

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

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Speaker*

**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, Hon.	Rossmere	PC
MORLEY-LECOMTE, Janice	Seine River	PC
NESBITT, Greg	Riding Mountain	PC
PALLISTER, Brian, Hon.	Fort Whyte	PC
PEDERSEN, Blaine, Hon.	Midland	PC
PIWNIUK, Doyle	Arthur-Virden	PC
REYES, Jon	St. Norbert	PC
SARAN, Mohinder	The Maples	NDP
SCHULER, Ron, Hon.	St. Paul	PC
SELINGER, Greg	St. Boniface	NDP
SMITH, Andrew	Southdale	PC
SMOOK, Dennis	La Verendrye	PC
SQUIRES, Rochelle, Hon.	Riel	PC
STEFANSON, Heather, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
SWAN, Andrew	Minto	NDP
TEITSMA, James	Radisson	PC
WHARTON, Jeff	Gimli	PC
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
WISHART, Ian, Hon.	Portage la Prairie	PC
WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC
YAKIMOSKI, Blair	Transcona	PC

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, November 25, 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

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

##### **Bill 5—The City of Winnipeg Charter Amendment, Planning Amendment and Real Property Amendment Act (Conforming to Construction Standards Through Agreements)**

**Hon. Eileen Clarke (Minister of Indigenous and Municipal Relations):** Moved by Minister of Indigenous and Municipal Relations, seconded by Minister of Manitoba Infrastructure, the Bill 5, The City of Winnipeg Charter Amendment, Planning Amendment and Real Property Amendment Act (Conforming to Construction Standards Through Agreements).

**Madam Speaker:** It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Indigenous and Municipal Relations, seconded by the honourable Minister of Infrastructure (Mr. Pedersen), that Bill 5, The City of Winnipeg Charter Amendment, Planning Amendment and Real Property Amendment Act (Conforming to Construction Standards Through Agreements), be now read a first time.

**Ms. Clarke:** In collaboration with Manitoba Justice, the Office of the Registrar General, the Department of Indigenous and Municipal Relations has developed their proposal for legislation that would allow Manitoba municipalities to register conforming construction agreements at Land Titles. A conforming construction agreement is another voluntary tool in a municipality's planning and development approval tool box.

To meet building code or zoning bylaw requirements, developers will sometimes enter into an agreement with an adjacent landowner that places building controls or restrictions on an adjacent property and allows for continued access over the adjacent property, and an example would be fire exit purposes.

The bill is being introduced at the request of the City of Winnipeg. It will clarify and add certainty—contractual obligations between landowners and title holders and prevent disputes regarding transfers of title. It will ensure responsible development that respects public safety. This legislation would provide the municipality to become a party to these agreements, enable the municipality to register the agreements against the titles of affected properties. This would ensure that the agreements run with the land and that the building code or zoning requirements are met in the future, even when one of the properties is sold.

Conforming construction agreements are also known as special separation agreements. They are recognized—

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. Order, please. Order.

I would just ask the minister to—the first reading is supposed to be kept very short, so if she could just conclude her comments as soon as she's able to.

The—

**An Honourable Member:** Thank you very much.

The bill is being introduced at the request of the City of Winnipeg. It will clarify and add certainty to contractual obligations between landowners and title holders and prevent disputes regarding transfers of title.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Committee reports? Tabling of reports?

### MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage (Ms. Squires). And I would just indicate that the 90 minutes' notice has been

provided in accordance with our rules, and I would ask the Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage to please do her statement.

### **International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women**

**Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister responsible for the Status of Women):** I rise today to acknowledge that today marks the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and the start of the global 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence campaign. Today also falls in the month dedicated to raising awareness about domestic violence.

I thank my colleagues for wearing purple today to signify that we all stand together against domestic violence and that we recognize the need to have an International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

The 16 Days of Activism campaign runs annually from November 25th, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, through to December 10th, the international Human Rights Day. This campaign emphasizes that violence against women is a human rights issue.

Madam Speaker, violence against women continues to be a global pandemic. We know that one in three women worldwide has experienced physical or sexual violence, and in many cases, by an intimate partner or family member. Here at home in Canada, the single greatest risk factor for sexual violence is being female or being perceived to be female.

Indigenous women, women with cognitive or physical disabilities, young women and members of the LGBTQ community are at the highest risk for sexual violence. Our government is determined to work towards ending all types of violence against women and girls and creating a safer society for us all.

The 16 Days of Activism campaign invites each of us to reflect on what concrete steps we can take to address gender-based violence in our homes, our schools, our communities, our places of work and in our province. I welcome all Manitobans to follow the 16 days of action awareness campaign that was created with the Manitoba Women's Advisory Council, which I am happy to table today.

In closing, Madam Speaker, I would like to acknowledge and honour the great courage it takes

for survivors of sexual violence to reach out for help. It also takes considerable bravery for those suffering domestic violence to recognize that the very person that is saying I love you is the one who is hurting you and your family the most.

Madam Speaker, I encourage anyone who has or is experiencing sexual, domestic or gender-based violence to reach out for help. There are tremendous resources available here in Manitoba, and to name a few I'd like to highlight the Klinik 24-hour Sexual Assault Crisis Line, which can be reached at 1-888-292-7565, as well as the 24-hour domestic-violence information crisis line at 1-877-977-0007.

Madam Speaker, the time to speak up against violence against women, and end it, is now.

Thank you very much.

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** Today marks the international day for the elimination of violence against women and girls, where we recognize and confront the myriad of manifestations of abuse women and girls face worldwide and the efforts to put an end to this injustice.

Violence against women and girls is an atrocious violation of our freedom from discrimination, demoralization and degradation, while continuing to violate women and girls' fundamental human rights to security, freedom and human dignity.

There is simply not enough resources dedicated to addressing this issue, entrenching violence as a major barrier in protecting women and girls.

To address this, United Nations has called for the next 16 days to be dedicated as days of activism against gender-based violence.

\* (10:10)

These 16 days appropriately end on December 10th, Human Rights Day.

Each of the next 16 days focuses on a specific issue around gendered violence, including that women with disabilities are more likely to experience sexual assault, that the prevalence of sexual harassment of the workplace and the need to ally with men to foster healthy relationships and stop the violence.

Events in Winnipeg include a discussion about gender, youth and violence, and a memorial to honour women who have lost their lives to violence.

I'm so grateful for the hard work of women's organizations in Manitoba that are leading the charge in the eradication of violence towards women and girls. Every single day organizations like the North End Women's Centre, Sage House, Ka Ni Kanichihk, the Native Women's Transition Centre, Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata work tirelessly to provide a safe space for women and girls.

We all have a sacred responsibility to protect women and girls against violence, and let today and the next 16 days of action manifest our commitment, dedication and vow to end said violence.

Miigwech, Madam Speaker.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** I ask leave to speak to the minister's statement.

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

**Mr. Gerrard:** Addressing, reducing and eliminating violence against women needs action by men as well as by women. Up to 70 per cent of women experience physical or sexual violence in their lifetime, the majority by intimate partners or someone they know.

Sexual assault and partner violence cost Canadians \$9 billion each year.

Violence against women is rooted in unequal power relationships in society. It's a global problem not limited to a specific group of women. Violence against women hurts humanity on all levels, and only when we recognize our women as partners who deserve respect and who are equal decision makers with men can we truly move forward as a society.

Manitoba has consistently had one of the highest rates of intimate partner violence in all of Canada. In Manitoba, a female's risk of being victimized by a spouse or intimate partner is more than four times that of their male counterparts.

This government's last annual report for the Department of Families reports, and I quote, that reduced staffing resulted in a lower number of clients being served by shelters, particularly in non-residential, follow-up and children's program areas. This is not good enough.

Today marks the start of 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, an international campaign originating from the first Women's Global Leadership Institute. It goes until December the 10th, international Human Rights Day.

In the many years since the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, progress has been made, yet the problems persist. As men and as women, we need to do better in the days, months and years ahead.

Thank you. Miigwech.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### Recognizing Seniors Groups

**Mr. Andrew Smith (Southdale):** I rise in the Legislature today to speak about seniors groups in our communities. These associations are an integral part of our community, as they foster active lifestyles and independent living for our seniors. This is crucial, as this segment of the population is rising very quickly. According to Statistics Canada, more Canadians are 65 and over than under the age of 15—close to 5 million people. Over a span of five years, there was an increase of 14 per cent, a rate of growth more than double the 6 per cent for the Canadian population during that same period.

Two weeks ago, I had the privilege of serving coffee at the High Steppers Seniors tea club. The people there were 'brivrant,' energetic and leading highly independent lifestyles. Some of them were still running businesses and had their kiosks open at the event. You could feel a special sense of community there, as the people spent time together on a regular basis partaking in various co-ordinated activities. Their social schedules are always full. The club is operated entirely by volunteers for the benefit of their local community.

Another group that serves seniors in my constituency is the Seine River Seniors, who host many events, daily activities exclusively at the Southdale Community Centre. This group also has senior volunteer members actively involved in Grandmothers to Grandmothers network that helps children orphaned by the AIDS epidemic in Africa.

Last weekend I had the pleasure of assisting at the Agape Villa pancake house—or pancake breakfast, rather. This place is an independent living facility that combines the comfort and benefit of both the residents and the seniors group. These people are all neighbours and have camaraderie and share very busy schedules. Some are still active well into their 90s.

I ask that my fellow members here in the Legislature join me in welcoming them to the gallery this morning.

Madam Speaker, I ask leave to submit these names into Hansard.

**Madam Speaker:** Is there leave to submit these names into Hansard? [*Agreed*]

*Ron Walker, Orysia Jackson, Judy Schau, Liz Chammartin*

### **Kildonan East Reivers 2016 Football Champions**

**Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia):** Madam Speaker, I'm proud to rise to offer a well-deserved congratulations to the 2016 Winnipeg High School Football League Bowl champions the Kildonan East Reivers. The Reivers' motto is Respect All, Fear None, and it's reflected every day in the positive attitude and hard work that the student athletes employ both on and off the field.

This victory represents the culmination of 11 years of dedication and hard work of countless students, coaches and staff, led by coach-head coach Jason Hawkins. Coach Hawkins started the team in 2006, and produced some amazing athletes, scholars, citizens and coaches. This season, he worked with a group of young athletes, many of whom started with very little football experience, and instilled in them the values of hard work, commitment to their school and the larger community and a never-give-up attitude.

This commitment in community, which have been central to the Reivers' philosophy, was exemplified by the team when former Reiver coach Rob Scott passed away last year. Rob was a student, a volunteer coach and an employee of Kildonan East Collegiate, and the coaching staff, team and school were hit hard.

Rob's wife, Karen, and their young son, Isaac, attended a number of games this year, and Isaac quickly adopted the Reivers as his team. He would break them down; he'd cheer them on; and he'd high five the players. He was there on the sidelines for the championship games, and he was in the locker room afterwards. For the family, it meant the world to have some joy and celebration during a very difficult year. This story rightly sums up the Reivers' team spirit: the extended family fostered by football extends far beyond the field of play.

Madam Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating the Kildonan East Reivers on their

incredible season. Thank you for demonstrating that football is more—is about more than playing a sport; it's about heart, dedication and overcoming adversity. We wish you all the best in your bright futures. Today, we are all a part of Reiver Nation. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I ask leave for the names of the 2016 Kildonan East Reivers be added into Hansard.

