the importance here is, as mentioned in the budget presentation, is the value of teamwork and the appreciation I have for each and every one of them.

Campaigns are about working together and getting to the doorstep of the voter. It was a campaign not just about listening to people but actually about hearing what they were saying. It's about putting constituents first and truly representing their needs and the needs of their neighbours.

Madam Speaker, I do want to publicly acknowledge and thank the member for Brandon West (Mr. Helwer), the member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Piwniuk) and the honourable member from Spruce Woods for the many hours dedicated to my campaign in Brandon East. Again, it is a great

indication of the strengths we have together as a team.

Throughout the campaign, Madam Speaker, some of the discussions at the door involved the need to create more well-paying jobs and to invest more in entrepreneurship to create a stronger economy. We heard, in the budget presentation, that the Progressive Conservative government is committed to making Manitoba the most improved province in Canada with a stronger economy, better services, better care and a brighter future.

I heard about the need for lower taxes so that families could start investing in themselves. We know that Manitobans paid some of the highest taxes in the country, and it is a definite welcoming sign that our government has committed to reducing this burden on families wherever and whenever possible.

Madam Speaker, many discussions at the door related to my 21 years in health care. I heard about the need for a more efficient health-care system, that front-line workers work so hard to provide and so much that our constituents rely on. I had a female constituent tell me a story about the time she thought she was having a heart attack, but because she could not afford an ambulance, she called a taxi and waited. Thankfully, and fortunately, she survived. I am also very pleased that we will be gathering experts from across this province to collaborate on creating a strategy that will effectively reduce wait-times in both specialized and emergency care.

I heard, Madam Speaker, at the door, about the need to invest and support education, at all levels, to ensure our children have the opportunity to build their futures. Our government is looking forward to partnering with teachers and educators, with school boards, with parents, with communities, to develop long-term strategies for Manitoba's kids.

Madam Speaker, I look forward to working with all members of the 41st Legislature to ensure we put Manitobans first, and believe knowing who we are and what we bring to the table assists us in this process.

I believe volunteering for a great cause is a way for everyone to give back to their communities, and I'm proud and honoured to have spent almost 13 years with the amazing folks at the United Way of Brandon & District. Holding the position as chair of the board of directors provided me with the opportunity to grow as a community leader and to work hand in hand with other like-minded

organizations and individuals. I was really honoured to serve as the chair of the campaign 2008 for the United Way of Brandon & District and truly put my community passion to work in raising much-needed record funds to assist the many not-for-profit agencies to provide a hand up to those in need.

Madam Speaker, prior to being hired by the constituents in Brandon East to be their voice here in the Legislature, I was extremely fortunate to have a 21-year career in health care. Those years, simply put, was an incredible journey. My employment as a regional manager of security services with Prairie Mountain Health afforded me the opportunity to grow my skills in customer service, labour relations and protection of people and property. I received a certificate in health service management through the Canadian Health Association, in Ottawa, and I gained emergency management education through the Justice Institute in BC. I thrived to receive education that I could use to better myself, in order to provide quality support to my staff, to my co-workers and to the public who utilize the services of Prairie Mountain Health.

Madam Speaker, my experience as a city councillor and deputy mayor for the City of Brandon has served to help me to continue to grow as a person, as a community-minded individual and as a team player who always worked hard to serve the residents of Brandon East, the entire city of Brandon and all of Manitoba.

\* (11:50)

Madam Speaker, I'm extremely proud to have called the city of Brandon my home for the past 53 years. I have seen numerous changes in the topography over the years and witnessed growth in both size and population. The diverse population that exists in Brandon is a testament to the quality of life and what we have to offer in Brandon, and it is the welcoming and outreach that extends to new families is what makes Brandon such a great place to live.

With our current budget presentation, I am excited to be a part of a government that will work smart, that will work hard and will work to ensure that we continue to grow and prosper, with investments in education, in health and in the services our residents rely on.

As an agricultural hub in western Manitoba, Brandon is a diverse community that can clearly boast to the reality of bringing Manitoba's second largest city while maintaining that small hometown

feeling of passion and friendship that brings communities together.

