

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

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The Honourable Myrna Driedger
Speaker*

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-First Legislature

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, November 28, 2017

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

Please be seated.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

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

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Diabetes Awareness Month

Mrs. Sarah Guillemard (Fort Richmond): Madam Speaker, my second child, Alec, turned 18 years old yesterday. We celebrated by attending a Jets game against the Minnesota Wild, and we were rewarded with quite the action with a 7-2 victory for the Jets.

It was memorable day for many reasons, Madam Speaker. In addition to marking a monumental birthday and attending a first Jets game, my son also marked 15 years to the day of his diagnosis of type 1 diabetes.

November is world Diabetes Awareness Month. It has always seemed rather a cruel irony that our son was born in the month that would recognize the disease he would develop on his third birthday. Families of type 1 diabetics never forget the details of diagnosis because it marks the first day of a new way of life. There isn't much time to mourn the loss of what normal used to be because you spend your days learning how to keep your child alive, making life-and-death decisions each and every day.

You do not ever get used to it. You just move forward one day at a time, managing insulin injections, blood tests, exercise, eating habits, growth spurts, illnesses and emotional strain. Many days, you celebrate the blood sugars being within range, but most days are spent solving the mysteries behind results that don't make sense.

Each child grows into adulthood, Madam Speaker, and the disease grows with them. Facing the challenges of post-secondary education, the natural pull towards independence and learning new skills to function as a contributing member of society is a stressful and exciting time for young adults. Add into the foray the responsibilities of keeping your body in balance through the stresses, and you need superpowers to succeed.

Madam Speaker, I have seen these superpowers in action, and today I want to acknowledge all who defiantly tackle type 1 diabetes each day and the parents who equip their amazing children with life skills beyond what they planned for. Thank you to all the health-care workers who walk alongside these families and provide the—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

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

Mrs. Guillemard: I want to thank all the health-care workers who walk alongside these families and provide the support and encouragement to face another day of battle.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Winnipeg Animal Services

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): Last week, I visited the Winnipeg animal services, spending time with Leland Gordon, chief operating officer, touring their facility and meeting all the amazing, devoted staff while, of course, loving up the many sweet, adoptable puppies, adults and senior dogs.

WAS rescues stray dogs from the city of Winnipeg and is dedicated to finding loving, forever homes for all of their pups. In addition, WAS participates in public awareness activities in respect of adoption, responsible pet ownership, dog licensing and spay and neutering programming.

Currently, there are a number of pups waiting to find their forever home who would make a wonderful new addition to any family looking to adopt a new furry baby.

Leland also shared with me the partnership WAS has with Jessica Thompson, with the We Are Here For The Animals, We Are Here For You cat program, which will spay and neuter—or spay or neuter your cat and provide transportation, if required, for only \$5. From April to November, this program has already spayed or neutered almost 800 cats.

While at the WAS facility, I also had a chance to visit WRENCH, an organization dedicated to creating stronger, healthy communities by removing barriers to building, repairing and maintaining bicycles housed at the bottom level of the WAS. WRENCH provides training to develop valuable mechanical skills as well as instill confidence and self-esteem.

On December 2nd, 2017, WRENCH will begin its annual Cycle of Giving, a 24-hour marathon that brings volunteers together to build over 300 bikes for children in need.

I want to acknowledge the staff and volunteers at WRENCH for their important work.

I want to say miigwech to Leland, all the staff at WAS and to Jessica Thompson, for their dedication in protecting our four-legged relatives and providing voice for those who cannot speak for themselves.

Finally, Madam Speaker, Chilly Dog and I want to encourage Manitobans to spay or neuter their pets and to consider adoption before buying your new furry baby.

If I can ask everybody to congratulate and acknowledge our guests in the House today.

Habitat for Humanity

Mr. Scott Johnston (St. James): Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I am pleased to rise in the House today to recognize the great work of Habitat for Humanity in Winnipeg. Through the mobilization of thousands of generous volunteers and community partners, Habitat for Humanity has worked with people from all walks of life. Built are safe, decent, affordable housing for purchase by working families ready to help themselves up.

This past summer, 16 homes have risen from a lot in St. James, and many families will celebrate their first Christmas in their brand new home. It was very humbling for me to be involved in this Habitat build, from participating in the roofing work to the

key-presentation ceremonies I recently took part in. I, along with the minister of Family Services, other Cabinet ministers and colleagues from both sides of the House participated in this worthy building endeavour.

It will be exciting for these young families to develop and join their new community in St. James. The schools and our community centres will no doubt benefit from their involvement.

Madam Speaker, yesterday I was part of a presentation that handed over keys from a all-female build. I believe the member from St. Vital as well as River East, Riel, Burrows as well as other honourable female members contributed.

We have as guests in the gallery today representing Habitat for Humanity Michelle Periera, vice-president of communications and philanthropy, along with Phil [*phonetic*] Krahn. Please join me in recognizing the efforts of Habitat for Humanity and their vision to help develop this affordable housing in St. James.

* (13:40)

The North Complex Café and Gods River Lodge

Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook): I'd like to take the time for some shout-outs to my First Nations.

First, I'd like to congratulate St. Theresa Point First Nation on the opening of their new restaurant. The North Complex Café is located right across from my constituency office, so I get to enjoy smelling the wonderful, delicious meals that are prepared there daily.

The restaurant is a joint program with Patal vocational school. Patal set up a learning centre and program for 10 culinary arts students, and now those students are putting their skills to use in the restaurant.

I'd also like to congratulate Manto Sipi Cree Nation on their opening of their new lodge. Gods River Lodge has been renovated and they also have replaced their old cabins with two brand new cabins. The new cabins have a capacity of six people and have all the amenities a traveller would require. This is the first phase of the project, and within the next two phases they will build an additional three cabins. So if you ever want to see what real-sized fish look like, I encourage you to take a trip to Manto Sipi and visit their lodge.

I'd also like to take this time to encourage safe travels on our upcoming winter ice roads and to perhaps implore this government to help in any way possible they can to develop these roads. Can you imagine we are possibly looking at shopping down south for—in time for Christmas? This only happened once when I was a child, and let me tell you, it was the best Christmas ever.

If you think we have a problem with food prices, you should see the prices for our kids toys up north. They are impossibly priced. Just some food for thought as we enter the holidays.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Any further member statements?

Introduction of Guests

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

From Kildonan-East Collegiate we have 26 grade 9 students under the direction of Damian Tryon and Louise Maciejkow, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe).

On behalf of all members, we'd like to welcome you here today.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Provincial Addiction Strategy Timeline for Implementation

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): A heart-breaking story in the media today illustrates the barriers families are facing trying to find addiction treatment.

The mother of a 16-year-old girl with serious addictions is speaking out after her daughter was turned away from Manitoba's health-care system. A lack of long-term youth beds forced the family to move to Calgary to access a private facility, costing more than \$4,000 a month, Madam Speaker.

Families are desperately waiting for this government to roll out an addictions strategy.

When can we expect this minister to develop and release a provincial addictions strategy?

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Deputy Premier): I want to thank the member for her question.

We know that there is much work to do to strengthen the system and improve access to mental

health and addiction services in Manitoba. We have engaged the services of VIRGO Planning and Evaluation incorporated to assist our government with the development of a comprehensive mental health and addiction strategy that is informed by evidence and in consultation with those living with mental health and addictions challenges, their family members and the public and the health-care providers.

So we are moving in that direction. We recognize the significance of this issue. And I want to thank the member again for that question.

Brandon Detox Facility

Ms. Fontaine: Brandon saw four people overdose on opiates in just one weekend. Advocates and families say it is a wake-up call for government to invest in detox centres and long-term treatment beds in western Manitoba. Without these services in rural Manitoba, it's nearly impossible to break the cycle of addiction. Families are calling on the minister to recognize that addiction is not only a Winnipeg problem and that rural communities, especially those without ambulance stations, need long-term treatment options to support those struggling with addictions.

Will the minister's strategy include funding for a detox facility and long-term beds in Brandon?

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

We on this side of the House and our government recognize the significant issues surrounding mental health and addictions problems. That—that's why we have engaged the services of VIRGO Planning and Evaluation incorporated to assist our government in the development of a comprehensive mental health and addictions strategy. We look forward to them coming forward with the results of that very soon.

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

Addiction Treatment Services Service Provision Concerns

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): The government's hand-picked consultant, Dr. Brian Rush, got a shout-out during the Throne Speech. However, families are concerned his track record of closing detox and treatment facilities in Nova Scotia doesn't bode well for Manitobans. His cut-happy approach caused an uproar, and you know

it's problematic, Madam Speaker, when even Conservative MLAs speak out against Dr. Rush's cuts that ignore valuable treatment options.

Manitoba families don't want to see the same thing occurring here in Manitoba. Will the minister commit that he won't make the same cuts to an addictions system already in crisis mode?

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Deputy Premier): Again, I want to thank the member for the question. Again, we do recognize the significance of mental health and addictions issues that are facing Manitobans. That's why we have engaged the services of VIRGO Planning and Evaluation incorporated. We look forward to receiving their recommendations at the end of this year and to continue our work to ensure Manitobans have the mental health and addiction supports that they need when they need them.

Manitoba School Divisions Funding Commitment Inquiry

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): Last week's Throne Speech was an opportunity for this Pallister government to change course and make real funding investments in students and in our schools. Instead, they've continued on the same wrong-headed path as before.

Schools funding isn't keeping up with inflation, and some school divisions have seen a 2 per cent reduction in their funding. Class sizes are growing ever larger and teacher ratios have been eliminated, and we haven't heard yet whether the minister plans to cut further.

So I'd like to ask today: Will the minister guarantee that school divisions will receive 100 per cent of funding for the 2018-2019 school year?

Hon. Ian Wishart (Minister of Education and Training): I thank the member for the question. I know he's concerned about the future of education in Manitoba. We have a long ways to go to get up to the—to a standard that we all wish to accomplish here in Manitoba.

We continue to work constructively with the school divisions across the province both in terms of funding and in terms of results. We look forward to getting better results for all Manitoba students in the future.

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

Mr. Wiebe: Madam Speaker, the minister refuses to make a commitment here in the House today to fund education and he continues to double down on the cuts to our children's education system going forward.

Education funding didn't even merit a commitment in this Throne Speech, Madam Speaker. Last week was an opportunity for the minister to begin to undo some of the damage that's already been done this past year. He could have made a real commitment to stable and sustainable funding for schools, but he didn't do that.

So I ask again: Will the minister tell this House unequivocally if any school division will receive less funding than they did in 2017?

Mr. Wishart: I find it very unusual that the member across would speak about sustainable funding models from a government that clearly did not have a sustainable funding 'monel'—model either for government or for education in Manitoba.

We continue to work with the school divisions. We want to get better results.

During the 17 years that they were in government, what happened to education? It went to dead last.

* (13:50)

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

Mr. Wiebe: Well, despite the minister's misinformation he's put on the record today, in fact, education funding went up every single year for the past 17 years until this government came into power.

During the last election, in fact—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order. Order.

Mr. Wiebe: During the last election, in fact, the Tories themselves told school divisions that they believed that class sizes improved learning, especially for young students. Once elected, however, they've done exactly the opposite by slashing the small-class-size cap. That means less one-on-one time for teachers with students.

The minister needs to tell this House whether he will offer real supports to students, and will the school divisions receive less funding in 2018 than they did last year?