**Madam Speaker:** Does the member have leave to add the names to Hansard? [*Agreed*]

*Jason Hawkins, head coach; Josh Pereira, offensive co-ordinator; Kasali Akili, defensive co-ordinator; Ryan Scott, defensive co-ordinator; Curtis Hunter, assistant offensive co-ordinator/running backs; Josh Pereira, quarterbacks; Michael Goring, offensive line; Ron Burley and Gloria Harris, receivers; Brendan Proulx, Justin Horton and Kyle Menezes, offensive assistants; Kemo Phillips, defensive line; Chris Cunnane, linebackers; Kasali Akili, secondary; Connor MacLeod, defensive assistant; Darren Ducharme and Rick Horton, athletic therapists; Cristian Molina at Kildonan Athletic Club, strength and conditioning; Ivan Harder and Blake Everett, equipment managers; Andrea Dueck and Eileen Blais, team managers; Abhishek Sharma, Alex Bater, Alex Desautels, Ali Rose, Ashley McCabe, Bradley Borges, Brandon Wiebe, Brenden Ruchkall, Brendon Reynolds, Cayden Strang, Cody van Driel, Cole Soltys, Corbin Walsworth, Danny Harris, Desmond Jeanson, Dillon Guiboche, Hunter Letkeman, Jackson Oneschuk, Jarod Hawryluk, Jessie Posthumus, Joseph Funk-Clements, Joseph Heyward, Joshua DeMarco, Justin Clarke, Kobe Elsley, Kyle Campbell, Mathew Baptiste, Michael Goldenstein, Michael McCallen, Nicholas Ducharme, Noah Thibert, Owen Smith, Rajbir Singh, Randall Wood, Riley Ginter, Robert Goldenstein, Spenser Dart, Talor Fisher, Trent Courchene, Trevor Parrish, Treyvin Rean, Tristen Chudy, players*

### **World Diabetes Awareness Month**

**Mrs. Sarah Guillemard (Fort Richmond):** Madam Speaker, I rise today to notify the House that November is World Diabetes Awareness Month. Of the 11 million Canadians living with diabetes or pre-diabetes, 373,000 are Manitobans.

There are two different types of diabetes: type 1 and type 2. Type 1 diabetes is an autoimmune

disease where the body destroys the insulin-producing islet cells and renders the person insulin dependent for life. Type 2 diabetes describes a condition where the body no longer uses its own insulin efficiently—efficiently and requires a change in diet and exercise, in addition to medication, in order to manage blood sugars.

My son, Alec, will turn 17 this Sunday. Alec was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes on his third birthday. He currently wears an insulin pump for 24 hours a day, seven days a week. His days are spent counting carbs and adjusting insulin levels according to his activity levels. Although there have been many advances in treatment for this condition, we have not yet discovered a cure.

I also have family members with type 2 diabetes, so I have a personal motivation to see this disease in decline.

One in three Canadians are living with diabetes; some of them do not even know it. I encourage all Manitobans to visit [diabetestest.ca](http://diabetestest.ca) to take the online CANRISK test and find out your own risk factors for developing this disease. The Canadian Diabetes Association has also launched a 21 Day Challenge to End Diabetes in order to promote healthy habits and reduce the risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

\*(10:20)

I would like to thank the Canadian Diabetes Association and the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation for all the work they have done to raise funds for the research and to bring awareness to the public about diabetes. Together, we can make a difference in the fight against this disease.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

### **Inclusive Manitoba**

**Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook):** I want to recognize and honour Manitobans today. In these past months, I have been introduced to hundreds of Manitobans that have been diligently working for a better Manitoba.

There are so many doctors, scientists, researchers, construction workers; I can go on and on. There are so many wonderful people who have been working towards finding solutions to many of the issues our citizens face. I had never realized the work being done to benefit our indigenous people; all I ever knew existed was the abject neglect.

It was when I came back home from—after going to RD Parker, that I learned of the neglect, because you live the neglect. The dilapidated, overcrowded homes, everyone having skin or stomach issues due to unsafe water, astronomical prices for food and seemingly always in mourning.

I have always inherently known that this province would never really succeed if it continued to ignore its most marginalized people: our indigenous, our immigrants, our disabled and our ever amazing LGBTQ community. We finally have a federal partner who has included all these groups.

I want to take the time to especially thank our LGBTQ people. I know they are healers; they possess such a great calm in their being, and you can easily pick up the wellness that flows from them. They were part of the medicine that had been forced away so many generations ago. It is only natural that as our traditional medicines resurge, our two-spirited relations will find their rightful place once again.

I hope you realize I'm giving you the keys to the city—to Manitoba. The solutions to the problems we face are within our very own Manitobans.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

### **Tanmay Bakshi**

**Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade):** Madam Speaker, I rise in the House today to recognize Tanmay Bashki [*phonetic*], who is joining us from Ontario. Mr. Bakshi is an accomplished software and app developer, programmer, algorithmist and YouTube. Mr. Bakshi has just returned from a—London where he was a keynote speaker at a major technology conference.

Mr. Bakshi is in Winnipeg as the keynote speaker at DisruptED, which is a conference being held, focusing on classroom uses of new and innovative technologies. The conference is an opportunity for industry leaders, educators and students to come together to explore the ways technology can enhance the future of education.

Mr. Bakshi has created many apps such as the youth-focused I Can, We Can! App, along with Guess, a number-guessing game for Apple Watch and iPhone, just to name a few.

He has also created algorithms ranging from a recursive Tower of Hanoi algorithm, which helps to solve the Tower of Hanoi problem, to AskTanmay, his most recent creation, which is the world's first

web-based natural-language, question-answering system to be powered by IBM Watson.

Madam Speaker, his—Mr. Bakshi hosts a popular YouTube series, Tanmay Teaches: Watson. His channel has nearly 5,000 subscribers, and videos have tens of thousands of views.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join, in a warm Manitoba welcome, to 13-year-old Tanmay Bakshi.

### Introduction of Guests

**Madam Speaker:** Prior to oral questions, I would like to introduce to you some guests that we have in the gallery.

We have with us today, from King's School, 10 students under the direction of Mr. Tyler Hendren and Janet Newediuk, who are the guests of the honourable member for Radisson (Mr. Teitsma) and the honourable Government House Leader (Mr. Micklefield).

Also in the public gallery, we have with us today Liz Chammartin and Judy Schau, who are the guests of the honourable member for Southdale (Mr. Smith).

On behalf of all honourable members in the House, we welcome you to the Manitoba Legislature.

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### Immigrant Population Economic Contribution

**Ms. Flor Marcelino (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Manitoba grew to nearly 1.3 million people this year, an increase of more than 16,000 since the previous year. This population growth keeps our communities growing and our economy strong. Since 1999, more than 150,000 new immigrants have settled in Manitoba, and newcomers have a real-GDP impact of over \$350 million per year. Madam Speaker, this is a made-in-Manitoba success story.

Why is the government trying to fix a system that isn't broken?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** Madam Speaker, Joseph Goebbels was the minister of propaganda for Adolf Hitler. He was a zealot. His behaviour, his actions, led to the deaths of millions of people, including many family members of people across Manitoba, including and not limited to, of course, the member for St. Paul (Mr. Schuler).

Yesterday, during debate on a Throne Speech, the member for Tyndall Park (Mr. Marcelino) invoked the name of Joseph Goebbels in reference to the member for St. Paul. I know he regrets that, and in the interests of setting a better tone for discussion and debate in the House, I do not wish to raise a point of privilege today. Rather than that, I would ask simply that the member for Tyndall Park rise in his place and apologize for an appalling lack of judgment.

#### Provincial Nominee Program Changes to Immigration Process

**Ms. Flor Marcelino (Leader of the Official Opposition):** The Provincial Nominee Program had 500 nominations a year when the Premier was last in government in the 1990s. Last year, we had 5,000 nominations, and years before, numbers were even higher until the Harper Conservatives capped Manitoba's nominees to 5,000 per year.

Statistics Canada reveals the immigrants to Manitoba have a much lower unemployment rate than the Canadian average, and once 'stablished', immigrants are very successful, many able to purchase their own homes within five years of arrival and an unemployment rate well below the provincial average.

Our economy has been robust because of our strong immigration programs. If the government changes the program to a cost-recovery model, it threatens to undermine its success.

Why are they trying to fix something that isn't broken?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** Madam Speaker, I'm trying to do what I can to fix something that I believe has been broken for far too long, and that is the nature of the tone in this House and the nature of the debates among our members—the nature of the debates among our members.

When we refer to each other in this House, it should always be done—it should always be done—with respect. *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Pallister:** It should always be done with respect, Madam Speaker. And I again encourage the member for Tyndall Park to join with us, all of us, in setting a better tone in this place. And referring to each other using and invoking Nazi leaders responsible for the deaths of millions of people is hardly an appropriate thing to do. And again—again—I encourage the



member for Tyndall Park (Mr. Marcelino) to simply stand in his place, do the right thing and offer an apology to a fellow member of this Chamber who should not ever be associated—ever be associated—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Pallister:** I ask the member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) if he would simply—

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mr. Pallister:** —simply respect the fact that we're trying to set a better tone here and that it would be useful for the member for Tyndall to simply rise in his place and offer an apology to the member for St. Paul (Mr. Schuler).

**Ms. Marcelino:** The Provincial Nominee Program is maximizing the numbers—the number of immigration spots available to the Province.

\* (10:30)

By imposing new costs onto the process, onto the backs of immigrants, the government will not create one more spot for new immigrants. What it will do, though, is discourage applicants who will find this an added burden to them.

Madam Speaker, I ask the Premier: Does he want a province where everyone can benefit or one where your pocketbook is the path to residence and citizenship?

**Mr. Pallister:** Throughout our history as a province, Madam Speaker, and prior to that time, we have been the home of hope for people from all over the world. We have sought and we have benefited from new immigration, and people have come here for many reasons. They have come here to find a better economic future. They have come here also to escape oppression, racism, personal attack, discrimination.

Joseph Goebbels led attacks against Christian churches, against Jewish people, against minorities, against people that were considered, by him and others, to be deviants in society. This was totally inappropriate. More than that, Madam Speaker, it's a scar on the history of mankind. I would ask again for the member for Tyndall Park to simply do the right thing, stand in his place and apologize to the member for St. Paul.

### **Sale of MTS to Bell Competitive Environment**

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood):** My question is to the Premier (Mr. Pallister). Madam Speaker, it's been nearly seven months now since Bell Canada announced an agreement to buy MTS, and there's still no official word from the federal government. When asked about the merger, the federal Minister for Innovation, Science and Economic Development recently told the media that the federal government, quote, has clearly shown its commitment to more competition, which benefits consumers.

Given that the federal government, both under Stephen Harper and the current Prime Minister, have both shown clear support for more competition, will this government withdraw its support for a merger that's clearly going to kill competition?

**Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade):** I do appreciate the member raising the issue. I know he's—has some issues with the 1990s, and he wants to bring back the 1990s and change history. He can't do that. But, you know, we believe this is—obviously, this is a business decision between two companies. They're moving this forward through the proper procedures. The federal government will have an opportunity to look at the competition side of it. They will make the ruling in due course. We're waiting for that ruling and see what the future holds for these two private companies.