I stand here today proud to be from Brandon, proud to represent those in Brandon and proud of the fact that this government has not just one but two MLAs to represent the great people in Brandon.

We're fortunate in Brandon, as we have two incredible post-secondary educational institutes in Assiniboine Community College in Brandon East and Brandon University in Brandon West.

I was fortunate to attend the Assiniboine Community College graduation yesterday, where a record number of over 900 graduates graduated from that great facility.

I always meet someone outside of Brandon on a weekly basis who tells me that their son or daughter is studying in Brandon at one of these great institutes. I'm even sure that I could say that a large number of members here today would proudly stand in declaring either Assiniboine Community College or Brandon University as their alma mater.

*Mrs. Colleen Mayer, Acting Speaker, in the Chair*

Madam Deputy Speaker, in addition to education, Brandon has much to offer. In a couple of recent members' statements, we heard all about the Brandon Wheat Kings, so: go, Wheaties, go. But we also have the Keystone Centre; the Royal Manitoba Winter Fair; the Provincial Exhibition, just around the corner next week. We have the Discovery Centre, Princess Park, Andrews Field and so much more.

Madam Deputy Speaker, Budget 2016 demonstrates that this government's commitment to putting Manitoba back on track with a fiscally responsible plan. I encourage all members to put Manitoba first and show that they really do care by supporting this new course for Manitobans.

I am proud, Madam Deputy Speaker, that our government is dedicated to protecting front-line services and the people who provide them. We will be investing education in health care and working diligently with those who provide these services.

I have had many calls with residents over the course of the campaign about challenging times and what they have faced recently. The most recent one, unfortunately, was the expansion and the ultimate increase of the PST. Throughout the course of the campaign, I was reminded several times about the comments from the member from Fort Rouge who

stated on social media that the PST increase actually hurt families in need.

It is gratifying to see that this new government has clearly stated no new taxes and an end to bracket creep that will keep the cost of living.

Madam Deputy Speaker, in my role as a regional manager for Prairie Mountain Health, I was fortunate to travel this great province. We have some amazing sights that everyone should get out and see and enjoy. And with this budget, I look forward to this government working hard to do so with the support of the federal government and other provinces and territories in developing a national strategy on climate change.

As of April 19th and the success of my election, I became the past board chair of the City of Brandon Environment Committee. There is a definite role in environment for all legislatures.

Madam Speaker, I consider being an MLA for the constituents of Brandon East to be an honour, and I am privileged and humbled for the responsibility these great folks have bestowed upon me.

I look forward, Madam Speaker, to not just the next four years, but to the next four decades of a better Manitoba.

I ask everybody to get behind this government and support Budget 2016.

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia):** Madam Deputy Speaker, it's my pleasure to rise today in the House, put some words on the record with regard to Budget 2016. And this is just another opportunity for us to get a little bit better picture of what exactly this government is all about because, quite frankly, that's what Manitobans are all wondering.

This is an opportunity to pull back the curtain a little bit more to see what's really behind it, and I know many of our members have spoken very—quite eloquently on this subject and will continue to do so. But I want to focus my attention specifically in the areas of health and how the budget fails to, I believe, address many aspects of health and also how it affects my constituents, Mr. Speaker—Madam Deputy Speaker—I apologize.

So Manitobans are watching closely. They are watching to see what this government is going to bring forward. Of course, we know that Manitobans

voted for change. However, I'm not sure that they knew exactly what the change was going to look like, so they waited with bated breath for some reveal of that in this budget, and they looked for the openness and the transparency that members opposite continue to use as buzzwords in this House, Madam Speaker, but it is the furthest thing, I think, from the truth.

I've heard many times folks talk about Tory times being tough times and I think we're continuing to see that here in this budget and, as I said, more and more of that is being revealed to us and we're seeing more and more of that as the days go by, and, of course, we'll continue to raise those issues here in the House and bring those to the attention of Manitobans.

But I wanted to point out, Madam Deputy Speaker, that it's actually not tough times for everyone because Tory times may be tough times for a lot of people but not for the friends of this government and there are a few of those friends who are already celebrating. They're celebrating because of things like the sale of Bell—the sale of MTS to Bell, you know, and the shareholders of Bell and shareholders of MTS are certainly not upset about that. They don't think that these are tough times. I don't think the corporate friends and the Tory insiders who've been appointed to the boards and given plush jobs here—I don't think that they think these are tough times. In fact, I think they are quite happy with the budget that was brought forward.