Mr. Wishart: As the member knows, our government has decided to give the school divisions and the teachers themselves the opportunity to be more flexible on—when it regards class size. So, certainly, that has been well appreciated. In fact—two 'o one, the school divisions across the province have thanked us for having giving them—given that freedom.

And as the member knows very well, the funding of schools is usually a January announcement. So he is certainly trying to get ahead of himself.

Home Warranty Act Timeline for Legislation

Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview): Yesterday, we learned that the government spent over \$150,000 to have a private consultant write parts of the Throne Speech, and now today we've learned that the government has again delayed the implementation of The New Home Warranty Act. Now, this act was supposed to be implemented in January 1st, 2017. Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen) put that off for a year until January 1st, 2018, and then he's just decided that it should be put off until January 1st, 2020.

So I have to ask him: Why does he bend over backwards to give money to the private sector, but he won't give any protections to new homeowners in this province?

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I thank the member for the question.

And I was—it was an honour to be at AMM earlier today, where this issue came up. And I can tell you that the members of the municipalities were aware of this, that there has been a delay with respect to the proclamation of this particular bill. But I will say that there will be 'adequate'—adequate protection for new homeowners as well as a respect that we have for those who are builders out there. And there's a balanced approach. We take a balanced approach, whereas members opposite never took that approach.

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

Mr. Allum: The Attorney General's response there indicates that the government did have a choice, but they chose—instead of doing the right thing for new homeowners, they 'choise' to play politics with the issue. We can see which side they're on. We're on the

side of people trying to buy a home for the first time. We're on the side of making sure that there's proper protections in place for them, and yet this government has delayed not only one year, but now it's going to be three years.

Why don't they care about the new homeowners in Manitoba?

Mrs. Stefanson: Certainly, we do protect new homeowners in our province, Madam Speaker, but we also have respect for those in the industry, that work in this industry. We will continue to work with our—consult with the various stakeholders in Manitoba to ensure that we get this right. Where members opposite failed, we will deliver.

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

Mr. Allum: Well, Madam Speaker, we did act, and this government is refusing to act.

Last year alone, in the first nine months of 2017, in fact, there were only—over 4,300 new homes built. By the time this act is implemented on January 1st, 2020, if that happens at all, that will mean over 12,000 new homes will have been built in Manitoba, and yet the government doesn't seem to care.

So I want to ask the minister one more time: Will they reverse course, and will they implement that act right here, today, on behalf of new homeowners in Manitoba?

Mrs. Stefanson: Well, Madam Speaker, members opposite had 17 years. If this was a priority for them in—during their time in government, they could have had it done 17 years ago. They chose not to make it a priority; they brought it through in the dying days of the previous NDP government. They didn't proclaim the act themselves. Clearly, it was not a priority for members opposite.

We will take no lessons from members opposite.

Public Transit Services Fare and Service Changes

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): The Premier's (Mr. Pallister) cuts to Winnipeg Transit means winter just got that much harder for workers, seniors and students. He's forcing Winnipeg to reduce hours of service on local busy routes and take buses off the road during peak hours. It means more people will be forced to wait in the cold for half an hour or more just to see a passed—bus pass over them.

Winnipeggers want this city to be a vibrant hub like Toronto or Vancouver, but without a strong public transit system they are stuck in the past.

Will the Premier (Mr. Pallister) reverse his cuts to Transit so Winnipeg can stay on the map?

Hon. Ralph Eichler (Acting Minister of Municipal Relations): As we said yesterday and several days in the past, that we are a massive supporter of public transit in Winnipeg. Through our funding model we have opened up the levels of unconditional grants to the City of Winnipeg. They can make the decisions that are a priority for that government.

We also heard loud and clear from the municipal governments that are still feeling the effects of the forced amalgamations by the previous government without any consultations.

We will take no lessons from members opposite.

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

Changes to Transit Services Impact on Manitobans

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): Newcomers, young people, indigenous Manitobans have spoken out against the fare increases and declining transit services. Twenty-five cents might not seem like a lot to the Premier, who's more likely to jump on a flight to Costa Rica than a bus downtown, but it means that—real consequences to Winnipeggers trying to make ends meet.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Smith: For thousands of transit users, affordable and quality services is a link between depending on EIA and finding sustainable employment.

The Premier is forcing impossible choices on those who need our help the most.

Why is the Pallister government abandoning those who need this line of service the most?

Hon. Ralph Eichler (Acting Minister of Municipal Relations): Well, Madam Speaker, it's unfortunate members opposite try to play words on a Premier that's trying to heal. It's absolutely shameful.

We have listened to Manitobans. We made sure that we had their best interests and thoughts whenever they were making their decisions on

unconditional grant funding. They asked for that. We listened to municipal governments. They have the ability to be able to decide where their priorities are.

There is an opportunity to review transit as we see it. There's opportunities for the City and Transit to work together in partnership in order to make sure that those that are having trouble with finding those finances, then they'll be able to do that.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Mrs. Smith: Low-income Manitobans will have less money to spend on food because this Premier is obsessed with the bottom line. To keep his own election promises, he's forcing Winnipeggers to hike—forcing Winnipeg to hike fares.

The Premier's decision at the Cabinet table means more money in the pockets—or less money in the pockets of students, seniors and low-income parents trying to hold down a job. His actions have real consequences for the people of Winnipeg, those others in Manitoba trying to heal also, that can't get on a bus because it costs 25 cents more to go to physiotherapy—oh, wait, there is no more physiotherapy.

Will the Premier stop his attacks on the front-line services that Manitobans rely on?

Mr. Eichler: You know that the fox cut out of the hen house when the government went and raised the PST on all those poor Manitobans that they're talking about, without any consultation.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order.

* (14:00)

Mr. Eichler: They went to every door, every door in this city, and said we will not raise taxes, and then they have the audacity to stand in this House and say that they can't afford transit. Something's wrong with this individual.

Northern Health Authority Budget Reduction

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): It's been almost nine months since this government ordered the northern regional health authority to cut \$6 million from its budget. That's \$6 million less for 74,000 Manitobans served by the NHRA.

People in northern Manitoba want to know where these cuts are going to be made. When will this government tell the public where they plan to cut \$6 million?

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Acting Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): We recognize that northern Manitobans deserve to kind—to have the kind of timely access to care as well as southern Manitobans and, indeed, all Manitobans, regardless of where you live. And that's why our Minister of Health is working very hard to ensure that those services are delivered to all Manitobans regardless of where you live in our province.

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

Mr. Lindsey: Madam Speaker, people in the North still don't know where this government is going to cut. But people in Flin Flon do know that Flin Flon is now only budgeted for three doctors instead of the five it used to have. We've been told there are fewer doctors because of this government's budget limits.

Can the Minister for Health tell the House: Are those two missing doctors part of this Premier's (Mr. Pallister) \$6-million cut to the Northern Health Region?

Mrs. Stefanson: The litany of false accusations by the members opposite is no surprise, I guess, to us, because they continue to do this and take this kind of approach to fear monger in our province, and it's unfortunate, Madam Speaker.

The members opposite had 17 years where they completely mismanaged the health-care budget, where they completely mismanaged health care. We had skyrocketing wait-lists for Manitobans.

We take a different approach. We take a proactive approach. That's why the Minister of Health is working hard indeed with all Manitobans and stakeholders to ensure that we have a health-care system that's there for Manitobans when they need it.

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

Northern Personal Care Homes Health-Care Aide Staffing Levels

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): We'll leave wait times to see a doctor to another day's question. Right now I want to talk about understaffed health-care aides in our seniors home in Flin Flon.

At the same time this government has forced the NHRA to cut overtime for health-care aides, northern seniors have been left in their beds, in their wheelchairs, for extended amounts of time waiting for baths, waiting for medication.

Will this government do something, reverse the overtime cuts and do whatever it takes to hire more health-care aides to balance staffing shortages in northern personal-care homes?

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Acting Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): I want to thank the member for the question.

Of course, after 17 years of mismanagement in our health-care system we find ourselves to where we are today, Madam Speaker. Changes need to take place. Change is tough in many instances, and Manitobans recognize that. But Manitobans also recognize that the status quo of spending more per capita in health care but getting less in the way of services is not the answer. That's why our Health Minister is working closely with stakeholders in all communities across Manitobans—across Manitoba to ensure that we have a health-care system that's there for Manitobans when they need it.

Indigenous Children in Care Parental Custody Rights

Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook): This government announced in the Throne Speech that they will be amending The Child and Family Services Act to remove barriers to guardianship.

We know that over 90 per cent of the kids in CFS are indigenous, yet the statistics for how many of those children are currently with indigenous families is not known.

Can the minister state without equivocation that indigenous parents will retain their inherent right to their children?

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Families): This government is very proud of the fact that we're introducing child-welfare reforms. We think that it's well overdue.

We know over 17 years with the previous NDP government that the numbers of children in care skyrocketed by over 85 per cent. Over 73 per cent of amount of days that are in care is something that is the legacy of the NDP government. And we know that over 60 per cent of the kids in care are permanent wards, which means mom and dad has been the state for far too long.

Where the NDP got it wrong, we're going to get it right, Madam Speaker.

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

Misuse of Foster Care

Ms. Klassen: Madam Speaker, there is no measure for ensuring all foster parents within the CFS system are doing the work out of love. We know that—we know many horror stories of children being dropped off on Main Street when they turn 18. Even the current Minister of Families himself referred to it as the dump jobs under the NDP.

If there were genuine love for our people's kids, we wouldn't see the kids graduate from being in care to being incarcerated.

Can the minister tell us their plans on how our CFS children will be protected from people who seek—who see foster kids as a paycheck rather than a beloved child?

Mr. Fielding: We have a four-part plan in terms of addressing children in care. Number 1, we want to prevent—provide more supports to early intervention and prevention by providing resources to agencies in care. We want to make sure we have lifelong commitments, 'things' like permanent guardianships or legal guardianships which is established by the courts. The courts are the ones that make the decision of whether a child should be put with a legal guardian; that's a part of it. That process will not change under this.

We want to make sure that people have lifelong commitments to these individuals. We think the process of having children going to 14, 15 different foster homes—the outcomes are horrible with this. That's why this government's making some strong changes, some strong reforms to address the child-welfare system that was left from us from the other NDP government.

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

Support for Family Services Agencies Physical and Sexual Abuse Prevention

Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook): I'm waiting for the member to make the Steinbach remark again.

Madam Speaker, have any members in this House ever seen the materials that are used to educate people on how to recognize sexual and physical abuse? The pictures are deeply disturbing

and heart-breaking. It's one of the most toughest learnings our people in the social work field undertake. And often, despite their best efforts, they are overloaded and understaffed. There are children under CFS care for legitimate reasons, such as abuse.

Will the minister tell the House how his government is protecting our children who are suffering from abuse? What new resources are being deployed to help our agencies?

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Families): I think a big part of our plan is exactly that: introducing reform plans that are important. Number 1, what we've done, which I think is important, is provide some flexibility to agencies. If you hear people in the child-welfare services as well as agencies, the issues that they have is that the strings are attached; sometimes they have to take children into care before they can get the proper services and supports. By providing more flexibility to agencies, what that means is they'll be able to spend money, early intervention and prevention—the exact type of services and support that the member just had mentioned will be supported by the reforms that this government is introducing.

Miles Macdonell Collegiate New Classrooms and Gymnasium

Mr. Andrew Micklefield (Rossmere): Miles Mac Collegiate is a high school that serves many Rossmere students in the northeast of Winnipeg. In fact, it has an enrollment of 1,155 students. Now, in 2016, Miles Mac began accepting grade 9 students for the first time and their student population grew by more than 300 students.