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

**Mr. Maloway:** When Telus purchased Public Mobile in 2013, it received Competition Bureau approval within a month. Rogers Communications' takeover of Mobilicity, in 2015, received government approval within a week.

Madam Speaker, the fact that this merger is taking so long is a clear sign that something isn't right. Will the Premier admit that they've been backing the wrong horse? They bet on Bell when they should have been betting on MTS.

**Mr. Cullen:** I'm—maybe the minister's missing a few things. Clearly, Bell have laid out—*[interjection]*

The member opposite is missing a few things. Clearly, Bell have laid some things on the line in terms of their long-term plan to bring—invest \$1 billion to Manitoba. We think that's the right thing for Manitobans to do, and we think it's going to create jobs Manitoba—in Manitoba, Madam Speaker.

In fact, looking at the CFIB in terms of our business creation here in Manitoba, just this month, we—our business index has gone up 14 per cent over the month of November. That's a step in the right direction.

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

**Mr. Maloway:** The previous Conservative government of Stephen Harper did its best to promote competition and have at least four providers. If the MTS deal goes through, Manitobans will have a choice of just three. In addition to reduced wireless providers, Bell is—buying MTS will mean just one provincial wireline, broadband and telecom provider for businesses.

Will the Premier (Mr. Pallister) admit this is a bad deal for Manitobans?

**Mr. Cullen:** The first thing they will acknowledge is the good work by the Harper government over the past years.

Madam Speaker, we're here to rebuild the economy of Manitoba. We're taking steps to do that with the business community. We're moving in that direction.

I'm going to reference again the CFIB news release, and the quote is: It's evident the provincial government's recent positive steps to improve the business climate are being noticed by Manitoba's entrepreneurs.

That is a step in the right direction. There's a lot of work ahead to do, but we're prepared to do it.

#### **Islamic Social Services Association Request to Renew Funding**

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** There are over 15,000 Muslim families living in Manitoba, and, as hundreds of Syrian refugees seek safety in our province, that number is growing rapidly.

Existing agencies like the Islamic Social Services Association stepped in to share their expertise in providing culturally appropriate mental health supports for families who have survived such trauma and turmoil that Manitobans can barely even imagine.

Two years ago, ISSA started a prevention family support program to provide prevention supports to Muslim families and eventually evolved to provide desperately needed counselling for Syrian refugees.

The program's funding expired in October, but when ISSA asked for a meeting with the minister—

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

**Hon. Scott Fielding (Acting Minister of Education and Training):** I do appreciate the question.

This government has taken a stand. There's more immigration that's happening in this province than in any time. We've taken a position—and to be fair, the opposition government allowed this happen when they are in office—to provide supports and services for Syrian refugees.

Syrian refugees right now, you know, we're supplying a lot of housing and the co-ordination it's—we're very proud of that. I think you're going to hear more about immigration later on today from members.

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

**Ms. Fontaine:** I actually ran out of time, and what I wanted to say was that when the ISSA asked to meet with the minister to discuss their renewal of funding, he flat out refused, saying that he didn't think the program was necessary, saying that he felt that there were plenty of support programs available. But actually very few of them are culturally appropriate, and even fewer of them are preventative models like AISS's program.

Families have come to our province looking for safety and support, and programs like these are on the front lines and doing valuable work every day.

Will the minister agree to meet with ISSA and discuss their program and invest in preventative program supports?

**Mr. Fielding:** I will take that question from the Minister of Education on this.

We do know that under the previous administration a lot of these items over 17 years were ignored. So it's funny when you hear members opposite talk about these initiatives that could happen that could've happened under your administration.

Our concerns are with that. We want to hear with everyone as a part of this in terms of the communities. I know the Minister of Education and myself met with a number of immigrant groups and agencies and organizations just in the last few weeks alone.

**Ms. Fontaine:** So, just to be clear, it was a program that we did do and did support.

The funding under this current administration has expired. And it is a social service program, i.e., why my questions are directed to the Minister of Families.

It is important the network of front-line workers are equipped to deal appropriately with Muslim families. We owe it to our front-line workers. We owe it to the families that are coming into Manitoba.

Will the minister agree to meet with ISSA and reinstate their funding immediately?

**Mr. Fielding:** I can tell you from a Manitoba Housing perspective that we've done above and beyond in terms what we believe we can do in terms of immigration. We're open to meeting. We're open to dialogues with a number of groups and organizations for it. We think that this is important. Immigration is important to the province of Manitoba.

We're always open to ideas to supporting more immigrants coming here, whether it be from Syrian refugees or other items. That's why we made accommodations. That's why they'll continue to have supports and services from this government.

\* (10:40)

#### **Fentanyl Crisis—Sale of Pill Presses Request for Restrictive Legislation**

**Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia):** Madam Speaker, I'd like to once again welcome the students from Kildonan-East high school who have stayed here to listen to question period.

These young people know that fentanyl is a danger in our communities, and they're concerned. Young people like these students are being hit hard by a growing crisis that demands immediate action.

We're working on this issue today in a spirit of non-partisanship. We're looking for steps that can be taken immediately to stop this emergency from destroying any more families. The Minister of Justice will see that I put a bill to restrict the sale of pill presses on the Notice Paper. We believe this bill will be a concrete step in stopping the spread of fentanyl and other opioid drugs.

Will the minister commit to reviewing the bill and moving it forward quickly in this House for a vote?

**Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** I'd like to start off by saying that our hearts go out to the families who have been negatively impacted as a result of this fatal opioid, fentanyl, to those loved ones that they've lost, to those that have been hospitalized as a result of this.

I know that the Minister of Health has been working diligently with his counterparts across the country in calling on the federal government to include as part of their national strategy a ban on pill presses. So, we hope that they take this very seriously.

But I think it's very important for the member opposite to understand that we do take this seriously. I know that we need to all work together to ensure that we deal with this issue together.

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

**Mr. Wiebe:** Madam Speaker, pill presses are cheap and readily available online. They're an easy way for drug dealers to produce their own pills and create deadly mixes of fentanyl in other illegal drugs without the user knowing exactly what they're ingesting.

Our bill is modelled after a similar private members' bill brought forward by a Progressive Conservative member in the Alberta Legislature. That bill received all-party support and was passed, a result I believe we can achieve here in Manitoba.

Once again, will the minister commit to working with us to pass this bill and act now to stop the spread of fentanyl among our young people?

**Mrs. Stefanson:** I want to thank the member for the question.

Again, the Minister of Health has been working with his counterparts across the country. We do know that drug dealers don't respect boundaries between provinces. We know that there needs to be a national strategy when it comes to a ban on pill presses, and so we need to—the member opposite needs to understand that there has to be a national strategy with respect to this.

So, that's exactly what the Minister of Health is working on. We need to all work on that together to develop that national strategy to deal with this fatal opioid, fentanyl.

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

**Mr. Wiebe:** Madam Speaker, the minister is right to say that fentanyl doesn't respect our provincial borders. And it also doesn't respect lives. Families don't have time for our legislators to simply pass the buck. This bill takes immediate action now, without waiting on the federal government. Alberta did it; BC is doing it now, and it's one concrete step that can be taken here and now in Manitoba.

This is just one of many steps we've been calling for. The minister and the government can open up more treatment beds, open up safe injection sites, all concrete steps that can be taken now. We're willing to work with the minister on a made-in-Manitoba solution.

Will this minister commit to working with us?

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Well, I want to again—want to thank the member for the question.

This is a very serious issue, of course. And that's why, this afternoon, the Minister of Health and I will be announcing a social-media public-awareness campaign to educate our youths—our youth on the dangers of this fatal opioid.

And so, I hope members opposite will join with us to ensure that we educate our young people so that they understand how very serious this issue is.

### **Restorative Justice Government Position**

**Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto):** Did this Minister of Justice agree that the provincial government has an important role to play in expanding restorative justice across Manitoba?

**Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Yes, we do.

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

**Mr. Swan:** Well, today, Madam Speaker, although you wouldn't know it, is the last day of Restorative Justice Week in Manitoba.

Good folks have gathered across the province to pursue new and better alternatives in our justice system. Yet, as of today, if any person wants to learn more about restorative justice and goes to the Manitoba Justice website home page and they hit the link for restorative justice, all they see when they click that link is Minister Mackintosh's press release for November 2015, and the previous government's call for public input.

Why does this minister care so little about the important area of restorative justice?

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Well, the member opposite couldn't be more wrong.

We, absolutely, on this side of the House, care about restorative justice initiatives to help those Manitobans to—for a hand up to ensure that they're not placed in our jails unnecessarily, Madam Speaker. And a part of that will be part of our initiative moving forward to reduce court backlogs, to reduce the overcrowding in the jail system, and this is all part of our strategy, moving forward.

So I hope the member opposite will get on board and support us in our strategy moving forward as a made-in-Manitoba solution.

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

**Mr. Swan:** When this Minister of Justice returned from her first Justice ministers' meeting, her press release stated that she would be learning about restorative justice from other jurisdictions.

Well, until this year, Manitoba was recognized as a national and an international leader at restorative justice. There's tremendous experience in our indigenous communities; there's tremendous experience and expertise in our faith communities and other communities.

As we watch both crime and incarceration spike under this minister's watch, why wouldn't she listen to so many strong and progressive voices in Manitoba, seek better outcomes and ensure that restorative justice was a part of this week's Throne Speech?

**Mrs. Stefanson:** And I thank the member opposite for the question.

In fact, I have been touring around Manitoba. I have been meeting with elders. I've been visiting our institutions. I've been meeting with all sorts of stakeholders within the justice community to ensure that we do look at ways of restorative justice initiatives. So I am listening to Manitobans.

But I don't think we need to stop within our borders. I think we can learn from other provinces as well to see what they're—what is working for them and how we can move these initiatives forward.

So we need to look beyond our boundaries, but certainly I recognize the expertise of individuals

here, and we will be working with individuals to develop that made-in-Manitoba solution.

**Phoenix Sinclair Inquiry  
Completion of Recommendations**

**Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook):** As a Liberal member of this House, I await for an apology as well.

It's been many years since Phoenix Sinclair's story came to light. There were so many Manitobans who came together to mourn. We need to make it right.

The Children's Advocate's special report found that only 29 per cent of the recommendations have been completed and some of the key recommendations have been stalled. This is despite the fact that we are nearing the third anniversary of when the government received the final inquiry report from Commissioner Hughes.

Ministers, I have heard repeatedly that you will take no lessons from the previous government, so can you table the list of recommendations that you will be enacting, before Christmas?

**Madam Speaker:** I would just like to remind the member that when questions are posed they should be posed through the Chair in a third-party manner.

**Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Families):** This government takes those recommendations very seriously.

In the first seven months, including The Protecting Children Act, as well as reintroducing an enhanced Children's Advocate legislation, which—the Children's Advocate, by the way, had suggested—is thrilled and excited about it. We'll be implementing over 13 of the recommendations attached to the Phoenix Sinclair-Hughes inquiry.

So we believe we've been taking action. Our Throne Speech talks about three concrete things in terms of dealing with child welfare. We need to put together a plan, which we will have, in terms of addressing child-welfare issues. We also talked about Protecting Children Act and enhancing the powers and independence of the Children's Advocate, who is very happy with the legislation we're proposing.

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

**East-Side Road Construction  
Construction East of Highway 304**

**Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook):** I rate—I read the latest infrastructure construction tender list.