It's certainly not tough times for our Cabinet ministers in this Chamber, Madam Speaker, who are looking to increase their own salaries by close to 40 per cent, and it's certainly not tough times for the employers who continue to enjoy a zero tax rate brought in by the previous government. They continue to pay a zero tax rate, but they are not being asked to pay their employees a living wage or to increase the amount that they're receiving through the minimum wage.

So it's not tough times for many Manitobans, but those aren't the Manitobans that I was elected to represent in this House. In fact, Madam Speaker, it's the people of Concordia, it's the people across this province who were looking for some kind of compassion, some kind of assistance to make their lives better, to make a go of it in this province, and to build a better province for everybody, not just for a select few.

So it's tough times, in fact, and it's tough times for the employees who are at the minimum wage, to all low-income wage earners who won't see their wages go up this year for the first time in 17 years. The cost of living continues to rise all around them. They've come to expect a fair increase to their wages year over year, and this year they've been given nothing, Madam Speaker. As I said, employers continue to have, small-business owners continue to have, zero tax rate for small-business owners, and, in fact, the rate has gone up as our government had continued to do. The threshold for paying that tax had continued to go up year over year, but those employees who, you know, who were expecting to get a fair shake in this deal got nothing.

For seniors, Madam Speaker, and I was proud to bring this up in the House yesterday, to ask directly the minister of seniors whether he would meet with the Manitoba seniors. Our phones have been ringing off the hook.

\* (12:00)

Seniors are asking—they feel bamboozled; they feel lied to; they feel deceived. And these are words that were brought to me by actual Manitobans who called me up to say: Where is our tax rebate, our rebate that we're using to stay in our homes, to keep life affordable, to do upgrades, to live in this province and continue to contribute to our society?

That's what Manitobans, seniors were asking. That's what they were expecting from this government. They heard no mention of it during the campaign, about removing that rebate and, in fact, they were guaranteed that that rebate would remain in place. And, when this government was elected, they mentioned nothing in their Throne Speech. They gave no warning to seniors. They made no mention of it in the House. They made no mention of it during question period until they bring their harsh budget. They cut from Manitoba seniors and they claw back. And that, I think, Madam Speaker, is the most important part of this equation.

This wasn't a rebate that seniors would—were hoping that if our government was re-elected it would remain in place, and I think they understood that we were on their side and that we would continue to keep that rebate there for them. They knew that starting January 1st that that rebate was being issued to them. Now, they hadn't gotten their cheques. They hadn't collected that cheque. They hadn't seen the cheque actually come to them. But they knew, starting January 1st, they weren't going to

get it until the middle of the year. They had to apply, they had to go through the process. They understood how this worked. But they were already receiving the rebate.

And so, as I said, Madam Speaker, when I brought Charlie to the gallery, Charlie was ready to buy his wife and himself a new bike to stay active, to be active in this province and exactly what we want for our seniors: stay active, you know, keep the stresses off of our health-care system because we have a couple of active seniors who are contributing and want to live in our province. And so, when he was ready to go out and purchase those bikes, he knew that that money was there because that money had been issued to him. Again, the cheque hadn't come in the mail yet, but that cheque was there. That money was there. He was counting on it, Madam Speaker.

And seniors across this province were counting on that money and this government came in and clawed it back. They pulled it right out of the hands of seniors in this province, pulled it out of their hands. Then they cut the future benefits that they can expect to see, and they had no regard for those seniors who understood that this was a deal between themselves and government, that they would receive this money, they would stay in their homes, they would continue to contribute to our society.

So it's unconscionable to me, Madam Speaker, that this government—and a government, I might add, that talks a lot about consulting, about reaching out to stakeholders. I think we've heard those words a few times here in this Chamber. In fact, this government talks about holding a referendum on tax increases. Well, well. What a great idea. I see the member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon) saying, what a great idea to have—to reach out to Manitobans, have a referendum on a tax increase.