Madam Speaker, I'm wondering if the Minister of Education could outline for this House the recent announcement made and how this will benefit the students of Miles Mac Collegiate.

Hon. Ian Wishart (Minister of Education and Training): I thank my colleague from Rossmere for the question.

Six new classrooms and a new gymnasium will be constructed at Miles Mac. The new gym will give students—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order. Order.

Mr. Wishart: The new gym will give students more opportunities to get involved in sports and to develop the kind of healthy lifestyles that will benefit them for years to come. The existing gym space will be

converted to a new art room and classroom space to help accommodate the increased enrollment.

This investment is part of our commit to providing the best education possible for students in River East Transcona School Division. Thank you.

* (14:10)

Madam Speaker: I just want to indicate to members that we have a lot of guests in the gallery. We particularly have students here, and I'm having a tough time hearing in the last little while some of the questions that are being asked and answers that are being given. I think we owe each other the respect to listen to whomever has the floor so that we can ensure that we can all hear what is being said.

So I would ask for everybody's co-operation in that.

Red River Valley Water Supply Project Invasive Species Concerns

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): This government's utter silence about the potential threats of the Red River Valley Water Supply Project in North Dakota is as concerning as it is baffling.

I and other water activists raised the alarm about this project and its potential dangers way back in the summer, and still we've heard nothing from this government about the potential damage of foreign invasive species that could end up here in Manitoba.

Will the minister please inform the House and all Manitobans how many potential foreign invasive species they are going to allow to come to Manitoba if they continue to be silent on this issue?

Hon. Eileen Clarke (Acting Minister of Sustainable Development): I'd like to acknowledge the member opposite for his question, and, once again, it's a lot of doom and gloom, and everything is wrong in the province of Manitoba.

But I'm very pleased to have met, the past two days, with members of our Association of Manitoba Municipalities and their members, as well as the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs just this morning, and very pleased that all our partners that we are working with throughout the province, indigenous and non-indigenous, are very supportive of what this government is doing moving forward in all of our aspects. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

The honourable member for Wolseley, on a supplementary question.

Mr. Altemeyer: Well, Madam Speaker, I guess, in an era of alternative facts we also have to put up with alternative answers.

Back to the topic at hand, the correct answer to my first question is two dozen. There's over two dozen foreign species in the Missouri River basin which could end up here in Manitoba if this government stays silent. These species range from more versions of the blue-green algae already causing problems in Lake Winnipeg, mollusks, plants, even fish.

Why is this government so accepting of silence in the face of real threats from a project that is undergoing construction in real time?

Ms. Clarke: I was recently also attending the Red River basin AGM—and our Grand Chief Jerry Daniels attended that as well—and spoke to all those in attendance, putting forward the commitment of SCO, as well as other First Nations in our province, to work with this government on all conservation issues going forward. And I think that's a great new beginning for Manitoba and we will continue to work with our partners.

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

Mr. Altemeyer: Wow. Okay. Where to start?

First Nations in Manitoba will probably not want to have two dozen foreign species in their water any more than anyone else will. If the minister wants to confirm that, I'd invite her to continue her dialogue with First Nations and all Manitobans.

The other big problem this government is completely ignoring: all of this information I'm reporting is freely available online. It comes from the environmental impact statement of the project, which itself is a decade old.

At the very least, will this government please end its silence, start standing up for Manitobans, standing up for the safety of our water and demand that the environmental impact statement at least be refreshed?

Madam Speaker: The honourable minister of indigenous and municipal relations—or, sorry, Indigenous and Northern Relations.

Ms. Clarke: For the member opposite to indicate that any of our First Nations, or municipalities or

people in Manitoba are not concerned about the water quality and also species that come within our waterways that are 'desfinitely' a negative impact—we're all very aware of it, and that's why we are collaborating with all partners to make sure that this government does the right thing going forward.

English Language Training Affordability for Newcomers

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Logan): English language training is critical for the success of newcomers, yet the cost for English language training at Brandon University for international students and permanent residents is rising by nearly 17 per cent.

What steps is the Education Minister going to take to ensure English language training remains affordable for international students and permanent residents of Manitoba?

Hon. Ian Wishart (Minister of Education and Training): I thank the member for the question.

We have been following with some interest the on-again, off-again approach that the federal government has been taking regarding English language training beyond level 4, where they initially said, no, they weren't going to offer it anymore. Then they reversed their decision, now have come back and said, well, perhaps we'll offer it, but with certain conditions.

So we are looking at where we need to fit in the whole process, and we will certainly be there for Manitobans and for international students to make sure that they have the services that they need.

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

Ms. Marcelino: I thank the minister.

Madam Speaker, newcomers are facing tremendous challenges from the Pallister government. The minimum wage was frozen for two years, RentAid was cut and transit services are declining while fares increase. And now the costs of even getting into post-secondary education are getting further out of reach. Brandon University is increasing the cost of English language training by 17 per cent.

What steps is the minister taking to address this?

Mr. Wishart: I thank the member for the question. I know she's interested in international students that have come to this province, and so are we.

We certainly have moved to change our Provincial Nominee Program to make a pathway forward for international students so that they can become Canadians and fit right into the workplace as easily as possible.

One of the first things we did, however, was get rid of the long waiting lists that were in place under Provincial Nominee Program so that we actually can process applications in six months now, not four years.

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

Ms. Marcelino: We are deeply concerned about the growing burden being placed on newcomers. Our province has seen such economic success because we are an open and inviting place. But that can only happen if we support newcomers to be successful.

Unfortunately, the steps to success are being pulled further and further out of reach by the Pallister government.

What steps is the minister taking to address the rising costs of English language training at Brandon University?

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

We continue to work closely with both the federal government and our own branches to make sure that we have access to English language training availability and that it's particularly available to students, as we want many students to come to the province not only for the education but for the opportunity that presents to come under Provincial Nominee Program, and we have made improvements in regards to that even further more recently.

We certainly know that many—or many international people want to come to Manitoba. It is a welcoming place, and we continue to follow that line so that many more Manitobans will come in the—or many more international students will come to Manitoba in the future.

Home-Care Services Funding Cut Concerns

Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas): Last Thursday, a constituent at Pineview Manor, a seniors home, called me in tears, telling me that she may be forced to move to the personal-care home. She's comfortable where she is. Her friends are there, her home is there. She described her love for

her community at Pineview Manor as I visited her apartment on Saturday.

* (14:20)

She shouldn't be forced to move, but it looks like that doesn't matter to this government.

Will this government reverse its harmful policy cuts to home care?

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Acting Minister of Health, Seniors and Acting Living): Our heart goes out to this individual that this member mentions today, and our heart goes out to many Manitobans who are suffering as a result of various illnesses that they have.

But I'll tell you, Madam Speaker, these Manitobans understand that we have been in office for a year and a half, and after 17 years of mismanagement of our health-care system, we are in the situation where we're in today. We have come some ways, Madam Speaker, but there's still much more work to do.

The Minister of Health is working with stakeholders in the community to ensure that health care is there for Manitobans when they need it.

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

Mental Health and Addiction Services On-Site Access in Northern Communities

Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas): At a time when this government is predicting the loss of at least 1,500 jobs in northern Manitoba, they are also cutting funding for mental health and addiction services.

In the face of job losses, strong mental health and addiction supports become an essential service, especially in remote communities.

Will this government acknowledge that their plan isn't working and instead commit to expanding on-site access to mental health services in northern Manitoba towns and First Nations?

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Acting Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): We know that there's work to do to strengthen the system and improve access to mental health and addiction

services in Manitoba, not only in Winnipeg but in northern Manitoba, indeed, all across Manitoba.

That's why we have engaged in—the services of VIRGO Planning and Evaluation to assist our government in developing a comprehensive mental health and addiction strategy. We will await the outcomes of that report, and we look forward to that happening in the next few months.

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

Northern Manitoba Health Care Physician Recruitment and Clinic Services

Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas): With every passing day it's becoming more and more clear that this government's reckless 'austerity' measures are hurting Manitobans, especially northern Manitobans. They've cancelled a grant program designed to encourage doctors to practise in rural and remote areas. They have cancelled health clinics in Thompson and The Pas, and they're cancelling the Northern Patient Transfer agreement's subsidy for escorts.

Will this government reverse direction, cancel the cuts and restore these much-needed investments?

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Acting Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): I know change is a difficult thing in Manitobans, and there are—for Manitobans and for members opposite.

We recognize that changes need to take place in order to move forward with respect to the health-care system in our province. And so we will continue to work in that direction, and we will consult all Manitobans, including those in northern Manitoba. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: The time for oral questions has expired.

* * *

Hon. Cathy Cox (Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask for leave to revert to members' statements. I have guests in the gallery.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave for the member to—or for the House to revert to members' statements, as the member has guests in the gallery? *[Agreed]*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

(Continued)

Student Choirs Partner with Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra

Hon. Cathy Cox (Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage): Thank you to all the members in the gallery.

Madam Speaker, I'm delighted to rise in the House today to recognize some outstanding young singers from River East constituency and neighbouring constituencies.

On the evening of November the 8th, students from the River East Transcona School Division teamed up with our wonderful Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra for a memorable night of music in a sellout show.

Madam Speaker, it was a full house at the Centennial Concert Hall, and it was great to see the beaming faces of proud parents, family and friends who were on hand to watch approximately 600 students singing their hearts out. From my community alone, upwards of 130 students from six schools performed. The singers were accompanied by the entire Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, all 67 members.

The senior years concert choir was spectacular, and the Canadian music medley from the fifth- and sixth-grade students was definitely a heartwarming, maple leaf moment.

I am delighted to say that this concert collaboration between the River East Transcona School Division and the WSO is a yearly event. Plans are already in the works for the 14th annual concert in 2018, and I would like to compliment the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra for their unique partnership with the school division.

I'd also like to recognize the teachers involved in this program. We all know that school is so much more than reading, writing and arithmetic. Thank you to all for cultivating the creativity in our kids.

But most of all, Madam Speaker, I want to congratulate all of the students for putting on a wonderful show. I hope many of you will continue to pursue your musical passions.

I'm so thrilled to welcome the—to the Legislature some of the stars of the show. We have several students today joining us: Emily Arsenault, Lovissa Wiens from Miles Macdonell—Miles Mac Collegiate;

and from River East Collegiate—which was my high school, Madam Speaker—Jordan Chalmers, and Corina Schuler who is the daughter of the honourable Minister of Infrastructure (Mr. Schuler).

Madam Speaker, I ask all the members of this House to join me in congratulating all of these young singers. Bravo, a job well done.

Thank you.

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): Madam Speaker, on a point of order.

Point of Order

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Assiniboia, on a point order.

Mr. Fletcher: Madam Speaker, during question period, the Minister of Agriculture referred to the presence of—or the absence of a member in this Chamber, which is, I understand, not the custom or within the rules, and I wonder if that member will apologize to whomever he was referring to.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member—or the honourable Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Ralph Eichler (Minister of Agriculture): Well, Madam Speaker, I'm not really sure what the member's referring to, but all members of this House are to be respected. Anybody that put their names on a ballot I respect, and if I offended anyone I certainly apologize for that.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, and that should take care of the matter. I appreciate the comments from the Minister of Agriculture, and just to point out and remind members about the rules of the House, that it is against the rules of the House to indicate whether a member is present or absent from the House.

PETITIONS

Access to Health Care

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Direct cuts to front-line health-care services, including the closure of emergency departments, intensive-care units, an urgent-care centre and more are occurring across the province.