Unfortunately, for Highway 304, my east-side-road highway, there are only two projects for west of Highway 304. I have previously tabled the map of Manitoba. The east-side road is in the east.

\*(10:50)

For Shoal Lake 40, it only states westerly to the reserve boundary, nothing for the actual reserve.

Minister, as you enjoy your daily tea, recall where that water comes from.

I ask: Can you table the construction timeline for the east-side road, east of Highway 304, and the Freedom Road? Thank you.

**Madam Speaker:** I would just like to remind the member, again, to please direct questions through the Chair in a third-party fashion.

**Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Minister of Infrastructure):** I thank the member for that question because it allows me to announce once again our record investment in infrastructure all across Manitoba: \$2 and a half billion—

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

**Mr. Pedersen:** Two and a half billion.

The construction industry is very excited about this because it gives them a surety that, moving forward, not just in election years where the previous government pushed up their spending, there'll be consistent spending each and every year in the next five years of—in construction.

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

**Agencies, Boards and Commissions  
Request to Table Review**

**Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook):** The government recently released another distressing report: I mean their Speech from the Throne.

They promised to reduce the number of—200 organizations by 20 per cent. I'm sure that when the government knocked on those doors, Manitobans weren't told of this either.

There are so many families worried and already struggling. This is usually a time for celebration.

How can they celebrate with that fact looming overhead?

Minister, can you please table a timeline of what these austerity cuts are going to look like so that Manitobans can start preparing for the cuts?

**An Honourable Member:** Can he table a timeline?

**Ms. Klassen:** Can he table a timeline?

**Madam Speaker:** Thank you.

**Ms. Klassen:** Thank you.

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

I want to clarify for the member, she—I'm not sure she's fully understanding. She's referring to the government's announcement about our Agencies, Boards and Commissions review. We are, of course, over there to analyze, to say what do these boards do, what is the number of them, is there a natural overlap and duplication that can be addressed? This is all part of our overall strategy to find those efficiencies.

All Manitobans will be well served by this exercise, as they are being well served by our red tape initiative, our overall fiscal review, our Health review and other measures this government is undertaking to make sure that Manitoba is the most improved province in the *[inaudible]*

#### **City of Winnipeg Amendments Construction Agreement Regulations**

**Mr. Jeff Wharton (Gimli):** Our government is setting a new course for Manitoba, a course that will lead to economic opportunity, improvements to front-line services, that Manitoba put back responsible—put Manitoba back on a fiscal, responsible track.

Can the Minister of Indigenous and Municipal Relations tell the House more about the legislation she introduced today and how it responds to the needs of our partners at the City of Winnipeg?

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Hon. Eileen Clarke (Minister of Indigenous and Municipal Relations):** I'd like to thank my colleague for that very good question.

Firstly, I'd like to acknowledge our member from Point Douglas and his dance troupe. They put on a stellar jiggling performance this morning. The member opposite truly has a very large spirit for dance. It's much appreciated.

Further to Bill 5, our new Progressive Conservative government is committed to a new, better approach to working in collaboration and partnership with all Manitoba communities. When adjacent landowners enter into agreement that places controls or restrictions on one of the properties, this legislation allows municipalities to become a party to these agreements and have them registered against the affected titles. This will ensure the agreements run with the land and that the setbacks or requirements are met in the future.

Our government is working with municipalities to ensure that regulations are streamlined, practical and support.

#### **Kelvin High School Gym Expansion Continued Funding Support Inquiry**

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Fort Rouge):** Last night, I was pleased to attend a wine and cheese fundraiser at Kelvin High School to support their new gym and fitness centre. People turned out to hear the details about the new addition to Kelvin, which is funded in part by provincial dollars, but also supplemented by \$1.1 million they raised themselves as a community.

The project's a win-win, helps educational goals, healthy lifestyle goals and contributes to the overall well-being of the community.

I ask whether we can count on the Minister of Education for continued support for this important project.

**Hon. Scott Fielding (Acting Minister of Education and Training):** I will take the question from the Minister of Education.

As a new government, we're interested investing in the education system, making sure the system's sustainable for the future, whether that be—whether that involves investing in actual—the education system or the capital infrastructure. We're going to continue do that, Madam Speaker. We're going to do that in a way that's comprehensive, that makes sense for Manitobans.

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

**Mr. Kinew:** At the event last night, two students, Hayley and Kiran, both recent grads at Kelvin High School, spoke about some of the challenges of being student athletes there since the high school has only one gym and yet has great teams in sports like football, volleyball, basketball and even curling. That means that their one gym is overcrowded. In

a climate like ours, they need more space for recreational activities at the school. With the private funding, Kelvin can expand beyond just building a gym, though, and turn it into a state-of-the-art facility that benefits the whole community.

When this project comes back to the Province's Public Schools Finance Board in January, can we count on the minister's support?

**Mr. Fielding:** This government is absolutely committed to enhancing education, whether it be an education system, whether it be capital projects that the member opposite had spoke of.

Our questions, I guess, are in terms of the history, because sometimes the 'wes' way to judge the future is look back at the history. And we know what happened under the previous administration. We know that over 17 years, we're having poor scores in education. We also know that there is overcrowdedness in schools, and those projects should have been done under the previous administration.

So our question is: Why didn't they get it done when they were in office for 17 years?

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

**Mr. Kinew:** This project was announced under the previous government. All that needs to take place is for the Public Schools Finance Board to give its final approval when it comes back in January.

And, when the community comes together like this to raise \$1 million, it's a strong sign that it's a great project and one that the community values a ton. And keep in mind, this won't just benefit my constituency; it also benefits students in the constituency of the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard), the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Stefanson), and because of the IB program, constituencies all across the city.

So, with that in mind, we just want to make sure that this commitment is going to be followed through on. Will the minister tell us whether they will break ground in time for Canada's 150th?

**Mr. Fielding:** You know, there's some fantastic projects that are out there that have been talked about in the public in terms of the education system. We're going to review all projects as we go forward on a capital basis. We also know from the past, in terms of the finances, the amount of dollars that we're spending on debt-servicing costs has dramatically

increased under the previous administration, the NDP government.

What that means, Madam Speaker, is you have less money for things like educational projects; that means less money for different—other services.

We need to get our finances under control. We need to fix the finances, and then we're able to repair some of the services that are here. That's exactly what this government's going to do.

### **Carbon Tax Revenue Referendum Legislation**

**Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley):** In the minds of many, the most pressing issue facing us in this era is, in fact, climate change.

What I would like to know is: Will this government's new \$1-billion-per-year carbon tax be potentially negated by this government's other commitment to bring in legislation governing referenda any time a tax is going to be increased?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** No.

\* (11:00)

**Mr. Altemeyer:** I wonder if that extensive answer could perhaps be extended a little bit.

Is the Premier confirming today that the carbon price, which is going to bring 1 billion additional dollars into government coffers every single year by the time it is fully rolled out, that that will not be blocked by the referendum legislation his government is bringing forward?

**Mr. Pallister:** No.

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

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. Order, please.

### **Carbon Tax Plan Dollar Amount Per Ton**

**Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley):** Madam Speaker, I think the Premier may want to review Hansard. I asked him if he would confirm it wouldn't be blocked, and he said no. If it's not going to be blocked, he should have said yes. I'll let him clarify.

Since he has—seems to have answers for us today, let's try another one.

Could he tell Manitobans what his plan is for the carbon tax? Will he be bringing it in this coming year, and, if so, at what dollar amount per carbon ton?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** We'll be bringing in a made-in-Manitoba plan. It's really exciting.

The member's preamble was totally false, as are most of his preambles, Madam Speaker, but our concern is, of course, getting the job done where the previous administration failed over 17 years to get it done.

### **Employment Plan Government Intention**

**Mr. Kevin Chief (Point Douglas):** I first want to start by thanking all my colleagues that joined me this morning over at the LITE blueberry pancake breakfast. Not only did they have some blueberry pancakes—you would have been proud, Madam Speaker: many of them know how to cut a mean polka. Some of them even know how to jig. So I want to thank them for coming.

They say it's always a good day, you're always going to have a good day if you start in Winnipeg's North End. LITE stands for Local Investment Towards Employment. The No. 1 question that people had there this morning was this government has lost 12,000 full-time jobs in six months.

They just simply want to know: What is their plan?

**Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade):** And I do appreciate the member's question relative to job creation in Manitoba.

We know we've got a lot of work to do ahead of us but we are certainly having tremendous dialogue with the business community. We are having really good dialogue with the labour movement, as well. And together we will move the economy forward.

We know, on this side of the House, that positive partnerships will lead to prosperity for all Manitobans and it will lead to prosperity for government, as well.

So, yes, there's a lot of work ahead of us, but this government is prepared to do that work.

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

**Mr. Chief:** According to Stats Canada, six months, they've lost 12,000 full-time jobs and counting, and for some reason that wasn't quite enough for the Minister of Infrastructure (Mr. Pedersen), who decided that he would reduce his budget by 20 per cent, which equals \$126 million. Without question that's going to result in job losses, Madam Speaker.

So I ask the minister: Which job does he think is unnecessary? Is it the disaster management co-ordinators? Is it heavy equipment operators? Is it highway safety officers?

**Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance):** Madam Speaker, I thank the member for the question. This was asked in his Throne Speech remarks yesterday, and I answered it in my Throne Speech remarks yesterday, as well.

This member stood and tried to scare civil servants, but what he didn't put on the record yesterday in the Throne Speech debate is that his government, in 1999, undertook the same senior management review. Now, the member's premise is false because these are not positions within the civil service. These are outside of the regular agreement. *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Friesen:** He doesn't make that distinction. But, of course, when they do it, they say it's good business practice. When we do it, they say Manitobans should fear.

Manitobans should not fear. We are going in the right direction. We'll do the work that they left undone.

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

**Mr. Chief:** I'm glad that the Finance Minister liked my response to the Throne Speech so much.

The fact is, the only people who are scaring lifelong public servants is the Finance Minister when he said he was going to cut 112 of them in a press release that they had.

Madam Speaker, their jobs plan is being described like this in the media: Layoffs coming out of nowhere, says a town's mayor. It's pretty heartbreaking, a worker says, after he and others received layoff notices, and now we see that the AMM has passed an extremely important emergency resolution asking for action to be taken in Churchill. You've got the closure of the Port of Churchill. You've got cuts to the rail service. There's been over 100 job losses after 120 days and counting.

Is that enough for the Premier to visit the North, and, as the Minister of Health says, is he willing to go before they're eating turkey at Christmas? *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please.



**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** Well, again, Madam Speaker, all the NDP is doing today and throughout this session is revealing that they've learned nothing by their old tactics of fear not working in the election, so they continue to use them. They try to frighten civil servants and children and people depending on cancer drugs because they're desperate tactics.

We will replace their fear with hope. When we build the economy we'll fix the finances, and we'll repair the services too. But their old tactics should never extend to personal attack. And so, again, I would ask the member for Tyndall Park, because this is no place for personal attacks, because we're wearing a ribbon today—signifies that we respect others and that we want to protect others when they are attacked. And so I ask the member for Tyndall Park to do the right thing.

We have an opportunity. Over half our members are new here. We can set a new tone in this House, one of respect for one another. I invite the member for Tyndall Park to rise in his place, do the right thing and apologize to the member for St. Paul (Mr. Schuler) now.