Now we're having one of the biggest tax increases in Manitoba history on seniors, and this government won't go to them and won't ask them if they think this is a good idea. And, in fact—

**An Honourable Member:** A tax hike without a referendum?

**Mr. Wiebe:** A tax hike without a referendum.

And we had a senior here, and I understand this is a—this is what you might call anecdotal, but my phone has been ringing off the hooks. I would imagine there's a few members on the opposite side who have had the courage to pick up the phone when

seniors have called their offices. And what exactly did they say to them when they said we're going to increase your tax rate that you pay in Manitoba? Did they have an answer? Did they have an answer? Because I can tell you that when I talk to seniors, they said, well, my member of the Legislature knew nothing about this. And I would imagine there's many on the opposite side who knew nothing about this, and it wasn't until their Finance Minister came and stole that cheque right out of their—the hands of seniors and now they're accountable to answer for it.

So I'm asking that they will answer for it, that they will pick up the phone, and the next time that I ask the Minister of Health to just simply meet with a senior in—from Manitoba, a Manitoba senior who has taken the time to come down to this Chamber—he said himself he voted Conservative, he was ready to go along with the PC team and their plan—and then when he asked to just simply meet with the Minister of Seniors, he was denied that. He was denied that. And the minister wouldn't sit down and just simply talk with the member—with a Manitoban who has come down to this Legislature.

So, Madam Speaker, I've gotten a little off track because this is something that, as the critic for Seniors, gets me very passionate.

But I did want to bring it back to health care, because, Madam Speaker, health care is another thing that's missing from this budget. And another thing that I've mentioned in this Chamber multiple times, I've asked the questions of the Minister of Health and I haven't heard the answers, and Manitobans are waiting to hear what they have in store.

Madam Speaker, Manitoba is a province where we look after one another. I talked a little bit about this in my address to the Throne Speech. But it's something I feel very passionate about as a Mennonite, as somebody who is part of a community that has done this as a community for hundreds of years, looked after one another. And, when we came to Canada, we brought that same attitude and expanded it to the larger community.

And this is not unique to Mennonites. I only mention it because it's something I feel strongly about in my own personal history. But I know there are many, many members and many communities who feel the same way, that health care is something that is for everybody.

And Manitobans, they want and they expect a government who invests in those services that are accessible and inclusive to all. And, you know, the 'opposi'—or the government here, Madam Speaker, in their budget, they've refused to answer the question, as I said, to talk about what front-line services are, who are the people that are delivering those services.

And they've, in fact, mused, the First Minister, in fact, mused, about two-tier health care in Manitoba and said, well, you know, it's on the table. It's something that we'll consider; we'll talk about. We'll see. Maybe this is something that would work, that we could put some people to the front of the line if they bring their credit card rather than their health card.

So I think Manitobans are waiting with bated breath. They want robust, accessible health-care services in Manitoba. And they have yet to hear what exactly a value-for-money audit, how that would look different than the same value-for-money audits that were done in the 1990s, that led to cuts, that led to firing of nurses, that led to a slowdown in the hiring and the training of doctors. They're waiting to see this.

And, you know, the Minister for Health could clear this up any day I ask him, and I will continue to ask him, to define who front-line workers are and to protect and say, on the record, that he will protect those workers. I give him that opportunity, you know, almost every day, Madam Speaker, and I would appreciate if he'd stand up. Today he was very proud to say yes and answer the question directly. I haven't heard a direct answer from him yet when I ask him to define health care and front-line workers. But I invite him to do that.

And Manitobans were waiting for some clarity in this budget. They were waiting for it through the Throne Speech. They said, well, we didn't see it in the Throne Speech—okay, I'm sure it's coming. We've got a budget in a week, couldn't fit everything in that robust 13-minute Throne Speech. We needed to leave it for the budget, okay. We're waiting in the budget. We're waiting to see that there's a guarantee and a protection for front-line workers.

And they saw nothing, Madam Speaker. They saw nothing. They saw no mention of it. They saw no mention of expanding and protecting health care in our province.

And this is the most important point, and that is, is that it is not so much about the health-care system

as a system, it's about the people who deliver the services that people count on. And this minister refuses to define those, who he thinks those people are. He refuses to protect those jobs, to talk about the importance of those folks and the work that they do.