(2) These health cuts will drastically reduce the ability of Manitobans to access timely quality health care—[*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Allum: —services.

(3) The provincial government made these decisions unilaterally, failing to consult with front-line health-care professionals who provide direct care to patients.

(4) The provincial government has had its main focus on the bottom line and failed to present a clear and detailed plan for the public health-care system that will actually improve and optimize patient care for Manitobans.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to reverse the cuts and closures that negatively impact patients' ability to access timely quality health care.

(2) To urge the provincial government to make real investments in Manitoba's health-care system that will provide a direct benefit to patients, such as increasing access to primary care, the development of a provincial health human resource plan, increasing publicly funded personal-care homes across Manitoba and increasing the efficiencies of diagnostic testing in Manitoba's health facilities.

Madam Speaker, this petition is signed by many Manitobans.

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

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

And the background to this petition is as follows:

* (14:30)

(1) Direct cuts to front-line health-care services, including the closure of emergency departments, intensive-care units, an urgent-care centre and more are occurring across the province.

(2) These health cuts will drastically reduce the ability of Manitobans to access timely, quality health-care services.

(3) The provincial government made these decisions unilaterally, failing to consult with front-

line health-care professionals who provide direct care to patients.

(4) The provincial government has had its main focus on the bottom line and failed to present a clear and detailed plan for the public health-care system that will actually improve and optimize patient care for Manitobans.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to reverse the cuts and closures that negatively impact patients' ability to access timely, quality care—health care; and

(2) To urge the provincial government to make real investment in Manitoba's public health-care system that will provide a direct benefit to patients, such as increasing access to primary care, the development of a provincial health human resource plan, increasing publicly funded personal-care homes across the province and increasing the efficiencies of diagnostic testing in Manitoba's health facilities.

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

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Direct cuts to front-line health-care services, including the closure of emergency departments, intensive-care units, an urgent-care centre and more, are occurring across this province.

(2) These health cuts will drastically reduce the ability of Manitobans to access timely, quality health-care services.

(3) The provincial government made these decisions unilaterally, failing to consult with front-line health-care professionals who provide direct care to patients.

(4) The provincial government has had its main focus on the bottom line and failed to present a clear and detailed plan for the public health-care system that will actually improve and optimize patient care for Manitobans.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to reverse the cuts and closures that negatively impact

patients' ability to access timely, quality health care; and

(2) To urge the provincial government to make real investment in Manitoba's public health-care system that will provide a direct benefit to patients, such as increasing access to primary care, the development of a provincial health human resource plan, increasing publicly funded personal-care homes across Manitoba and increasing the efficiencies of diagnostic testing in Manitoba's health facilities.

Signed by many, many fine Manitobans.

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Direct cuts to front-line health-care services, including the closure of emergency departments, intensive-care units, as urgent-care centre and more, are occurring across the province.

(2) These health cuts will drastically reduce the ability of Manitobans to access timely, quality health-care services.

(3) The provincial government made these decisions unilaterally, failing to consult with front-line health-care professionals who provide direct care to patients.

(4) The provincial government has had its main focus on the bottom line and failed to present a clear and detailed plan for the public health-care system that will actually improve and optimize patient care for Manitobans.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to reverse the cuts and closures that negatively impact the patients' ability to access timely, quality care—health care.

(2) To urge the provincial government to make real investments in Manitoba's public health system that will provide a direct benefit to patients, such as increasing access to primary care, the development of a provincial health human resource plan, increasing publicly funding personal-care homes across Manitoba and increasing the efficiencies of diagnostic testing in Manitoba health facilities.

Signed by Norma Bueckert, Jeff Foster, Arlene Sawatzky and many other Manitobans.

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Logan): I wish to present to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, this petition.

The background of this petition is as follows:

(1) Direct cuts to front-line health-care services, including the closure of emergency departments, intensive care units, an urgent-care centre and more are occurring across the province.

(2) These health cuts will drastically reduce the ability of Manitobans to access timely, quality health-care services.

(3) The provincial government made these decisions unilaterally, failing to consult with front-line health-care professionals who provide direct care to patients.

(4) The provincial government has had its main focus on the bottom line and failed to present a clear and detailed plan for the public health-care system that will actually improve and optimize patient care for Manitobans.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to reverse the cuts and closures that negatively impact patients' ability to access timely, quality health care.

(2) To urge the provincial government to make real investments in Manitoba's public health-care system that will provide a direct benefit to patients, such as: increasing access to primary care, the development of a provincial health human resource plan, increasing publicly funded personal-care homes across Manitoba and increasing the efficiencies of diagnostic testing in Manitoba's health facilities.

Signed by many, many Manitobans.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Greg Selinger (St. Boniface): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislature.

And the background to this petition is as follows:

Direct cuts to front-line health-care services, including the closure of emergency departments, intensive care units, an urgent-care centre and more and occurring are—and more are occurring across the province.

These health cuts will drastically reduce the ability of Manitobans to access timely, quality health-care services.

The provincial government made these decisions unilaterally, failing to consult with front-line health-care professionals, nor the public, for that matter, who provide direct care to patients.

The provincial government has its main focus on the bottom line and failed to present a clear and detailed plan for the public health-care system that will actually improve and optimize patient care for Manitobans.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as-is as follows:

To urge the provincial government to reverse the cuts and closures that negatively impact patients' ability to access timely, quality health care.

To urge the provincial government to make real investments in Manitoba's public health-care system that will provide a direct benefit to patients, such as: increasing access to primary care, the development of a provincial health human resource plan, increasing publicly funded personal-care homes across Manitoba and increasing the efficiencies of diagnostic testing in Manitoba's health-care facilities.

This is signed by Annie Shaw of High Bluff, Manitoba; Heather Adamski from Oakville, Manitoba; Alyssa Peters from Austin, Manitoba; Stephan Nadal from Brookside place, Manitoba; and Lisa Killam from Bagot, Manitoba; Elsie Rands from Austin, Manitoba—

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Selinger: —and many, many other Manitobans.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Just a reminder to members that our rules suggest, I believe, that names don't have to be read and addresses should not be referred to. So just a caution to members.

* (14:40)

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): Madam Speaker—sorry—I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Direct cuts to front-line health-care services, including the closure of emergency departments, intensive-care units, an urgent-care centre and more, are occurring across the province.

(2) These cuts will drastically reduce the ability of Manitobans to access timely, quality health-care services.

(3) The provincial government made these decisions unilaterally, failing to consult with front-line health-care professionals who provide direct care to patients.

(4) The provincial government has had its main focus on the bottom line and failed to present a clear and detailed plan for the public health-care system that will actually improve and optimize patient care for Manitobans.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to reverse the cuts and closures that negatively impact patients' ability to access timely, quality health care.

(2) To urge the provincial government to make real investments in Manitoba's public health-care system that will provide direct benefits to patients such as: increasing access to primary care; the development of provincial health human resource plan; increasingly publicly funded personal care homes across Manitoba; and increasing the efficiencies of diagnostic testing in Manitoba's health facilities.

Signed by many, many Manitobans.

Miigwech.

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Direct cuts to front-line health-care services, including the closure of emergency departments, intensive-care units, an urgent-care centre and more, are occurring across the province.

(2) These health cuts will drastically reduce the ability of Manitobans to access timely, quality health-care services.

(3) The provincial government made these decisions unilaterally, failing to consult with front-line health-care professionals who provide direct care to patients.

(4) The provincial government has had its main focus on the bottom line and failed to present a clear and detailed plan for public health-care system that

will actually improve and optimize patient care for Manitobans.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to reverse the cuts and closures that negatively impact patients' ability to access timely, quality health care.

(2) To urge the provincial government to reverse the cuts—sorry—(2) To urge the provincial government to make real investments in Manitoba's public health-care system that will provide a direct benefit to patients such as: increasing access to primary care; the development of provincial health human resource plan; increasing publicly funded personal care homes across Manitoba; and increasing the effectiveness of diagnostic testing in Manitoba health facilities.

And this petition has been signed by many, many Manitobans.

Mr. Ted Marcelino (Tyndall Park): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Direct cuts to front-line health-care services, including the closure of emergency departments, intensive-care units, an urgent-care centre and more, are occurring across the province.

(2) These health cuts will drastically reduce the ability of Manitobans to access timely, quality health-care services.

(3) The provincial government made these decisions unilaterally, failing to consult with front-line health-care professionals who provide direct care to patients.

(4) The provincial government has had its main focus on the bottom line and failed to present a clear and detailed plan for the public health-care system that will actually improve and optimize patient care for Manitobans.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to reverse the cuts and closures that negatively impact patients' ability to access timely, quality health care.

(2) To urge the provincial government to make real investments in Manitoba's public health-care system that will provide a direct benefit to patients such as increasing access to primary care, the development of a provincial health human resource plan, increasing publicly funded personal-care homes across Manitoba and increasing the efficiencies of diagnostic testing in Manitoba's health facilities.

This petition was signed by many Manitobans.

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

The background to the petition is as follows:

(1) Direct cuts to front-line health-care services, including the closure of emergency departments, intensive care units, an urgent-care centre and more, are occurring across the province.

(2) These health-care cuts will drastically reduce the ability of Manitobans to access timely quality health care services.

(3) The provincial government made these decisions unilaterally, failing to consult with the front-line health-care professionals who provide direct care to patients.

(4) The provincial government has had its main focus on the bottom line and failed to present a clear and detailed plan for the public health-care system that will actually improve and optimize patient care for Manitobans.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to reverse the cuts and closures that negatively impact patients' ability to access timely quality health care.

(2) To urge the provincial government to make real investments in Manitoba public health-care system that will provide direct benefit to patients such as increasing access to primary care, the development of a provincial health human resource plan, increasing publicly funded personal-care homes across Manitoba and increasing the efficiencies of diagnostic testing in Manitoba health facilities.

And this petition is signed by many Manitobans.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, on House business.

House Business

Madam Speaker: On House business.

Mr. Cullen: Yes, Madam Speaker, pursuant to rule 33(7), I am announcing that the private member's resolution to be considered on the next Tuesday of private members' business will be the one put forward by the honourable member for Rossmere (Mr. Micklefield). The title of the resolution is The Federal Government Should Prioritize the Yazidi Victims of Sex Slavery and Abuse at the Hands of ISIS in its Resettlement Quotas.

Madam Speaker: It has been announced by the honourable Government House Leader that pursuant to rule 33(7), it has been announced that the private member's resolution to be considered on the next Tuesday of private members' business will be one put forward by the honourable member for Rossmere.

The title of the resolution is The Federal Government Should Prioritize Yazidi Victims of Sex Slavery and Abuse at the Hands of ISIS in its Resettlement Quotas.

Mr. Cullen: Madam Speaker, if we can resume debate on the Throne Speech.

THRONE SPEECH (Fifth Day of Debate)

Madam Speaker: Resuming debate on the motion of the honourable member for Seine River (Ms. Morley-Lecomte) and the amendment and subamendment thereto, standing in the name of the honourable member for Arthur-Virden, who has 11 minutes remaining.

Mr. Doyle Piwniuk (Arthur-Virden): Again, I just wanted to summarize what I've said yesterday, that I'm proud to be a Progressive Conservative and how I've been a fiscal conservative all my life and how I've, you know, the background of my business career and how I feel that it's important and it kept being a capitalist.