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

#### Point of Order

**Mr. Ted Marcelino (Tyndall Park):** Madam Speaker, on a point of order.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for Tyndall Park, on a point of order.

**Mr. Marcelino:** In deference to the perceived slight, I want to apologize to the House and retract comments that I may have made that even remotely suggests any affinity to the Nazi party of old.

I want to apologize to the House and retract the comments I made yesterday, and, in the heat of debate, and more as an expression of my frustration about getting no answers, we sometimes make comments and comparisons which, on reflection, do not properly reflect the views we wish to say or express. This is our collective workplace; I understand that. And, to the member for St. Paul, to the Premier and to everybody else, I know that we must all uphold, respect and decorum, and I know all members—I know we will all do our best to live up to those standards. Thank you.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable Government House Leader, on that same point of order.

**Hon. Andrew Micklefield (Government House Leader):** Madam Speaker, there was nothing perceived; there's nothing remote about the insult, nothing vague about drawing an analogy between our member and the murderous, hateful, anti-Semitic, genocidal Nazi regime. The word apology was used and, thus, we ruefully accept that, but, with students in the gallery, we are disappointed that it's not more forthright or clear.

\* (11:10)

And I certainly hope that these kinds of disappointing and distasteful displays of poor judgment will cease immediately.

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Official Opposition House Leader):** Yes, just further to the point made by the Government House Leader, it is very clear that the member said, I want to apologize for the—to the House and retract the comments that he made yesterday. That is very clear. That's what he said.

**Madam Speaker:** On this point of order raised by the member for Tyndall Park, I would indicate that this is a valid point of order that is being raised. I do thank the member for his withdrawal of those comments and his apology to the House and to the member.

I did have a chance to peruse those comments this morning, and it is distressing that yesterday we ended up going down the road and hearing comments like that in this House. People have often said politics is messy, but politics should never be mean. Politics should never take us over a line in the comments that are being made here and personally drawing, you know, comments in a derogatory way about people.

It's fine to debate ideas; it's fine to debate, you know, logical comments that are being made, policies, ideas, but once people start to cross the line and go over into some of the comments that have been made—yesterday was not a very good day for democracy in this House. It did start to go down the road of a serious lack of decorum towards the end of the day. Respect is what this needs to be about, and it's respect for each other, respect for democracy, respect for the public that has put us here. And when I go back to look at the Throne Speeches when people first came here in the spring, those Throne Speeches, the responses to the Throne Speech, were some of the best I've ever heard. And they were really about why people came here and why it mattered. And I think some of that has been

forgotten as we are getting towards the end of the year.

And I would urge members to try to get back to that because we do have children in the gallery. We have people watching, not just in the gallery, but this is streamed. I think we do have a higher responsibility in this Chamber and other Chambers across Canada to raise the level of debate.

You know, we've heard it is 2016 many times in different connotations, but I think as we have been discussing here before and trying to set a tone, when we're trying to teach children in schools that bullying is not acceptable, we also then have to look at decorum here in the House. And it should be—you know, we can be passionate; we should be passionate, because we do fight with words. But we have to carefully choose those words so that they are not hurtful to individuals or to democracy or to this institution.

Yesterday I did have to stand on a number of occasions, and by the end of the day, it was frustrating, because the moment I sat down, remarks were starting to fly again. There needs to be respect for this Chair too.

So, I would urge all honourable members, this may be a very good lesson in what has happened, you know, today, because it's a reminder that we have to be more thoughtful. Everybody has to be more thoughtful. The tone does need to change, and it does need to become about respect.

And especially when we're looking, you know, and talking today about domestic violence, when we're talking about, you know, harassment and bullying, we have to be the role models. And it can be hard sometimes. But we do fight with words here, and that is at least a good thing; in other countries, they choose other weapons. We have an incredible opportunity in Canada with freedom of speech, but that doesn't mean we can go so far and lead with innuendo into things that should never, ever be brought forward in today's democracy.

So, this is a good lesson. We do have a lot of new members, and I think the challenge is before us. And this has been a good example and a good reminder we all have to do better, because that's going to be better for Manitoba and our institutions and our democracies and as role models to children.

So, I thank the members for their comments. I thank the member for his retraction and his apologies.

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**Madam Speaker:** And we will now move into petitions.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

#### THRONE SPEECH (Fourth Day of Debate)

**Madam Speaker:** Resuming debate on the proposed motion of the honourable member for Fort Richmond (Mrs. Guillemard), and the amendment and amendment thereto, standing in the name of the honourable member for the Interlake—oh, pardon me—standing in the name of the honourable member for Tyndall Park, who has eight minutes remaining.

**Mr. Ted Marcelino (Tyndall Park):** The Throne Speech that was delivered a few days ago leaves much to be desired. It's from that sense of frustration that I might have gone over the line, Madam Speaker. And I'll try to stay within the ambit of the Throne Speech.

Now, let me start by trying to dissect the codes that were used in this Throne Speech. The word fixing the finances is a code word. It's a code word in English that means politicizing the budget process. And the government should stop picking ideological fights and actually work for all Manitobans.

There was an attempt to manufacture political crisis in the budget in order to offer a fake justification for their program of cuts and eventual privatization. The privatization of front-line services was a—it was an attempt, a crude attempt, in 1988, when home care was proposed to be privatized. And, even during the last session of this House, there were attempts at introducing, in their own way, a Conservative plan for a two-tier health-care system.

The fake savings of over \$100 million in their last budget—it was more about, as the Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen) said, it was more about rounding off. The actual figures were about \$125 million less. And the inflation of the budget numbers by about 150—I think that's the number, \$150 million—it was used to label the previous

government's deficit as historic. And it was used more for political purposes than anything else.

When the Auditor General looked at the books, it turns out the government inflated their deficit figure by more than 15 per cent. And they could never explain how they came up with it.

\* (11:20)

And they have not apologized for that.

The Throne Speech breaks an election commitment and launches an attack on front-line services and the people that provide those important services. The government wants to off-load their financial problems onto the backs of those workers, which is—it's a shame. There are better ways of doing it. And when I say there are better ways of doing it, there are hard choices that should be made. That's what governments do. That's what leadership does.

The Throne Speech cut jobs. The Throne Speech slashed wages. And the—when, come to think of it, when the minimum wage was frozen at its current level, the Conservative government has chosen to keep the poor a little bit poorer.

And when there was an increase in the salaries of the members of Cabinet by roughly 20 per cent, it was, well, it's just \$330,000 for the entire Cabinet, but \$330,000 is being used to justify a so-called mandate. The reasoning behind the increase was that, well, we got a mandate. That's what members opposite were saying. They were saying that it's their entitlement.

And, of course, the culture of entitlement is always bad in more ways than one, because when members of the Cabinet accepted their paycheques, they're expected to say, well—or at least do their job. And part of their job, which I believe should be more defined and refined, is to answer questions during question period.

And what I found myself doing was staying up late and trying to connect whatever non-answers I got when I asked questions, whether inside the House or in committee, and it's that level of frustration that really impels—impelled me, personally, to take it personally. And when I am insulted by the answers that were given, which were more deflections and skating around, then I could explain most of my misbehaviour.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Mr. Scott Johnston (St. James):** Thank you, Madam Speaker—I actually got it right this time, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, just before I begin, let me also indicate to the House my appreciation for the members' support for domestic violence today with their wearing the colour purple. I think that it certainly is a very positive reflection on this House that all members are certainly united in their support of dealing with this very important issue.

Madam Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise to put a few words on record in support of our government's Throne Speech. Our government's Throne Speech addresses that after a decade of debt, we are focused on fixing finances; after a decade of decay, we are focused on repairing our services; after a decade of decline, we are focused on rebuilding our economy. Our Throne Speech speaks to all these things.

Our government is setting a new course for Manitoba, a course that will lead to economic opportunity and improvements to front-line services that will put Manitoba back on a responsible fiscal track.

Our government is listening to Manitobans and will govern for Manitobans, fighting for changes that will result in a stronger, safer and more prosperous province. Working together, we will make Manitoba the most improved province in Canada, and I am proud to be part of a government that has accomplished a great deal over the past number of months and a government that is going to do even more over the next few months and years to come.

Manitoba is a better place when we all work together, and it is important to note that the opposition has supported two thirds of our legislative agenda up to this point, a credit to some of the wisdom practised by our friends in the opposition benches.

I look forward to working with our government and all parties in this Legislature to move our province forward in the right direction. Fixing the finances is the most important—is most important to our economy and the future of our province. The services that we all rely on and require a strong, stable economy that our government is working to fix.

Our government has begun the hard work required to fix our finances, repair the damage and correct the course of our great province. The recent

release of the 2015-16 Public Accounts confirms physical challenges we have inherited and threaten the province's bottom line and the ability to deliver the service to Manitobans depend on. The province's debt has doubled and Manitobans now pay some of the highest taxes in the country, and our Throne Speech addresses a plan to correct that. Our plan does not include continuous credit-rating downgrades which we all know is detrimental to this province.

To get results, we must work together. Our prebudget consultations welcome the input of all Manitobans, and our government has extended invitations to members of all parties in the Manitoba Legislature to be involved. And I am proud to join the Minister of Families (Mr. Fielding) and the member from Assiniboia in hosting a prebudget consultation in west Winnipeg and to hear from Manitobans about the budget and work towards a goal of helping them.

I extend an invitation to my honourable friends in the opposition. I'll even buy you coffee and donuts if you show up, even coffee and donuts. To the members of—the member from Wolseley and the member of Tyndall Park and certainly my honourable friend from Fort Garry-Riverview and the member from Minto, who is an old St. Jameser—more than welcome—more than welcome—to join us—more than welcome to join us.

The Budget 2017 consultation process is the most comprehensive consultation effort ever undertaken by the government in Manitoba. It is important to note that our budget consultations, the most open and transparent in the history of our province, will actually result in a budget, unlike the previous administration's efforts.

Manitoba elected us to listen to them, to build a budget that will help each of them every day, and Madam Speaker, we will do that. We are listening to Manitobans. Together, we will fix our province's finances, repair the services that Manitoba families rely upon, and rebuild our economy.

The challenge is great, but together—and I—when I say together, I also include the opposition—we are up to this task.

One thing we have heard during the budget consultation process from Manitobans is that red tape is overwhelming; bureaucracy negatively affects them each and every day. Red tape costs Manitobans every day by stifling growth and killing jobs. There

is a lack of regulatory accountability in our province with no measurement system and no central government body responsible for red tape.

\* (11:30)

Our government will create regulatory accountability through our red take—Red Tape Reduction Task Force comprised of business, labour, community agencies and government. Reducing red tape will be an important part of Manitoba becoming Canada's most improved province, and that is our government's goal.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to stand with a government that 'prioritize' safety of its citizens, especially when we are preparing for the federal government's changes and adoption of legalized marijuana. This whole issue represents challenges. Our government didn't have legalization of marijuana as an item on our agenda, but the reality of this—[*interjection*]-also, too, my coffees and donuts come into that question.

Madam Speaker, it's not—it wasn't on our government's agenda, but it is a situation that our government is going to have to address, and we will address it with due diligence. I don't believe that the federal government realized all of the issues that surround the legalization of marijuana. And we look forward to working with them to try to resolve this question for the safety of Manitobans.