And so those folks are at risk. And they know they're at risk. They feel it. They're worried. And they're watching.

And so my pledge to this House, Madam Speaker, is to continue to ask the minister, to hold him to account, to hold this government to account and to try to get some answers out of them. And I would appreciate some straight answers once in a while. I won't ask every day, but once in a while, to assure Manitobans and to ensure them that health care remains a priority.

\* (12:10)

And this government also refuses, not only on—for individuals and the people that deliver those health-care services, they also refuse to guarantee those health capital projects which we know are so important for delivering the services.

And I see I've gotten the attention of the member for Rossmere (Mr. Micklefield), and I think he knows where I'm going with this, and that is quite clear because it's somewhere I've gone before, if members think I'm going to stop talking about the Health & Fitness Centre in Concordia—at Concordia Hospital, they are wrong because this is something that I've worked very hard on myself, the former member for Rossmere and many, many others to get this capital project the recognition that it deserves, to get it on the radar, so to speak, to work with the hospital board to make sure that they understood, you know, some of the requirements from government and to get this project moving forward.

And here we are on the precipice of having this project built and realized for our community, as I said, in the constituency of the member for Rossmere, and yet I haven't heard him stand up once to talk about this project. I haven't heard the Minister for Health say that he's going to build this project—not once. This money is not new money; this is money that has been set aside, that has been guaranteed, that the members of the Concordia board went to the bank with and said we are ready to move forward. The government of the day saw the value of this and understood that every government that comes into power in Manitoba must understand the value of a project like this.

So here we are ready to build, ready to get shovels in the ground, ready to realize the work of countless volunteers and countless folks who have put their money and their time and their expertise towards building this project for everyone, and we hear nothing from the Minister from Health. We hear nothing from the member for Rossmere, and I ask him, I implore him to stand up in this House to put on the record that he stands with the people of Concordia Hospital and that this project will go forward. But I haven't heard it and I have an idea why I haven't heard it, because it is part of a review for value for money. And that's the key right there that that bottom line—that bottom line—is what's most important, and that's what Manitobans are concerned about. That's what they're concerned about.

So I appreciate that the member for Radisson (Mr. Teitsma) was talking about that we made an announcement that we said the money's here, we walked in and we said here's your letter—here's your letter, you go to—

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

**The Acting Speaker (Colleen Mayer):** Order. The member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe) has the floor.

**Mr. Wiebe:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

You know, and I appreciate that the member for Radisson and the member for Rossmere are wrestling with this because they're hearing from their constituents. They knocked on the door every door they knocked on they heard it from their constituents they said get it built, they said we've seen what this government has been doing and we want to see this built. And then they get into power and they stand up in their caucus and say, let's get it done; we're ready to go. And crickets, I would imagine, Madam Speaker, crickets because it's—it has to fit with the bottom line. Now I hope that that will—that they will see the value, okay, the value portion of that equation and they will understand the value there.

I'm not convinced of it because what I see from this government is that the bottom line is the most important thing, that the bottom line trumps everything, and when we sit here and we hear from this government that they won't define who front-line workers are, they won't guarantee that those front-line services area available to Manitobans, when they won't guarantee that those health capital projects that are so important to our communities that help deliver those services to our people aren't guaranteed. We

know that they care only about the bottom line and at the expense of Manitobans and the expense of the health-care system in this province.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson):** I would like to congratulate and welcome all members to this House, particularly those first-time MLAs, as it takes a lot of courage to put your name on a ballot and solicit support in an election.

For those who were unsuccessful, thanks as well for exercising your democratic right.

It's a great feeling to be a part of the 41st Legislature and having matched a century-old election record of 40 ridings.

*Madam Speaker in the Chair*

I must commend my team that helped me win the Emerson riding, which is truly the south gateway to Manitoba. The team consisted of a campaign chair, Debra Enns, who has guided me to three consecutive wins; Sharon Friesen; Imy Rempel; Glenn Reimer; Kirke and Ruta Calderwood and many other volunteers, too many to name today, Madam Speaker. But my family: my wife, Rose Ellen, my son, Warren and his wife, Venessa, as well as my daughter, Amy, and her friend, Brian.