* (14:50)

And now I want to go into saying how much of a socially progressive I am when it comes to this day and age, and I remember my father, who was

always—taught us to be very inclusive of all people, and it probably comes back from the days that when he first was—his family immigrated to Canada from Ukraine, my grandfather was 17, my grandmother was probably two. They settled in the northern part of the Roblin area and—but when they were married they decided to move their family to their land and down to between—they lived closer to a—US—between the Saskatchewan-Manitoba border closer to the town of Langeville [*phonetic*], where we live today, and the town of—it's called Shellmouth—we just live north of that.

My mom still lives on the family farm, and what was interesting was when my father was—when the family moved there, my father was five years old. He was actually the first one to be born on the farm, our family farm, and he was—when he was five years old he went to school for the first time, and because his family was so large we—mind you we had a lot—there was a lot of neighbours who were more German descent, the neighbours there. He did not know a word of English and he had to learn English from the time he went to school, and he was actually ridiculed for being different.

Most of the people in the area were—rather, spoke English—and his classmates. It was tough for him at first. But he assimilated and knew that was—it was a tough time. As he grew up, he actually was—before he buried my mom he was engaged to a young lady before that to a white Anglo-Saxon Protestant, while being Ukrainian Catholic all his life. The person who—her family did not accept the marriage—potential marriage, and they actually had to break off the engagement.

Then came along my mother, who was also white Anglo-Saxon Protestant, and called WASP. They actually got married, and my mom's family actually really embraced my dad when he came into the family. They've—so—thought so highly of them. And it's probably until later, until my grandma passed away, my mom's cousin was looking into ancestry.com and researching a family tree on my mom's side who—my aunt—both my grandparents came from Yorkshire, England. But what's interest about my grandmother, who was accepted on my father, was that she—we discovered that on her mom's side her mom's mother was Jewish and her dad's side was—her dad was from her—the maternal side was Gypsy.

So the Mardon [*phonetic*] family was actually from the start was—for part of the Mardon [*phonetic*]

family went before—generations before that. And my grandmother, she was very inclusive. And I remember telling this story to a Jewish rabbi's parents who actually rented our condo down south. Was—I explained them to the situation and was discovered that she said technically, because it was your grandmother—mom's mother's mother was Jewish, that technically makes you Jewish.

And—but, you know, I did grow up Catholic—Ukrainian Catholic all my life and converted into Anglican and—after I married my wife. But that was kind of the inclusion that my parents always taught us to be inclusive to all people, and I still recall my dad, the friendships that he had with, especially with the First Nation community. He—I remember he used to—we used to be involved with horses, and one the guys who used to break horses then, especially horses that were needed was, you know, was First Nation. He actually lived in Wayway. His name was Marcel Amyotte, and a very good friend of my dad.

Marcel was the type of person that all young—Aboriginal young people really respect him. They always surrounded him because he was—he had leadership. He showed leadership in the community of Waywayseecappo, which was the reserve close to Russell. And when he came to my dad's to pick up some horses, I remember many times he would have a whole group of young children with him because he—they really looked up to him.

And so then, when it came to First Nations friendships, I remember when my dad—when we were quite young my brothers and I—my dad needed help on the dairy farm. And I remember he used to always hire hired men, and a couple of them were—actually were First Nation individuals who came—one was McKay his name was Darcy McKay, and the other one I can't remember his name. I asked my mom. And he actually—they stayed on the farm for almost a whole season to help out with the, you know, doing hay and combining and stuff for the summer and fall season, and we became like good friends with the McKay family.

And over the years, we've always had relations with our First Nation. My mom, who grew up in the Binscarth area, grew up close to Gambler, and she knew the—all the individuals in that area. And one of the things, when I became an MLA back in 2014, one of the friends that I've actually made close—my closest friend I made in the—as an MLA was Chief Tacan, Chief Vincent Tacan. He is the Chief of the

Sioux Valley First Nation—Dakota First Nation and, you know, we've actually had great friendships.

We—I remember going horseback riding with Chief Tacan and had—you know, when you go horseback riding, you're actually on a horse for many hours and a couple hours and have a great opportunity to discuss different issues, especially when it comes to the First Nation community. And one of the things he actually said—you know, he actually started the—when it came to the—because Dakota First Nation people don't have—are part of their treaty, they actually were the first ones in Canada to have self-governing.

And when Chief Tacan actually had to have a plebiscite, a referendum, from his people to accept the self-governing role, instead of going to all his people and asking just to have one referendum and vote, he actually had—he decided that he needed to do it differently. And what he did was he actually met with different segments of his—of the residents there at Sioux Valley.

And what he told me was that he first talked to the elders who were 'remy' involved with residential schools and, sort of, were—sort of, you know, little—some of them were still bitter about what had happened in some of the experiences. And then he actually talked to the second group, which was parents that had kids who were going to schools in the Sioux Valley who had—you know, had children going to school. And then he talked to the youth, was the other group that were probably under age 21, without children.

And what he actually came up—when he actually met with all three different groups, he talked to the elders and, yes, they were bitter about the past. Some of them were positive. Then he talked to the ones with children, and, you know, a lot of them were—you know, it was a positive situation. He explained it to them what—how important self-governing was. Then he talked to the youth.

And what he told me was verily interested about the youth of a First Nation community was that they wanted the same thing that our kids want. They want jobs and opportunities, have a purpose of fulfilling what their goals are and dreams are. And they want hope.

And one thing, when I talk to Chief Tacan, he said that what his people really want is career opportunities. And he said that with a lot of those—with having a career—job opportunities, he said that

a lot of social programs would be solved by social economics. And meaning that if there was—if someone—if a person had a career, they can actually—and have ownership of housing, this would actually solve the housing problems when it comes to First Nation communities.

Secondly, he said that if—it also would help health care, because, you know, usually when a person's educated and—they tend to understand the health concerns and issues.

And thirdly was it just—when it comes to education, it's important that he said that one thing that—he had a school, which they actually took over from the Brandon School Division—was the Fleming School. It was an old school that should have been condemned, and even they got—Brandon School Division got rid of it, but they had a choice of—to purchase it, which, again, has a lot of issues to begin with. They actually bused their grade 7 to grade 12s to Brandon, Manitoba.

And what he told me when I was at the powwow this summer was that the school was in desperate need of repairs, and it would cost so much money to actually—to repair that school. So he decided—like, he would, like, have some—he wanted some—solving some opportunities here. And then I said, well, you know what, right now with the NDP, how they moved ACC—half of it to the old Brandon—BMHC, they actually took lots of money and moved the—part of the ACC there, so half the ACC on Victoria campus is still empty.

* (15:00)

So what I said to him—that—what happens if we were to do a vocational school, an opportunity of a vocational school? And he said this would be a great opportunity for his people, his youth, to get interested in actually doing some hands-on when it comes to trade schools and stuff.

And, you know, right now, it just—you know, I'm running out of time. Wish I had more time. But what he said that—you know what? Is given with—give—I—teach him how to fish, and they'll eat for a lifetime instead of giving a—like the minister—the Leader of the Opposition said, give him a pickerel on a dock, so. And they'll eat for a day. So I think it's important what he wanted is the vision for his people and the importance of it.

And thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm running out of time.

Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook): I'd like to thank my constituents for having faith in me to be their voice here in the Legislature. It is because of their needs and dreams that I will continue to implore this PC government to consider my people.

I'd like to thank the staff here at the Legislature for all their thoughtful actions and kind smiles.

Let's get a brief refresher of our Canadian history. Turtle Island had a 'varrier'—a vast, barrier-free economic trade and bartering system when under my people. Enter the settlers who deemed us as incompetent savages. More settlers came and essentially destroyed our livelihoods and our ways of life. However, the truth of how capable and astute my ancestors were lies in the very fact that they masterfully negotiated treaties in which included education, medicine, hunting rights, et cetera, not frozen in time. We can all hopefully understand that the acts both protect and hinder my people.

Mr. Dennis Smook, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

Fixing our finances. I see the speech makes mention of this government's listening to all—listening to Manitobans. I would like for them to retract that word, listening, because that implies what you're currently—because what you're currently doing is simply an act of hearing Manitobans. Listening implies the action of taking into account. Listening means when our constituents talk to us, we put their words into action. I have sat in many committees where many Manitobans have spoken against their policies; people have outright cried. And this government did not listen to those presenters; they simply heard them. Well, the government's ears did perk up, but only when the presenters were pro for the bill being debated. And so the heartache continues for the majority of Manitobans.

Value for money. That saying brings a chill to many people who are barely scraping by. This government has made it very evident they do not value our most vulnerable people in this province. It is those most vulnerable who are paying dearly. It has not taken those vital steps to make us better. There are ways this government can devise so our most vulnerable people don't pay, but the government seems to be stuck in ideology there.

Talk about fear mongering. Actually, it's not even fear mongering. It's outright fear. People fear what this government will do next. Where's the good news? Many of us would have liked to hear of the investments being made within Manitoba. Where is

that number? Let Manitobans know what's on the chopping block well in advance. Quit bankrupting people. Give them time to retrain or go back to the now higher priced post-secondary education. Quit sending people to the food banks because of your lack of action.

I voted in favour of dismantling of ESRA, the East Side Road Authority, in hopes of roads being built quickly to my east-side communities. No five-year plan has been tabled as promised by the previous minister of Infrastructure. And now you state value for money for infrastructure? We all know that my wonderful constituents are bound and gagged by laws and regulations that were made without our consultation, that have effectively shut us out from being able to participate in the economy. We are bound when it comes to trying to create value—viable economies in our communities. I'm sure that's your only measure of value, economic value, and not the value of people. Not once have I seen the common measure of goodwill when it comes to your budgets. It is not—is it not possible for this provincial government to devise a measure of goodwill when it comes to human capital within their budgets?

Open government. My colleague, the member for Burrows (Ms. Lamoureux), wanted this government literally to add the word accountability to amend the health care act. The PCs voted it down. Undisclosed assets, press releases telling PC MLAs to disclose interest on item that is already legally required via the Conflict of Interest Commissioner to be disclosed, all these point to the fact that's—that it's really impossible for us to believe that this government has been breeding accountability.

Repairing our services. There is no measure for ensuring all foster parents within the CFS system are doing their work out of love. The Minister of Families (Mr. Fielding) himself referred it—referred to it as the dump jobs. If there were genuine love for our people's kids we wouldn't see the kids graduate from being in care to being incarcerated, as the Throne Speech stated.

This government announced in the Throne Speech that they will be amending The Child and Family Services Act and I am hopeful. We need to remove those barriers to guardianship, but we also know that 90 of—90 per cent of the kids in CFS are indigenous and the statistic for how many of those children remain with indigenous families is not known.

The members in this House would be appalled to see the materials, and I have to reiterate it, that I used to educate people how—on how to recognize sexual and physical abuse. The pictures are deeply disturbing and heartbreaking. It is one of the toughest learnings our people in the social field work undertake and, often, despite their best efforts, they are overloaded and understaffed. These children are under—there are children under CFS care for legitimate reasons, such as abuse.

I would—I do wish to thank the minister for the headway into caring for our children. I hope he makes good on his promise to work with indigenous partners, with child welfare and community organizations and that he realizes our children's lives are indeed in his hands.

Better health care sooner: I got a call last night from a constituent who had gone into the nursing station in my community. She saw a young lady who was in extreme pain, and the nurse on call would not let her go lie down on a gurney. She ended up just simply lying on the floor on the cold waiting room as she could not comfortably stand or sit down. That was just appalling.

I know I brought this up to the minister several times, who then said he wants documentation before he does anything. The minister doesn't realize how systemic racism works. We fear for our lives if we dare complain.