We also recognize the dangers of fentanyl possess to Manitobans, and recognize that public education and improved addiction services are an important part of our response to this crisis.

Our government has immense faith in our Health Minister. He understands the dangerous reality of this situation and is working with partners, in this province and across the country, to create long-term solutions to this crisis.

We will work to develop a strategy to combat the rise of fentanyl overdoses and fentanyl use to make Manitoba a safer province for all Manitobans.

As our Lieutenant Governor said Monday, our province's greatest asset is its people. That is why our government is committed to improving fundamentals of education in Manitoba. We have seen that our students aren't performing at the level that they should be, and there is a need for Manitoba to reinvest in our education programs. The literacy and numeracy that our government will develop will

concentrate on improving students' achievement and skills in the core area.

Madam Chairman, our government is going to demand results, and our Minister of Education is going to get those results. We will consult with partners across Manitoba to ensure that this program—sorry—this program supports the diversity that we see in our province. We will not accept low rankings of Manitoba students, low results in PCAP and PISA results, which are unacceptable.

We recognize that without good education opportunities in Manitoba that our province cannot succeed. Without education, we cannot become the most improved province in Canada, and our government recognizes that.

Madam Speaker, the aerospace industry is an important part of this province, and speaking firsthand, as the MLA for St. James, I can say it has a tremendous impact on my constituency. Manitoba's aerospace sector is world class. It employs approximately 5,400 people and contributes millions of dollars to our Manitoba economy. Manitoba has the largest aerospace presence in western Canada, and that's something we as Manitobans can be very proud of.

Our government is concerned that the federal government's plan to compromise fighter jet manufacturing in Manitoba will deal a serious blow to our province. Our government is committed to openness and transparency, and we look forward to working with the federal government to ensure that Manitoba receives its fair share of contracts.

Manitoba's industry is recognized as a high value, and these initiatives can challenge Manitoba jobs. These careers are so important to our provincial economy in all levels of government and that all parties should stand together and support these jobs. And all parties have stood together to support our aerospace industry, and I, as the member from St. James, who houses a significant part of the aerospace industry, do appreciate the support of opposition on this issue.

For Manitoba's aerospace industry to advance manufacturing and machine-learning economies is extremely positive. Our aerospace and advance-manufacturing industries are on the cutting edge of technology, and we, our government, is working with our industry to develop an aerospace factory of the future, which will provide the tools and support to upgrade Manitoba's manufacturing facilities.

Madam Speaker, once again, I am proud to be part of a government that is working to fix the finances and repair the economy and rebuild the services of this great province.

I thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Madam Speaker, it's a privilege to be here in the Chamber today to talk about the recent Speech from the Throne. It's a privilege which I owe my thanks to the residents of River Heights who've supported me in my efforts to represent them and to speak and work on their behalf, on behalf of all Manitobans. I say thank you to the residents of River Heights.

In making my comments on the Speech from the Throne, I will speak particularly to the concerns of River Heights' residents, and I will speak particularly with respect to financial matters, to health care, to the environment and sustainable development, to child and family services, and to infrastructure, the areas where I have or share the critic role in the Manitoba Liberal Party.

First, to the residents of River Heights, I want to thank those of you who attended our forums on brain health and on seniors. It was good to see so many of you come out and contribute to the discussion of what needs to be done in our province with respect to these important issues.

I also want to thank you for the good work that so many of you, day-to-day, in helping others and efforts which are not just in River Heights, but which affect people all over our province. I give as one example the get-together I was at last night in support of the new gym and the new community facility for Kelvin High School. It is a tremendously important initiative. A very substantial amount of private-sector fundraising has already occurred, and all of us in the community are hopeful that this will continue and that the gym will be built as soon as possible.

Now to talk about the financial situation. The Conservative government brought in their budget earlier this year. It was, as I said then, essentially an NDP budget, and now the Conservatives, after overspending in health care in the first half of the year, are talking austerity. We will wait for the next budget to see exactly what is going to be proposed, but in the interim and for now, I will mention that I've spoken frequently of the need for the provincial government to set the government and department spending budgets at the beginning of the year and

then adhere to these budgets and to, where necessary, include contingency funds if there are concerns about possible emergencies which may arise during the year so that the government will, as a whole, be able to come in at a spending budget and not overspend.

This is what I have referred to numerous times as the economics 101 of governing and managing finances. If you can adhere to your spending budgets, then the chances are good that you'll be able to manage the government finances well. As a rule, revenue estimates are not far off. Occasionally, but not often, are there need to be adjustments during the year as a result of that. Good planning so that spending is in line with revenue then follows.

\* (11:40)

Where a government doesn't manage its expenditures well, it's a set-up for problems. Indeed, that is what we saw under the former government, that every year the former government spent more than it budgeted and that created problems which accumulated, and over the cumulative 17 years, the overexpenditures added up to about \$3 billion. That was a substantial part of where we are today in the economic and the financial situation of the government and the province.

You can, therefore, imagine my concern when, not long ago, a report from the present government said that the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority was estimating that it would come in at \$100 million over budget by the end of the fiscal year. The present government has had its hands on the reins for almost all of the current fiscal year, and in spite of this they've not yet managed to sort out how to manage finances in Health to stay within the budget.

I will talk about additional reasons why it's important for each department to stay within its expenditure budget. When a department is given a budget at the beginning of the year, the department has the ability to plan and carry out its mandate without fear of the Premier (Mr. Pallister) getting all excited about problems with financial management a few months into the year and ordering cutbacks in expenditures.

Too often managers within departments have not had the ability to plan properly because we've had, in the past, a premier who kept fiddling with expenditure decisions and asking for spending cutbacks throughout the year because the government wasn't doing a good job of managing its finances to meet the budget targets.

In this regard I am somewhat concerned about what's happening now and that we're hearing from many throughout Manitoba that decisions in this government with regard to funding this year—and we're already more than halfway through the year—are not being made quickly and this is giving rise to a lot of uncertainty.

It appears that the present government, having set its budget for this year, and the voting on the budget having been completed before the end of June, is still engaged in ongoing tinkering and changing of the budget day by day and making cuts and more cuts. This sort of micromanagement from the top is a problem if it's interfering with decisions on current year budgeted funding.

If this intense look at expenditures is aimed just at developing the budget for next year, that is another matter, and that, indeed, is a proper thing that needs to be done to make sure that next year the budget that is put forward matches the needs and matches what is a government's direction. There does need to be a careful look at the spending plan for next year.

Now, it seemed, of course, to many of us that, in their budget, the Conservative government initially adopted what's an, essentially, an NDP budget without giving it the consideration it really needed, and that what is happening now the government really needs to get on with making decisions for this fiscal year where they've not been made yet and whether those decisions are positive or negative so that people within government and those affected outside of government know what they're working with so that projects are not just waiting because the government is not making a decision.

*Mr. Doyle Pivniuk, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair*

In the above context I was pleased recently to see that the government has already put out tenders for the coming year. Getting tenders out early is good financial management. The government is, at least in this area, doing what needs to be done, though I must add that I, and my colleagues, were certainly surprised and perplexed to discover that the government is not planning to do even a single centimetre of construction on the east-side road this coming year, according to the tenders which were put out.

We stand to be corrected if the government can provide different evidence, but from what we've seen so far, it is sadly beyond belief that a government which says it's a government of all the province

would so neglect people who have been disadvantaged for so long.

I'll move on to talk about health care. It is a cruel irony that the government has had such a long wait before even announcing the members of the wait reduction task force. Having to wait for the task force is a sad testament to the priority that the government has put on this effort, which, to the rest of us in Manitoba, is a top priority.

That the government also took more than six months to begin its health-care sustainability and innovation review also speaks to the government's slow place at addressing urgent matters.

I will now talk about the critical and time-sensitive issue of brain and mental health. I mention this as time-sensitive because it is. Since this government came to office, we've had far too many people who have died from suicide or from an opioid overdose. Thanks to rallies organized by concerned parents like Arlene Kolb and Christine Dobbs, thanks to persistent questions in question period by myself and other MLAs, the government is starting to act.

For example, naloxone is being made more widely available, but one of the big obstacles for success remains the system for helping Manitobans with addictions is not as well organized and co-ordinated as it needs to be. The minister himself has admitted as much yesterday.

Furthermore, and of particular importance, individuals who have addictions have found that they often can't get the quick access to treatment that they need. One young man tried to get help through a Winnipeg emergency room and was told the only way he could address his addiction in the short term was to go to the street to get the drugs he needed. Surely, this gives a sharp example of the failure of government policy in this area.

Indeed, I was talking recently with people from the Behavioural Health Foundation. They have the capacity, if there was just a little more funding, to be able to deal with more individuals with addictions instead of having the several-months wait, which occurs currently for most. In our brain-health report, we stress the need for people with addictions to be able to get the help they need when they need it.

When I asked the minister this question yesterday, he sidestepped the question. He must know this is a major issue, and yet there has been little progress in more than six months of his

government in making sure people can get the help with an addiction problem the moment that they need it and not later. We in the opposition will keep the pressure on; the minister and his government need to act.

But, of course, brain health is much more than just the fentanyl crisis. Manitoba Liberals released a report on brain health last week. We considered many areas of brain and mental health. We found that there's an urgency to make changes to improve the brain health of Manitobans. We found that action today has the potential to save a lot of dollars in the future and to improve our economy, our productivity and our GDP.

Addressing the brain health of Manitobans can make a big difference to our people, our province and our future. Indeed, it is essential to our future. Indeed, the very sustainability of our health-care system depends on acting today. I call on this government to do much better than what is in the Throne Speech, and to move with speed and with urgency to improve our approach to brain and mental health in Manitoba.

There are other areas of health which need urgent attention. I will just mention one more and that is the need for a dedicated stroke unit.

In opposition, the Conservatives railed against the NDP for not acting, and now the Conservatives, it would appear, like the NDP before them have not been acting. They are now more than six months in government and we still don't have a dedicated stroke unit. It wasn't even mentioned in the Throne Speech. Has it fallen off the government's radar? Well, I can tell you that it has not fallen off our Liberal radar. Action is needed now.

I'll now move on to the environment and sustainable development. In this area, while the government's message of attention to climate change to the sustainable management of fish and wildlife populations and attention to zebra mussels and other invasive species are welcome, the reality is that there's so little detail that it's very hard to judge the merits or lack of merits of the government's approach. The descriptions are vague and with generic references to working the stakeholders but without specific details of plans. Even in areas such as the stewardship of the fisheries resource where the government has previously committed to moving to sustainable certification of the fisheries—Lake Winnipeg, Lake Manitoba and Lake Winnipegosis—

there was not even a mention of this in the Throne Speech.

Is the government backing off or going ahead? We don't know. And, in addition, there's no mention of attention to protected areas or of the cleanup of orphan mine sites. So we don't know where these fit or don't fit in the government's vision.

So for environmental and sustainable development issues, based on this Throne Speech, the government gets poor marks.

Now to the Families Department. On child care and early childhood education, we are not given a clear plan as to how the government will ensure that there are the additional spaces needed to end the unacceptably long waiting lists with currently far more than 10,000 children waiting.

\* (11:50)

The government's approach to Manitobans with disabilities remains largely to be determined, as we wait for more details. It is good to hear that the government has a goal to have fewer children in care and to provide more support for families. But I say this with some skepticism, because this approach has been mentioned in reports going back to the late 1980s, but successive governments have never delivered on this vision.