No one can do this all by themselves, Madam Speaker, as you're well aware, and it's nice to see you in the chair. I want to congratulate you on your win as well, in Charleswood. We know that that can be a tough riding to win, from time to time. We've seen that in the last federal election. And congratulations, again, as well, for letting your name stand for Speaker and running a very good campaign which you won there too. Congratulations. *[interjection]*

I beg your pardon? Did you want the floor? Just checking.

This was the first time a candidate—this last election is the first time a candidate from the NDP or Liberal parties actually ran in the Emerson riding. And guess what? It wasn't an NDP candidate. They couldn't find anybody to come out there. The Liberals had trouble finding candidates, but they found one for the Emerson riding, and he did a great job. He worked day in and day out. But the NDP didn't show up. But that's not uncommon when you're outside the Perimeter.

The Emerson riding is a very diverse riding, and, from its large agricultural base to the largest printing company in Manitoba, there's also manufacturing. And value adding is a primary function in our agricultural sector as well. And we know that the NDP government aren't really interested in value adding. They aren't interested in seeing Manitobans move forward in the world market when they stand up and they speak against the TPP. That just shows how small of thinking that they have, including the member from Concordia. He talks a lot, but he's well fed.

Madam Speaker, since April 19th, the PC government has compressed six months of work into six weeks. I must sing the praises of all my colleagues and their dedicated staff who have helped with preparing of the Throne Speech and also a great work of the member from Morden-Winkler, in preparing and delivering the 2016 budget. He has done a tremendous job.

We campaigned on an open and transparent government and not to raise taxes but provide relief for Manitobans, and this budget has set the tone and the path to make Manitoba great again. What we didn't expect was a bloated deficit left behind by a reckless, mismanagement—mismanaging NDP government: \$1.012 billion, some \$600 million more than projected by the former government when they were making their wonderful projection. Just missed it by \$600 million. That's just a little bit; mostly zeroes.

It was clear in the election that Manitobans didn't believe the promises that they'd heard from the NDP government. They'd been fooled too many times, and they showed their displeasure at the polls, the largest majority in a century. This budget makes it clear we're beginning to turn the province around and are prepared to deliver on all our promises.

\* (12:20)

We've delivered a budget that demonstrates our commitment to getting Manitoba back on a responsible fiscal track. The current projection of the \$1.012-billion deficit is the largest in our province's history. The consequences of reckless spending and overexpenditures will create impacts well into the future, and it's not fair—it's not fair to my granddaughter, who was just born not long ago, to have a \$26,000 debt created by this NDP government with their recklessness, with their mismanagement and their incompetence.

In our first budget we're setting a new course, a new course that will lead to lower taxes, better services, and a strong economy, and we're going to ensure the protection of front-line services now and into the future. We must correct the course and move our province back towards balance.

In Budget 2016, Manitoba's new government will reduce the core deficit by \$122 million to \$890 million—that's a 12 per cent improvement over the 2015-16 projection. However, when the NDP come out with things, they never do reduce; they just keep raising—raising taxes—raising taxes and spending recklessly.

Budget 2016 has no new tax hikes and gives Manitobans a permanent tax break that will keep up with the cost of living by ending bracket creep and indexing income tax brackets at the rate of inflation.

Manitoba's new government will remove 2,770 low-income Manitobans from the tax roll in 2017. The only way that the NDP government removed anybody from the Manitoba tax roll was they forced them out of the province to go somewhere else to find gainful employment.

Manitoba's new government has already done a number of things to make Manitoba look better. Manitobans shouldn't have to make difficult decisions about the cost of an ambulance when they need emergency services. Seniors on a fixed income—on a fixed income of \$1,500 a month who need an ambulance because they have to go to the hospital or they have to have an ambulance come and pick them up when they have fallen in their seniors home because the staff can't pick them up—\$500. If they have two of them in a month, that doesn't leave them anything to live on. That's shameful, and in 17 years that's what the NDP government has created for our seniors.