Has this ministry even investigated sanatoriums? If we dare bite the hand that feeds us, we pay with our lives. No one wants to make a formal complaint. We are too scared to do so. I should be able to allow for anonymity for my constituents. The stories shared with me are heartbreaking and it needs to be addressed. This should be incorporated into the whistleblower act.

I'm glad you're finally working on a—on developing a comprehensive approach to chronic disease prevention, but why is it taking so long? This government was in opposition as well for 17 years. You knew over half of Manitobans suffer with this. Why couldn't these plans be ready and were able to hit the ground running?

Everything I ask for from this government I get the typical—go talk to your federal cousins. And there it was on page 7, one of the best statements. Since 2006, the Government of Canada has off-loaded nearly \$40 million in medical transportation costs. Finally, this government admits what a disaster

Stephen Harper—Stephen Harper's government was for my people.

That wasn't the only budgetary item that the federal government off-loaded onto the Province or onto our First Nations at that time.

* (15:10)

Child care and early years education. Madam Speaker, the first years of a child's education are crucially important in providing the formative base upon which they will build throughout their years of education. Despite this, we still see many inequities among the schools throughout this province. Many of the schools, even here in Winnipeg, are being forced to rely on food banks for their programs aimed at helping feed the 'hungry'—the hungry children that go to their schools.

This is the situation here in the heart of our province. Now imagine the many northern youth who are unable to afford the high cost of fresh fruit and vegetables. There are so many issues outside of what our students learn that greatly impact their education and future.

Services to women. While we are tremendously grateful to see greater actions to help and support women and families affected by family violence, we need to do more. During the—during my question period, the heckling from one of the members kept calling out my preference to live in Steinbach—on my preference to live in Steinbach. Madam—Deputy Speaker, Steinbach is a safer community for myself and my four daughters. We had no choice but to move down south while I went for my post-secondary education. We would love to go back to my reserve, but I gave my home away to two of my cousins who then split it down the middle and now—live there with their larger families on either side.

Women go murdered and missing more so in Winnipeg than any other place in Manitoba. For the MMIW issue, we need this province to start addressing these issues head-on. They need the supports, supports that other provinces such as Saskatchewan are providing for families. Why does Manitoba always have to fail when it comes to mental health support?

Francophone Manitobans. I'm glad this was addressed. I'm wondering where the government sits in preserving our indigenous languages.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in talking about poverty, I would just like to remind all members of this House that I once stated that I lived by my catechism teachings as well as the seven sacred grandfather teachings, and I would like to point out the verse, Deuteronomy 15:7-15.

Thank you.

Mr. Brad Michaleski (Dauphin): First of all, I want to thank you for the job that you're doing in keeping order in this place. And I know you do a good job in here and also in committee, and especially when some of the opposition members seem to drag the clock and not allow some of the presenters to speak. Sometimes we run out of time, and it's nice that you keep things in order and keep things in check for everybody, and greatly appreciate that.

I'd like to thank the staff here doing a great job also. And also like to thank my support system back at home. They're pretty important for a rural MLA to serve in this House, which is a incredible privilege for me. And I really do thank my family and friends at home that keep things rolling and keep things in order.

And also like to thank the people—members of this House for—all of you for serving. It's been really interesting to listen to this—different perspectives from people all around the province, and it's really been an educational experience 'til now, and sometimes frustrating listening to the members opposite, but we'll get through to them one of these days.

So—but I do first want to—I want to just simply say that this is, I think, the third time I've spoken to the Throne Speech, and they just keep getting better all the time. They really do. The last few have—we've had a number of challenges as a province. Our government inherited them, so we needed to make it—make some big changes, make some bold visions. And—so we've—we're making that turn. We're making progress on a lot of the problems that we're dealing with. And this Throne Speech is very much a visionary, hopeful Throne Speech that lays a pretty strong pathway for the future of Manitoba and improves a lot of the confidence that was hurt by the previous government. And so, no, I'm really optimistic that—with this Throne Speech.

A lot of the amendments that were raised, you know, they really, I don't think, are in order; if the members opposite really looked into the Throne Speech and they looked into the depth of the Throne

Speech instead of just skimming over the top and—or the headlines. They'd see that a lot of their concerns are addressed in the Throne Speech. So I don't—I'm not going to vote in favour of their amendments because a lot of the concerns are in the Throne Speech.

I want to thank, also—over the last number of months, we've had a number of consultations throughout Dauphin constituency, right from Roblin to Ste. Rose. And, again, it's a good learning experience for me to hear from—and listening experience for me to listen to the members of the—my constituency from Roblin to Ste. Rose and Dauphin and Grandview. It's a—it was a great experience, and I want to thank them for participating in the consultations.

Going back to the Throne Speech, it's important, again, that agriculture is highlighted in the Throne Speech. I know for many years that wasn't a priority for the previous government to even include it in the Throne Speech. And that's pretty disappointing for an economy of Manitoba that relies on agriculture so much, for them to ignore agriculture the way they have. It's refreshing that it's coming up time and time again in the Throne Speech. It's a very, very important part of the provincial economy and a very important part of the provincial life for a lot of Manitobans.

But I'm going to focus first on the hog industry. And just a few weeks ago, I had a person near Roblin who owns a hog barn and a feed mill. And, you know, he really patted us—patted me on the back, and he just said, you know, good for you guys on your changes that you're making to some of their highly restrictive and unreasonable restrictions that were put in the—on the hog industry that were really slowing down growth and investment in the province.

Now, I can tell you, I know 20 years ago, when I used to work for a company in—just out of Dauphin, we were working in the building construction industry, and I was involved in the design and manufacturing and supply of engineered wood products into the building construction industry over a 13-year time period. And during that time, I worked in the residential area, commercial and farm, and right—there was about a three-year stretch, four-year stretch where the agriculture—or the hog industry really took off. And it was really exciting for our company in Dauphin that was supplying materials into that market. We were—we had a—taken a number of years to build up a relationship with

some of the players in the hog industry in southern Manitoba. But, when it took off, I was really thankful to have a number of companies out of Steinbach and Niverville and southeast Manitoba call us up and say, come on, let's—we could use some of your products. And so it helped us in Dauphin. We were able to take a plant that was—hired 15—well, seven full-time people and an additional seven for the season. We ended up running double shift and employing 30 people, for—and that lasted for about three years.

*(15:20)

So the effect on the hog industry in just the supply industries to the construction industry was huge. And, of course, those—we were able to create jobs for 15 new families. And, again, when I went down to—in—working in the industry, of course, where the construction was actually happening, the trades were—it was just unbelievable to go into a restaurant at dinner time and to see the young people that were working in the construction industry in the different trades that were helping that industry, plus, again, just the demand for feeds and grains. It just—it was such a ripple effect throughout the economy.

It was really disappointing when I heard some of the changes that were going on with the NDP government, how they took the building class—you know, you want to talk about some pretty—you know, you want to put a stop sign up in front of growth. You take the building class of a low human occupancy building and you ratchet it up to commercial spec; you end up running 30 per cent, 40 per cent more on a cost of a building. That really was an impediment to growth, the people that were in the industry. And, of course, manure management, some of those regulations that they put in place, it was just unreasonable, and it's unreasonable to even label and target agriculture like that. And that's, you know, that's really of a negative legacy of the NDP, is just how they didn't come to the defence of agriculture. They didn't support them, and they made a lot of regulations just to satisfy their activist buddies. So—and it's unfortunate they—that they took the—one of the most important industries—one of the most important industries in the province, and, you know, just let the activists have at it.

So we understand that, you know, they're the—NDP's green plan was based on the, you know, The Nature of Things, and—you know, so I would suggest the NDP, you know, next time they come up with an epiphany to stall agriculture growth in the province

is, you know, come out of the basement—come out of the basement—go out past the Perimeter, and look and see the good things that are going on in Manitoba, what's going on, the diversity in Manitoba agriculture and the sustainable, the environmental progress that agriculture's making. You'll see that the—you should never, never attack or talk badly about the Manitoba agriculture industry.

So anyway, I'll just—just some—just a few facts on hogs—on the hog industry. There's 16 to 17 thousand people employed in the pig industry, and, of course, there's just countless spinoffs, not just in the hogs industries but for grain producers. There's a need to and there's a—there is—one of the things that we do produce is corn and barley, and there's—you know, why are we shipping that stuff out of the province? Why are we shipping our weanlings out of the province? Why aren't we developing them here in Manitoba? Why aren't we feeding cattle in this province? You know, this is all because the NDP made it so hard on the industry to develop and have the confidence to invest in that next layer of value add. It just made it nearly impossible, and then our—that one layer of wealth that we could've developed in this province, we shipped it out of here.

So we're about changing that. We're about making it realistic for the agriculture industry to invest in this province and to grow the hog industry, to grow the beef industry, and we're going to do it in a responsible way, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We're going to do it in a way more reasonable and realistic way than the previous government who crafted their green plan. They crafted their green plan off of The Nature of Things and David Suzuki, and they come into this House and they say, that's the way it's supposed to be. We all going to—we have to stop everything because David Suzuki said something.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is—since this happened, since the NDP—*[interjection]*

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): Order. It's getting a little loud in here. Order.

Mr. Michaleski: —put the brakes—put the brakes—on livestock growth in this province. Since they put the brakes on it—you know, again, we're exporting grain that we should be feeding to livestock. We should be feeding hogs, we should be building barns. We should be developing and growing our cattle industry and the way we're going to do it, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is with Manitoba—our made-in-Manitoba climate change and green plan, which really is one of

the most comprehensive and intelligent plans that I've seen in a long, long time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have to say that our plan is built on four pillars and it's—again, it's the best plan I really seen. It's a smart one and it's smart because it combines the environment, the environmental challenges, the environmental concerns we have with economic realities. That's something that the NDP just seemed to ignore. They were more interested in getting results by attacking agriculture, but what ours is, what our plan is, it deals with the environmental challenges in a reasonable and smart way. It deals with the economic realities and the shared responsibility of environmental concerns.

You know, it doesn't—it doesn't label anybody. It's everybody's responsibility—the water, the land, it's—it is a shared responsibility, and if the member from Elmwood likes—who likes to say that while—or make fun of the farmers that's coming to town, and if he thinks it's all Ag's responsibility he's sadly wrong. He's sadly wrong. This is a shared responsibility for all of Manitoba and all Manitobans.

So this is where this plan works so good because it is a comprehensive plan and it deals with the shared responsibility of solving the problem and funding the problem.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have to say the plan is built on four key pillars, key pillars that work for Manitoba: climate, jobs, water, and nature, and Manitoba, on the climate bill there, it's talking about clean energy solutions and renewable fuels and alternative fuels.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, why aren't we doing that anyway? We should be. We're—we've got a province with a lot of hydro. We should be looking and developing at—and being out in front and dealing with the next generation, the next step in energy—alternative energies. Why aren't we doing that?

So this plan lays a framework towards that, towards the future of—and, again, it's going to take time. But, you know, changes like this don't happen overnight. We don't flip a switch and all of a sudden we're running something else. It takes a time to develop those technologies, developing that through research and through our universities.

Again, this is what our climate plan does. It focuses dollars towards important things that we're going to be dealing with in the future.

The second one is on—of course, on jobs, and that—there's a lot of jobs to be created in solving the environmental issues that we all face, and whether it's agriculture or in the urban centres, there's all kinds of challenges and no end to the number of projects we can work on to improve our environment, to improve the quality life for people. So, again, this is about directing shared responsibility into those projects that benefit all Manitobans.