Our own efforts in the Manitoba Liberal Party to highlight communities like Nelson House, where the Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation Family and Community Wellness Centre has reduced the number of children in care, decreased crime, decreased addictions and decreased FASD and are, hopefully, pointing the way to a better future. We appreciate that the government supported the resolution put forward by the MLA for Kewatinook to gather all-party support for this direction, but we will await real results and real change.

We know that the government must change the funding model, perhaps by ensuring that when an agency reduces the number of children in care, and the reduction of funding based on the number of children in care happens, that that reduction is compensated for by a similar enhancement of funding to the family enhancement portion of the agency's funding, so that the agency has the ability to increase its efforts in family enhancement, and, as a result, we can take—create a virtuous cycle that drives improvement. It is time that this change comes. It must come.

I want to speak for a moment about the situation with the Islamic Social Services Association. I am concerned that the minister is not meeting with representatives from the Islamic Social Services Association. This association, ISSA, has contributed in a major way to helping with issues and families in the Islamic community.

This agency has played a tremendous and important role in bringing peoples of different religious backgrounds together to work harmoniously in Winnipeg and throughout Manitoba. It speaks to the fact that we have had in Winnipeg and Manitoba a community where people in the Muslim community are working together with all of us to decrease the number of people who are radicalized, to decrease problems with our own community.

I say to the minister: It is vital that we provide support to the Islamic Social Services Association.

I think there may be a little bit of confusion. The Islamic Social Services Association has worked for many years on a shoestring and, finally, after many years, the NDP government did start to provide some very modest level of funding. And I believe that it's important for the community and important for the Muslim community and the children and families that this continues. And I believe it's also important for our whole community in Winnipeg and Manitoba that we continue support this effort.

Now to infrastructure—we're beginning to get a picture of the government's plan for infrastructure spending, which starts, from what we can see, with about a 20 per cent drop in the investment in infrastructure.

We also note with very considerable surprise that in spite of the government's minister saying that there would be continued building of the east-side road, that this year's tenders don't allow for that to happen. We hope that there is a mistake here, that we're misreading things, but we ask: Why has the government so sadly and badly neglected this important part of Manitoba? Why is the government neglecting some of the most vulnerable people in our province? We don't know, but we await an explanation.

I conclude this is a government which has been slow to act and slow to make decisions. It's remarkable for a party that spent 17 years in opposition that those so were so ill-prepared to govern and so slow to act. Waiting more than half a year for a wait times task force to be established is



not acceptable. There's too much to do to waste so much time without action.

As Liberals, we feel that the Throne Speech should have been so much better than it was. We won't support it, unless, of course, the government first accepts our amendments, but we will wait and see.

Thank you, merci, miigwech.

**Mr. Alan Lagimodiere (Selkirk):** It gives me great pleasure to stand before the House today to share some comments on our government's Speech from the Throne, which opened the Second Session of the 41st Legislature.

Our government is setting a new course, one that is focused on long-term sustainable measures aimed at fixing our finances, restoring our service and rebuilding our economy. Our government has laid a foundation to fulfill promises made to Manitobans during the last election. The people of Manitoba elected our government to bring a new wave of prosperity under Conservative administration.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, all Manitobans will reap the benefits of a better plan. The message is clear that we, as the new government, are committed to getting our financial affairs in order as quickly and efficiently as possible. If we fail, we fail ourselves, we fail our children, we fail our grandchildren, we fail our most vulnerable. We cannot let this happen. To accomplish our goals, we will require commitment and focus from everyone here today.

We look—when we look at the effects of our government's plan, we will see opportunities for business, we will see opportunities for better education, we will see better health care, we will see us providing better for our most vulnerable, and we will see the entire province of Manitoba grow and prosper.

As the member from Selkirk, I am pleased with the speech because it demonstrates that Manitoba's government is ready to fix our finances, repair our services and rebuild our economy.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are a few areas of the Throne Speech where I'd like to put a few comments on the record. I'd like to start with families.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the aftermath of the tragedies that occurred with Child and Family Services under the NDP watch, like the Phoenix Sinclair tragedy, today the Child Advocate reports that three years after the report of the inquiry into the

death of Phoenix Sinclair fewer than two-thirds of the recommendations were implemented under the NDP.

The Child Advocate's office further states that they met resistance from the Child and Family Services department under the NDP. A quick review shows that the previous government was unable to correct and failed to address for over 17 years a problem such as the fact that in April of 2015 there were 10,852 children in care in Manitoba. And it is heartbreaking to hear that 76 children died under the NDP watch while in the care of CFS between 2009 and 2013. Under the NDP, 44.3 per cent of all food-bank users were children, and we also held the title of having the highest child-poverty rate in Canada.

As legislators, we need to understand that we have a shared responsibility to protect those that are most vulnerable. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is important to note that the Child Advocate now reports that our new minister is helping to move the process along.

Our government is committed to addressing the needs of Manitoba's most vulnerable children. We are focused on achieving better outcomes for children, fewer children in care, stronger partnerships with families and communities, better co-ordination of services, and greater public accountability.

Our government will continue to take action in ways that ensures consultation with our indigenous partners so that together we might explore how best to allow children to maintain ties with their community and access traditional parenting within an environment that ensures their health, their safety and their cultural identity.

\* (12:00)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the city of Selkirk is known for its large population of residents requiring assistance programs. Over the years, the NDP have continued to throw money at social assistance programs, giving a handout but never a hand up. Manitobans saw that the NDP way of doing things does not and never did solve any problems. NDP philosophy of reckless spending feeds into a declining economy. It leads to accelerated social problems like poverty, poor education attainment, and increased crime.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, earlier this year our Budget 2016 included a commitment to fully index rate assist payments to 75 per cent of median market rent.

This will help low-income Manitobans living in private rental accommodations to have more cash on hand to meet their basic needs.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, affordable housing is a high-priority topic for Selkirk. People in my community are proud to see our government take steps to address homelessness and affordability. They are happy to see our government taking steps to make necessary repairs to our current existing housing stock, repairs and maintenance that were deferred by the previous government, leaving our residents living in mould-infested and, in some instances, rodent- and parasite-infested residences. As a community, we look forward to construction work that will bring much-needed repairs to rental units across the province, improved housing in northern communities and better shelters for victims of family violence and seniors in need.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, within the Selkirk community, we have two groups focused on improving the lives of those living with disabilities. These groups are Hearthstone and Community Living groups. In speaking with directors and service providers from these groups, they advise me that they were very happy to see our government is building upon the commitments made in the 2016 budget.

Our government is building on the abilities initiative which is designed to modernize and improve services within Community Living disABILITY Services. Those that I have spoken to say that this work will help ensure that adults living with an intellectual disability have access to appropriate supports within a flexible framework that allows for services to be tailored to their unique assessed needs.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we speak of education, as a government we understand that education is Manitoba's path to future growth and is currently one of our greatest challenges. As a province, we need to recognize Aboriginal youth are one of the largest growing sectors of our demographic makeup. Ensuring this demographic segment of our society and all Manitobans receive a thorough education will ensure Manitoba moves towards becoming the most improved province in Canada and perhaps the world. The education we provide today will lead to future growth. Our new budget provides supports for new initiatives to champion our children's ability to read and write.

This is one of the keys to ensuring the future success of our province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are very proud of our Lord Selkirk School Division's high school diverse programming. It recognizes the unique makeup of Manitoba's student population and focuses on an education designed to allow easy access into the workforce. Our government recognizes the importance of education in the early years, the importance of investing in professional development for educators, support for school divisions and the development of curriculum that includes targets so that we are able to both measure and report upon our students' improvements in literacy and numeracy.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it was an honour for me to attend the recent AMM meetings. All of the municipal leaders I interacted with at this event are very excited about our government's plans to reduce orange tape, to help grow the provincial economy, and our government's commitment to making Manitoba the most improved province for regulatory accountability by 2020.

AMM representatives I spoke to applauded our government's commitment to ensuring value for money as we rebuild our provincial infrastructure and implement a return-on-investment test to prioritize government investment in highways, bridges, water management infrastructure, as well as social and cultural projects. AMM members were also pleased to see that in the first 100 days of our mandate, we followed through on our promise to provide municipalities with a new streamlined process for accessing cost-shared infrastructure dollars.

Attendees also commented on our robust municipal infrastructure consultations and are happy to see we remain committed to building respectful and collaborative relations across the province. They told me they were very pleased to see so many of our MLAs attend and have honest, open discussions about their concerns.

Our ongoing commitments to make Manitoba the most improved province in Canada includes ensuring that government funding delivers value for money and return on investment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when it comes to a sustainable development climate action plan, it is important to understand we stand at a pivotal point for Manitoba and our partners throughout Canada and around the globe. Climate change is a serious and growing issue and our province is already

feeling its impacts through unpredictable weather patterns and increased challenges with water management, including changes in the 'incidency' and severity of flooding. We recognize that we need a balanced, responsible approach to resource management, focused on preserving the earth's natural ecological balances.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we speak about health care, access to timely, quality and affordable health care is one of the most important concerns expressed by all Manitobans. Under the NDP we saw our health-care services delivery decline. We had the longest ER wait times, long wait times for diagnosis and surgery, poor doctor recruitment and retention and more than 1,200 people awaiting personal-care homes.

As a result, a comprehensive assessment for Manitoba's entire health system has begun. This exercise will identify opportunities for the elimination of waste and inefficiency and will recommend measures to improve the effectiveness and responsiveness of the entire health-care system, including core government and the regional health authorities as well as Diagnostic Services of Manitoba, CancerCare Manitoba and the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba.

The assessment will also make recommendations on how to make health-care costs more sustainable over the long term, while sending out expectations for better results in the programs and services provided to Manitobans.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, our government is also developing a focus strategy to improve accessibility to and the co-ordination of mental health and addiction services across Manitoba. We are committed to developing a new comprehensive mental health and addictions strategy for Manitoba which will focus on improving access and co-ordination, recognizing that there's no health without mental health.

The mental health and addictions strategy will be recovery orientated and emphasize patient and family choice in getting the supports needed to help Manitobans experience—experiencing difficult circumstances.

In Selkirk, we are facing issues with increasing poverty and an increase in mental health issues. These issues are often co-related and the previous government did little or nothing to help tackle these issues in Selkirk. I am happy that our government

recognizes the importance of mental health and well-being and has a new comprehensive mental health and addictions strategy for Manitobans which will focus on improved access and co-ordination. The notion that the mental health and addictions strategy will be recovery orientated demonstrates how our government is putting Manitobans first.

Moreover, the emphasis on making sure patients and their families have ample choice in getting the supports they need will create a long-term impact on the well-being of those suffering with mental illness.

A lot of these mental health issues are exacerbated due to poverty. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the bottom line was the spending spree of the NDP over the past 17 years was not sustainable, and the previous government's usage of the monies did not and would not provide for Manitoba's long-term sustainability.

For over 15 years in our city of Selkirk, we had to watch our provincial government neglect us. Our economy was in decline. Jobs were lost and crime and drug use continued to rise.

What was the response? Money tossed at an issue again, again and again? It is evident that the NDP did not realize that throwing money at a problem does not solve a problem; it only masks it for a short period.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to make matters worse, during a time of economic decline when all Manitobans were struggling to make ends meet, a time when Manitobans started living from paycheck to paycheck, the NDP's plan was to broaden the tax on many essential items for all Manitobans.