Manitoba's new government will create a new funding model to fast-track the construction of 1,200 PCH beds which will alleviate—alleviate—the wait time by emptying acute-care beds in the hospital. In the time that the NDP have been in power in the 17 years, they have created 64 net PCH beds. Yes, they built other ones, but they decommissioned; the net benefit was 64. That's shameful. They didn't care about seniors. They didn't care about Manitobans. They stand up in the House and they'd start to pick holes. They don't look in the mirror and say, look, we created it. We created the mess.

In education we have made an investment in a better future for our children and in our province, Madam Speaker, in both Manitobans' path to opportunity and future growth, and one of our greatest challenges, that's why Budget 2016 provides a 1.4 increase in funding for education and training over the current 2015 projection, including a 2.55 increase in funding for schools.

Budget 2016 provides support for new initiatives to improve our children's ability to read and write. It also increases resources available to at-risk students.

We are following through on a previously announced support for universities and college, including operating increases of 2.5 and 2 per cent, respectively. In addition, if you had read the budget, the member for Riverview-Fort Garry—or Fort Garry-Riverview (Mr. Allum)—if he had read it, he would have known what was in it, but he can't read and comprehend obviously.

In addition, Manitoba's new government is proud to fulfill our commitment to the Child and Youth Mental Health Strategy. That's very important, Madam Speaker, as we have seen that it has been neglected for many, many years.

Then—Budget 2016 confirms our government is ensuring the protection of front-line services for all Manitobans, especially families in need. The debt-servicing costs created by this mismanagement and reckless spending of the NDP government has endangered our seniors and our services in Manitoba.

The budget enhances the Rent Assist program for low-income Manitobans and increases support for residential-care workers and provides additional incentives for child care, including operating grants for existing facilities, as well as principal and interest costs for new centres. We've never seen that put forward by the former government.

Furthermore, Manitoba's new government is committed to increasing social supports through innovative social impact bonds and fostering new businesses, social and community partnerships. Partnerships is what's going to pull Manitoba back together. Instead of having from a top-down, we're going to have an all-inclusive government. We will form partnerships with people that have the same interests that we have going forward.

Budget 2016 provides a 6.2 per cent increase in funding for the Department of Families over the current 2015-2016 projection.

The protecting children act is a necessary first step in making Manitoba a safer place for all children. This legislation is one of our top priorities, and it will improve information sharing and enable government departments, service providers and law enforcement to provide quicker responses, better prevention, early intervention and treatment for at-risk children. The act will establish a made-in-Manitoba collaborative model that puts children first and allows us to work together in a more efficient and effective way. We look forward to working together with front-line service providers to address the urgent needs of our most vulnerable members of society.

Budget 2016 lays out the foundation for an improved partnership with the City of Winnipeg and all Manitoba municipalities by providing department of 'indigenous' and municipal affairs the tools to create a single access point for municipal programming at a provincial level. This approach supports our commitment to provide municipalities with a fair say on infrastructure projects affecting their jurisdiction.

The budget also increases resources to rural opportunities for growth to create jobs and partnerships with our municipalities, working together to save money and get better services for all Manitobans. And this support is directed to assessing the feasibility of economic opportunities and supporting community-initiated projects that pursue strategic economic opportunities.

Strong communities protect their most vulnerable. Our government is focused on creating economic opportunity and improved social supports

for residents of Manitoba North. We are committed to establishing a duty-to-consult framework for respectful and productive consultation with 'indigenous' communities.

Under Infrastructure, we have committed to investing at least 1 billion on strategic infrastructure in 2016-2017. And the level of investment, in Budget 2016, is over \$1.8 billion. Our funding is guaranteed and predictable to enable better service and better planning so that the industry can count on what's going to happen—not raid, raid, raid and then parade, as the NDP government has done.

This funding includes investments in hospitals, schools, municipal infrastructure, as well as roads and bridges. That's something that the NDP did not do in their 17 years. They let all of Manitoba's infrastructure fall apart.

So, Madam Speaker, I still have 20 seconds and I'll try and wrap it up in that time, if you don't mind.

The new Manitoba government is much more committing to agriculture through partnering with industry and making producers a priority.

Our government is focused on expanding trade with the Trans-Pacific Partnership and New West Partnership.

Thank you very much.

**Madam Speaker:** When this matter is again before the House, debate will remain open.

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, June 3, 2016

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