The third—the other pillar is on water, and that, of course, that is one that is everybody's responsibility and, you know, the member from Wolseley would like to maybe point fingers at Agriculture on this one, but, really, this is something that's everybody's responsibility. It truly is everybody's responsibility and, you know, it's just—you know, again—*[interjection]*

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): Order.

Mr. Michaleski: —when the member from Wolseley, again, likes to—*[interjection]*

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): Order.

* (15:30)

Mr. Michaleski: —label agriculture as a poor steward of the environment and being irresponsible, I would suggest the member from Wolseley is incorrect on that and he does have a shared responsibility in this. So, if he would like to jump in, you know, jump in his Lada, get past the border—or—of the—out into the rural Manitoba, he'll see that a lot of agriculture producers are very, very responsible with the environment. They're very responsible on water controls, manure management. He'd see that if he went out and saw. You know, turn the TV off. Get out there. Have a look. And you'll see that agriculture is doing a good job.

So another—and to switch gears—I'm going to have to switch gears. I've got so much good news to say about this throne—the Throne Speech. Again, this is really a Throne Speech—*[interjection]*

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): Order. It's getting a little loud in here. I'm having a difficult time hearing the speech. So, if we could just tone it down a little bit, please.

The member for Dauphin. Sorry, I didn't have my mic on.

Mr. Michaleski: Well, I—thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I really do appreciate the time. But the time is ticking. And I've got pages and pages of stuff here

to talk about. The green plan and the Throne Speech, and I just got—you know, there's just pages. More pages of where I could say how the NDP failed us. For the last 17 years, they've failed in every front. There's nothing that they didn't leave unscathed. They just didn't.

So I'm just going to have to say, in closing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that Throne Speech really is a vision of hope created by the PC government. We've got lots to fix. We've got a great team to do it. And we've got tons of opportunity. Really, that Throne Speech, this climate plan, is just tons and tons of opportunity for all Manitobans. So we got a great—it's really great how our government's renewing hope and optimism in Manitoba. And thank you very much for—*[interjection]*

Mr. Mohinder Saran (The Maples): Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

At this point of speech in the Legislature, I would like to take the opportunity to thank all of my constituents in The Maples. I would, as well, thank my colleagues, well-wishers and good hearts who kept co-operating with me and encouraging me to serve the greater interest of my constituents in specific. And I am really thankful my staff who work hard, because my constituency, one of the most busy constituencies, and every day, 10 to 15 people drop in because this constituency belongs to—there are many new immigrants. They don't know where to go, because they can go to the departments, but they don't know where to go. So that way, they keep coming to us, and we try to help them.

And also I thank my constituents; irrespective of conspiracy against me, they kept trusting in me and they—even in the last leadership race, they signed 900 members on my behalf, on my side, and we were able to deliver 87 delegates out of 93. That shows how the constituents kept believing in me.

And I read this Throne Speech. Sometimes, in the Throne Speech, either there will be sizzle or substance or both. But, in this speech, I could not find anything, neither sizzle nor substance. Their superficial statements does not explain anything. But we have some issues and concerns, first in The Maples and in general. I would present, in the House, some of the concerns of the residents in The Maples. After I focus on some specific needs of The Maples constituency, I will draw attention on a number of provincial issues.

As the elected representative of The Maples, I meet my constituents regularly. They also come to me to share their everyday life experience in Manitoba and in Canada. I interact with them as—and when I can, and this gives me the opportunity to learn more about people's expectations from government and from their representatives. Therefore, I am talking about the immediate needs first; then I will surely talk about common concerns of Manitobans that need attention.

First of all, I would like to talk about the Seven Oaks ER. I am hearing every day from my constituents their woes which will be caused by the Seven Oaks ER closure. They're afraid that they will be severely disadvantaged by this closure. Seniors and physically challenged people keep calling me regularly. The emergency room used to serve 45,000 patients per year. Once it was considered the busiest or second busiest ER service in Manitoba.

This ER was also extensively reorganized and expanded in 2008 to excel in innovation of emergency-care delivery. It was also made equipped with a state-of-the-art Minor Treatment Area, to separate patients with minor ailments from more urgent stream of care. The separation made both services much faster and efficient. The MTA also began using both nurse practitioners and physician assistants in emergency care.

Once the ER is closed down, all of these developments will go in vain. The objective behind all those renovations and modifications was to extend a greater quality health-care service, not to waste taxpayers' money spent in a renovation.

My constituents always tell me how great the Seven Oaks ER service is. They inform how they are still being benefited by the ER's real-time estimate monitors where time display on screen extra. The average wait time in the ER is still the lowest among all ERs in Canada. It also efficiently integrates information technology, including access to Manitoba's electronic health record system. My constituents report that they will suffer by the ER closure and advised me to speak in the House to keep the ER open.

Second issue, my constituents are talking about—it's about transferring the taxi industry to the City. And, on one hand, the government say how fair they are. But on the other hand, they treat different industries different ways. The majority of the people who work in the taxi industry, they were—they are Indo-Canadian or South Asians.

And, with this move, this will wash away all the savings. So these people become poor. How this will be the most improved province when it will make people more impoverished people in Manitoba and whole Canada? So these people—I think—and throne speak—speech, it said they welcome newcomers. Is that the way to welcome newcomers, wash away their—all the savings, force them to leave this province?

* (15:40)

And I think it does not make any sense. One way, they are saying they're welcoming to the newcomers. On the other hand, they are attacking the newcomers, because the taxi industry was the bread and butter of these newcomers. Sure, some of them will come, engineers, doctors and in different professions. But to start with, they start from taxi or trucking industry.

Taxi industry buys them their tags. Trucking industry will also tag them if somebody had a licence from the other province, say, from Ontario, they will have to go through again, and there was no pre-warning if you get licence from other place you have to do it again.

So that was another attack on the newcomers.

But I also would like to concentrate on—in The Maples, where for many years there is little avenue. It was supposed to be twinned. And with these kind of cars how that will be twinned? There are only two lanes, one to go, one to come back, and if cars are parked they are—there's no way and they drive together and the track will be moving. So it's very hard and people are expecting it.

Similarly, in the—because this is a area where lots of immigrant to come and settle and schools are overcrowded, and we need at least two more schools. With these cuts, how they will build two or three more schools which are needed, because these schools already overcrowded and they have temporary rooms that you can see trailers where some classes are heard? So I don't see any indication from the government that they are going to immediately build those schools.

There—other issue, which was very important to newcomers and to the community, that's a granny suite or secondary suite building. Granny suites are secondary suites. And it used to be \$35,000, 50 per cent of the total cost approved by the government, and I haven't heard anything about that. How that will benefit the economy? How that will

benefit the newcomers? By building granny suites or secondary suites, it helps the newcomers to have someplace where rent will be lower than the otherwise in the apartments and other places.

On the other hand, there're cultural issues because still people stay in extensive families where parents and grandparents and all of them live together, and this way these secondary suites will help to stay those families together, and also independent. So these are very important.

I don't know whether the minister responsible for that look into it. Even he had looked into it, where that money come from, and how they can help to have those secondary suites and granny suites.

I also talk about seniors. In the last government, seniors were first given \$235 school tax rebate, then \$470, then it was \$2,300. It was \$2,300 to be and also PC also agreed on that one, but then they backed off. And—but that helps to develop the economy, because if seniors stay in their houses, and that way they can be taken care of by their relatives or their children, and it won't cost the government that much, and, in that way, the government will save money. And that can be spent some other projects.

Other issues regarding The Maples: The previous government agreed, considering that The Maples Community Centre is the smallest one and the most busy one—and the government agreed they will spend—fund that project to develop a new community centre, and one third of the cost, they will share, maximum up to \$6 million. But, in my opinion, that has been cancelled. So The Maples constituents will be left just a small community centre while they have the most diverse community. And different groups need different kinds of accommodations in that community centre, which at this time cannot be provided.

So, when I—last time I said, well, the north is not being treated in the same way as the south Winnipeg; I think that's close to that, because we don't get that many facilities as compared to the other side. And one reason is that because these are new immigrants—most of them are. They're low-income people, they don't have time to organize themselves and go and participate in the committees—but, on the other side, they have those kinds of people who are rich, who have enough money and who can spare time. So, I think, this government has a responsibility to treat all the people fairly. So it's really urgent that the community centre in The Maples is adequately developed.

I think the government minister and the immigration department, they are very happy with the new changes. I think they are not seeing the real issue over here. They honestly feel they are doing a good job as compared to before, but I don't think so, because, recently, they are trying to put a condition on the people who want to apply under the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program. First, they have to get recognized their credentials. If they're equivalent to Manitoba institutions, then they will be allowed to apply; otherwise, they won't be allowed to apply.

And, if people who want to be applicants, they want to apply, they first have to get their credentials recognized. I don't—it will cost \$500, \$1,000. And, even if they may not have a chance to apply or may not get qualified. So that amount of money, it really will hurt, especially Asian countries, where \$1 is equal to 50 rupees or pesos. And it will discourage from the Asian countries, immigrants, and it will encourage—it won't make a different to European countries.

Is that a subtle way of creating prejudice against those people, or is this unknown and they have not thought about that? I will give them the benefit of a doubt. Therefore, the minister should think about that. Let those people come over here. And, when those people come over here, in the way—at the beginning, they will work any job they can get, then they will improve their skills. I—also, I think it's important before this is immediately go to their profession. They know the culture of the working place over here, and that's the best way to let them start to do any job.

* (15:50)

Let them improve their qualifications, and then they can get a job, because different countries, there is a different culture, and some people, professionals, may not say—engineers, they may not like to go and change a light over here, engineer would not mind it, so first they have to learn about that. Previously, I gave that example when I went to chief engineer, how one person was not ready to do it, and I had to convince him this is a different environment and we should learn this way.

So it's all important, how we want to bring people from other countries, and many people now thinking we won't have a chance to apply over here in the Provincial Nominee Program. They start moving to the other provinces where they will be treated better.

Sometimes, unfortunately, even within visibility minority groups, we don't try to understand the other cultures and we—one visible minority group will discriminate against the other group, and they want to make their point, they want to become a hero. These phony activists, they are doing more damage than they're helping their people, than they're helping their cause.

And one time—take a women's issue. At one time, women never lie. They tell the truth. But, on the other hand, if some woman said that and she is not believed, how this hypocritical thinking? So I think minority groups themselves have to think twice how they treat other minority groups.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I can keep continue to speaking on those issues. I did not become—got elected by chance. I—throughout my life, when I was a student, first, we built a—there needed a road back over in India. We organized the organization. We made the government do it. Then we asked them to upgrade the school. Then we did not have electricity in our village. We asked them to bring electricity.

Over here, I was president when we have the first gurdwara in Manitoba, so I—people trusted me. I did not come by chance. Those people who wanted to attack me, who attacked me, who conspired against me, I think they are mistaking.

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): The member's time has expired.

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): It's a pleasure to speak to the Throne Speech.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table three documents, and I wonder if the contents, with unanimous consent, could be included in Hansard.

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): The member has requested leave to have the contents of the documents included in his speech in Hansard.

Some Honourable Members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): I hear a no, and leave is denied.

Mr. Fletcher: I'd like to first say thank you to the people of Assiniboia and, in fact, all members of the House for sharing in this great experience of representing the people of Manitoba.

And little—you know, time ticks quickly, and I won't be able to say everything I would like, which is why I would like to just ask one more time if there could be leave to accept the documents.

An Honourable Member: We still haven't seen it. It hasn't been distributed.