And Madam—Mr. Speaker—Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm sure I do not need to remind you, nor the people of Manitoba, that the NDP did this after claiming they—there would be no new taxes or tax increases.

\*(12:10)

I am proud to belong to a team that will help grow our economy while understanding the solutions to many of the problems facing Manitobans is not spending more money on the issue, but rather taking concrete steps to tackle and correct the problems.

The NDP spent beyond their means, resulting in accumulated debt and ever-increasing taxes. This—our new government inherited an \$846-million deficit from the previous government, and red ink remains the prime target of our new government.

Our path towards a stronger economy was begun through the engagement of all Manitobans in the development of the 2017 provincial budget. We have heard from thousands of Manitobans through a process of in-person meetings as well as online and written participation. This has included input from representatives of businesses, indigenous communities, non-governmental organizations, not-for-profit groups, municipalities, and individually concerned citizens.

The Budget 2017 consultation process is the most comprehensive consultation effort ever undertaken by the government of Manitoba. We are listening to Manitobans. Together we will fix our province's finances, repair the services that Manitoba's families rely upon, and rebuild our economy. The challenge is large, but together we are up to the task.

Manitoba is a home of hope, a diverse and special place with potential for greatness. Our government is listening to Manitobans, and we will govern for Manitobans, fighting for changes that will result in a stronger, safer and more prosperous province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have engaged Manitobans, and it's Manitobans who have shown us our strengths, our weaknesses and our opportunities and our threats as a province. We are up to this challenge, and we ask our colleagues to join us in moving forward for the benefit of all Manitobans. Our government sends a strong message throughout Manitoba, throughout Canada and throughout the global community, the message that we are open for business, we will fix our financial problems, we will fix our education system, we will fix our health-care system, we will stand up for what's right: protecting our seniors and protecting those most vulnerable.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to support the Throne Speech.

**Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley):** I can't really say it's a pleasure to put some comments on the record about this Throne Speech, because there's some very, very concerning political directions that have been signalled by this government.

I don't think when Manitobans come to realize the full impact of the political direction this Throne Speech is providing, I don't think very many Manitobans are going to be pleased to be on the receiving end of it.

This is an austerity Throne Speech. And the public, unfortunately, is going to have to become very familiar with that term, because that is quite clearly where this government is headed. So, with my speech today, what I hope to do is to provide a bit of an understanding of what austerity is and what it's going to mean for my constituents in Wolseley and what it will unfortunately mean also for all Manitobans.

We can probably start by asking ourselves: Where is this austerity agenda coming from? And Manitobans' most recent experience with austerity wasn't very long ago. It was the guiding principle of the former Harper federal government. The government in Manitoba in place right now has some very direct links to that exceptionally right-wing and undemocratic legacy of the Harper government, and the austerity agenda has clearly been transferred from Harper to Manitoba.

And one of the main vehicles for that transfer of policy, quite clearly, is the Premier (Mr. Pallister) himself. He served as Reform MP, a member of the Reform Party, before—and the Alliance—after it morphed into the Canadian Alliance, and—

**An Honourable Member:** Actually Reform beat him when he ran first. He got beat by Jake Hoeppner.

**Mr. Altemeyer:** Yes.

And he had to take a couple of shots at it before he could get into that exclusive, extraordinarily right-wing club, as my honourable colleague from Elmwood is correcting me and reminding me, he had to try a couple of times to get into that very right-wing network. And he served following as an Alliance MP, served with Stephen Harper. And so you don't have to look any further than the Premier himself to understand where this agenda is coming from.

And the key questions Manitobans deserve to have the answers to is: What is this going to mean? And how is it going to impact them?

One of the most direct ways, unfortunately, that this is quite clearly going to impact in a negative way my constituents and everyone else, is there's just going to be less money for most people. Austerity is all about taking government away from the job that it is supposed to do and having negative impacts on society in multiple different ways, and dollars going into people's pockets is one of the biggest ones.

And here's just a couple of examples of how austerity will do that. First and foremost, if you are working in the public sector, if you are a civil servant, if you are dedicating your life to public service, an austerity agenda is going to put your jobs at risk. Austerity governments love to cut jobs and they do it by the thousands. And we have already seen—already—barely six months after this government took office, they have already broken their fundamental promise to Manitobans that cuts to front-line services and cuts to jobs would not happen. We are getting very different direct indications from this government now. And they are ultimately going to be held accountable for breaking that promise.

The job cuts are also manifested in other ways, because austerity governments and the political parties who follow austerity policies don't really believe in government being involved in addressing the issues of the day, there's just a lot less investment going on. That drives down employment; that increases unemployment. And we see that already from this government.

Another tangible example in the dramatic cut to infrastructure spending: their original claims that they would maintain or increase the amount of money—I mean my members here can correct me if I'm wrong, my colleagues—but we were close to a billion dollars a year in investments in new infrastructure and repairing existing infrastructure. This government's indicated they'll be lucky to come in at half that. And so there's just going to be less work done and fewer jobs available for people who would very much like to help continue to build the province.

There's also very severe implications when an austerity government comes to town for anyone working in the charitable sector, the non-profit sector, with non-governmental organizations. These groups, that's the community of organizations that I'm proud to say is my background, these organizations work very, very hard to address very important issues and they try to do it by obtaining funding from multiple different sources the best that they can. But when government is pulling out of the effort, it just makes their job so much more difficult.

And our government brought in a number of absolutely fantastic programs which we will be watching very, very closely, increased the funding for them, employed people, got them to work in their local neighbourhoods. And it will be tragic if the

austerity agenda leads to reduced funding for these very, very positive local initiatives.

\* (12:20)

We can also see this government's complete indifference to the plight of low-income people by their steadfast refusal to increase the minimum wage. To put this into perspective, increasing the minimum wage is one of the best ways that you can support low-income people and it doesn't cost the government a dime. It is purely a regulatory measure. Loads of other provinces this year are raising the minimum wage. And, for the first time in 17 years, that's not going to happen here in Manitoba.

When we came to office, the minimum wage that we inherited from the previous Conservative government was only \$6 an hour. Over our time in office it's been increased every single year, sometimes more than once, and now sits at \$11 an hour, and the increase is more than double the rate of inflation. We made a tangible difference for low-income people, but because austerity governments don't care about poverty and low-income people, they have refused to raise the minimum wage.

Another thing that will dampen the employment prospects and the amount of money that citizens have available to them is that there will be attacks on organized labour and attacks on wages, and we already have two obvious examples of this from this government. The first that came to light, of course, was their ill-conceived Bill 7, which attacks the rights of union organizing to take place in the workplace for automatic certification.

It is a well-documented fact that the income disparity between the richest in a society and the poorest can be addressed significantly when there is a strong union movement and much better advocacy in the workplace for fair wages to be paid to the people who are doing the work. This government is going in the exact opposite direction.

And another very concrete example of this attitude from this government, of course, was the terrible strike, completely unnecessary, that just happened at the University of Manitoba. It was largely because this government stepped in at the eleventh hour after a salary package had already been put on the table by the administration. It was this government's preoccupation with driving down wages in the public sector that said, no, there cannot

be any wage increases this year. You have to change your negotiation tactics.

Well, lo and behold, when the government comes in and completely changes the process, undermines the constitutional right for collective bargaining, you're going to end up with a strike, and this government is so arrogant they have not yet apologized to the faculty, to the staff, to the students or their families for playing such a key role in causing that strike to happen in the first place.

All of these things, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, are examples of what an austerity agenda from a government is going to do to the citizens of our province as they try to enter the workforce and as they try to earn enough money to support themselves and their families. And that's just one aspect of the austerity agenda.

A second big priority of austerity is, of course, cuts in services, and we will be watching very closely in the upcoming budget to see where it is that this government is going to make the cuts that are coming, and we're also going to be keeping a very close eye to explain to people that there are differences between what this government may promise and what they actually deliver, and in my own critic portfolio area of the environment and green jobs we have a perfect example. The only initiative of any potential significance that the government's department opposite tried to bring in is that they tried to claim they were going to be putting more money into battling aquatic invasive species.

Well, as was later revealed, they may have put that in their budget document that they were going to spend more, then they started the program far too late and they're actually on track to spend way less than we had been allocating to that very important issue in our time in office.

So it's not just that there are cuts in services coming. It's also that this government seems to be perfectly well prepared to claim that they are doing more and actually hope that no one notices when the exact opposite happens.

So, in addition to services being cut and in addition to wages being depressed and jobs disappearing, another big impact for citizens is going to be that costs are going to go up for them, and these can take a variety of forms. It can be service fees; it could be, you know, programs that right now are offered for free, the government may bring in extra charges to try and further its agenda.

And a perfect example of this is, of course, the looming tuition increase that all of the students who were just forced out on strike when the faculty had to walk away after this government interfered at the University of Manitoba, this government, under repeated questioning by my colleagues here, has refused, absolutely refused, to honour our position that tuition should not increase any more than the rate of inflation every single year. They've refused to acknowledge that, and we really hope that they reconsider that position and decide that all sectors deserve to get the support that they need to provide education for the youth that will be our future.

Another perfectly blatant example of costs going up under P3s that this government could've lent some clarity to: we brought in a proposal that there should be no health-care premiums in Manitoba. This was proposed by my colleague from Concordia, our Health critic. And just to explain this a little bit, health-care premiums are an extra charge that some provinces levy on their citizens, with all of the money going to pay for health-care services. This is a tactic, which, certainly, depending on how it's implemented, can have an enormous negative impact on families, particularly low-income ones who may not have the funds available.

So, if this government was willing to assure Manitobans that they were not looking at raising this fee on our citizens, they could have agreed with our proposal and voted in favour of it. And, lo and behold, that didn't happen at all.

The other ironic thing about costs going up is that the costs aren't just going to go up for citizens when they try to access a service that is—you know, had funding cuts from government. The austerity agenda ironically also increases costs to government. And one example of this would be public-private partnerships. Public-private partnerships involve a government walking away from financing a new initiative, whether it be a road or a bridge or a sewer treatment plant, whatever the case may be, and enabling the private sector to come in and make potentially enormous amounts of money in profit in government's absence.

So all of the talk that an austerity-focused government will bring to the table claiming that what they are doing is necessary, claiming that it's all about reducing costs, not actually true. And it's quite clear there's a different agenda behind the scenes at work, and I'll get to that in a moment.

But, just to close off on where this government is going about public-private partnerships, lo and behold, we have legislation on the books brought in by our previous NDP government which requires P3s to have full accountability. And what is this government doing? They actually said in their Throne Speech they're going to gut that legislation and repeal it completely. There isn't going to be any amendments. It's—they're not even attempting to improve it to ensure greater accountability; they want it out of the way.

Now, how on earth does that fit with the claim that all of these cuts are necessary? Well, that's because an austerity government actually isn't about balancing the books. An austerity government is about providing more money and more power to the elite in our society at the expense of everyone else.

And you can see that no more clearly than in a austerity government's blind submission to international trade agreements that enable private corporations to sue governments just for doing their jobs.

And I'm running out of time today, but I'm hoping that with the time that I have when we resume on Monday, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I can conclude my comments then.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Wolseley (Mr. Altemeyer) has two remaining minutes.

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

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, November 25, 2016

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