Mr. Fletcher: Oh, it hasn't been distributed. Okay.

Okay. Mr. Speaker—okay—can I ask for leave, or what's going on here?

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): The member for Assiniboia had asked for leave. It was denied. That is the ruling that has been made, so it has been denied.

The honourable member for Assiniboia, then you may continue with your speech now.

Mr. Fletcher: Mr. Speaker, when we ran as MLAs, we ran on a platform, a platform which I largely support. In fact, I support it all, but there seems to be different interpretations. So, on a go-forward basis, I will endeavour to fulfill the PC party platform, and where the government fails or misinterprets their mandate, I intend to hold them to account.

For example, we ran on lower taxes. In fact, under the government's proposal in the Throne Speech, it is going to raise taxes. It says it's because Ottawa made them but, in fact, that is not correct. It is the Manitoba Legislature, under this government, that is raising the tax. In fact, the government is suggesting the tax be two and a half times of what Ottawa would introduce. Now, there's some vague language that sometime in the distant future it'll all even out but, in fact, the underlying assumption is false.

Federal policies change. They change for a lot of reasons, but they also change because the parties change. And, in just a few months, we may have Prime Minister Trudeau no longer the prime minister and running to be secretary-general for the United Nations and prime minister Andrew Scheer will end the carbon tax. But Manitobans are going to be stuck with a tax two and a half times even of what Ottawa's asking and the corresponding spending. Well, at the same time, no other province is going to be stuck with that.

The thing to do, if Ottawa wants to do it, let them do it. The money's going to come back to Manitobans anyway. They've said that. So why would we do it to ourselves two and a half times more than anyone else? It's just ridiculous and it's against what we ran on.

Carbon pricing does not reduce greenhouse gases. But I'll tell you what does: using Manitoba

Hydro in an east-west grid. I've long advocated for that and I'll continue to do so. If the federal government is serious about reducing greenhouse gases, they will either assist financially or even, through the National Energy Board, force other provinces who use primarily fossil fuels to generate the power to accept clean Manitoba power. This also has the added effect of helping Manitoba Hydro find markets for an oversupply and it will achieve real results for the environment. Carbon pricing, the way it has been presented, just will cost everyone more money.

* (16:00)

And that's an example of how I will pursue the next 12 months; I will bring forward good, helpful suggestions that achieve the results that Manitobans expect, that won't include higher taxes, because what Conservative government would increase taxes? Well, apparently this one. And I respectfully disagree.

We will—or I will, along with like-minded MLAs, conduct in the new year an inquiry into Manitoba Hydro. This citizens' inquiry will be investigating how and why the decisions made in the past led to a massive overbuild of dams in Manitoba leading to Bipole III, a hydro line two times the length it needs to be, and, oh, about 10, perhaps 20 billion dollars in cost overruns. We're only a million point one—like, it is such a boondoggle, it boggles the mind.

We need to find out why the PC government, when they were in opposition, demanded an inquiry. When we ran in the election, we said we'd have an inquiry. That hasn't happened. So I will take it on as a Manitoban, with like-minded MLAs, stakeholder support, to have that inquiry. It will be transparent. Transcripts will be available publicly. People will be able to attend. Stakeholders will be able to testify. And it will be in conjunction and in parallel to the Public Utilities Board investigations that are occurring at this very moment. It will be thorough, and there will be a report at the end providing suggestions. And, again, it would have been much better if the government had done the investigation to Hydro. But, as a professional engineer and a lot of experience in this type of thing, I'm happy to do it for them.

Mr. Speaker, other areas that I will pursue are in the area of red tape reduction. I support the government's efforts to reduce red tape. I do not support the government's efforts that create red tape.

These include the creation of a new Crown corporation.

Madam Speaker in the Chair

These include a ride-sharing framework that is inoperative, impossible to enforce. Policing costs will increase. The cost for people who use taxis and ride sharing will increase. And it's a nightmare for Manitoba Public Insurance, who are unique, no-fault insurance system, and the red tape in MPI alone will be devastating, never mind the 137 separate municipalities which will now have to regulate taxis. It's just ridiculous.

Red tape, as we all know, can stifle innovation and cost money. So it is beyond comprehension why the government would create more red tape and costs deliberately. And, with the creation of the new Crown corporation, that includes transportation, potable water, gas and hydro. And the new Crown corporation, of course, will cost all Hydro payers more money in rates because that new Crown is going to be paid for by Hydro.

Mr. Speaker—or, Madam Speaker, now, other areas that I'll focus on are the mining industry. In the Throne Speech, there was nothing that was helpful or tangible to—you know, it's very loud in here.

Madam Speaker, it's very loud in here. It's very loud in here. I wonder—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

The—there is some indication that it's loud and members aren't able to hear themselves, so I would ask for some co-operation from members to please provide some, I guess, respect for the people that are speaking so that everybody can be heard accordingly.

Thank you.

Mr. Fletcher: Thank you, Madam Speaker. That's much better.

The—in regard to the mining industry, the government has failed to immediately condemn the federal government for announcing a national park on top of what may be one of the largest nickel deposits in the world. The government should have condemned it as soon as it was announced. The federal government should never have announced it. And the First Nations weren't even consulted.

So, if the feds did go forward with the provincial government on the announcement, that is very bad for the mining industry. And if the provincial

government didn't know, well, that's very bad too. But what is worse is the provincial government has done nothing to stop the project. And mining capital is just flying out of the province.

I was at the mining convention just two weeks ago here in Winnipeg, and it was a depressing affair. This used to be the third largest industry in Manitoba, and it's about to collapse. In the documents that I tabled, they included a whole plan on how to enhance the mining industry and create development and jobs for the North, for First Nations, to improve our economy, but also, simultaneously, smart ways to protect our environment.

Madam Speaker, in the next 12 months, I will work with the people of Assiniboia and all Manitobans to go in areas where the government has been silent or even—or help them identify issues that are important to Manitobans such as organ donation.

The private member's bill that I introduced in the last session obviously forced the government to realize the importance of that issue. They, to their credit, decided to have a stand-alone legislative committee to deal with that issue. However, unfortunately, Madam Speaker, the government took away one of the most progressive and innovative ideas off the table immediately, and that is the issue of presumed consent. Therefore, I have reintroduced my private member's bill on that issue.

Conflict of interest. Madam Speaker, it boggles the mind that the government has not brought forward legislation to improve the conflict-of-interest framework in Manitoba. We have the weakest conflict-of-interest legislation in Canada. It hasn't been changed in 30 years. It has many, many loopholes, and the whole tax regime in Canada has changed, technology has changed, and even the scope of the conflict of interest is so narrow, it really creates a lot of doubts in Manitoba and Manitobans about the integrity of everything.

*(16:10)

Improved conflict-of-interest legislation not only helps Manitobans to have faith in the process, it also protects politicians from speculation or 'induendo.' None of that exists—well, the 'indoendo' and speculation does, but there's no way to disprove it, because we don't have proper regulations and legislation in Manitoba. That needs to be dealt with, and I will do that in the next 12 months, and I hope the—yes—there will be support.

There are eight legislative initiatives in the document I have tabled. I will also pursue democratic reform issues. We see that the number of MLAs can easily be reduced in Manitoba. We have a Premier (Mr. Pallister) who's doing the best job he can. And, I would argue, he's probably the busiest MLA with the most responsibility, and he can do and meet his responsibilities from thousands of kilometres away. So why do we need so many MLAs in this day and age? And that would be a real not only cost savings but efficiency.

In regard to democratic reform, I've put a push to remove parties from the ballots to remind people that they are voting for the person when they vote.
[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Fletcher: They're not voting for a party or leader. The fact is, Madam Speaker, parties have become all too powerful, and we need to put more emphasis and—in the individual MLAs.

Now, it's sad that there's some government members heckling these fundamental principles of democracy, but the most fundamental and most egregious that exists at the moment is the fact that the government is resisting or challenging court-application I've made on the unconstitutionality of preventing MLAs to represent their constituents in the way their constituents expect and violating the rights of constituents and violating the rights of MLAs and freedom of association, freedom of expression, freedom of representation. The government is supporting unconstitutional legislation. The Attorney General (Mrs. Stefanson) has recognized it's unconstitutional, yet they are still moving forward.

Madam Speaker, in my tabled document, I have many, many initiatives, and I look forward to pursuing them all.

Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the member from The Maples, amendment to—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired. The honourable member for Assiniboia (Mr. Fletcher).

Mr. Fletcher: Yes, I move—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

The member has run out of time in his speech. He would now have to ask for leave of the House to proceed with what he wants to say.

An Honourable Member: Point of order.

Point of Order

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Assiniboia, on a point of order.

Mr. Fletcher: In the—it was noisy in here, Madam Speaker. But, in the last few seconds of my speech, I was making a motion.

Madam Speaker: And I would indicate to the member, as for other members that make motions, they have to include that in their time allotment. So you would have had to make your amendment during the allocated time. So the member ran out of time. And, as we do with all members, the member is then cut off.

So the member did not do it in the allocated time. If he wishes to do it now, he is going to have to ask for leave of the House in order to propose an amendment.

Mr. Fletcher: Can I make an amendment to the subamendment of the amendment to the Throne Speech, please?

Madam Speaker: With leave.

What I would point out to the member is the member is attempting to move an amendment to the subamendment currently under debate.

As Beauchesne's citation 581 indicates, and I quote, to an amendment when proposed from the Chair, a subamendment may be moved, but only an amendment and a subamendment thereto can be proposed at the same time to a question—which means there can only be an amendment and a subamendment.

In addition, according to our rule 48, only one amendment and one subamendment may be accepted to the address in reply to the Speech from the Throne.

Therefore, the motion the member is proposing is out of order and may not be moved.

Mr. Fletcher: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MATTER OF PRIVILEGE

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): I then rise on a matter of privilege.

The matter of privilege is simply this, if the rule that you have correctly, and it is in the rule book, is enforced, why is it that one independent MLA can bring forward an amendment when there are five

independent MLAs? Who decides which MLA has that opportunity? We're all equals in this place, and to have just one MLA raise the issue violates, in my view, the spirit and the fundamental powers of MLAs or parliamentarians as outlined in the British North America Act, the Manitoba legislative act, the House of Commons parliamentary rules of procedures and it's a fundamental violation of the principles of the Westminster parliamentary system.

Now, Madam Speaker, I would—and I understand you're working under difficult rules, however, the rules cannot go against the fundamental rights as enshrined under the Constitution Act of Canada or—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Before the member proceeds, I want to point out to him that on a matter of privilege I would like to inform the House that a matter concerning the methods by which the House proceeds in the conduct of business is a matter of order, not privilege. Joseph Maingot in the second edition of *Parliamentary Privilege in Canada* states on page 14, that allegations of breach of privilege by a member in the House that amounts to complaints about procedures and practices in the House are by their very nature matters of order.

He also states on page 223 of the same edition, a breach of the standing orders or a failure to follow an established practice would invoke a point of order rather than a question of privilege.

On this basis, I would therefore rule that the honourable member does not have a prima facie case of matter of privilege.

MATTER OF PRIVILEGE

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): On a matter of privilege on a separate matter.

I'm just going to make a—

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Assiniboia, on a second matter of privilege. I would indicate to the member he does need to move and second a matter of privilege, and—

Mr. Fletcher: Okay.

Madam Speaker: So if he could indicate, as he's proceeding with that—

Mr. Fletcher: I move, seconded by the member for The Maples (Mr. Saran), that the Speaker reflect on and report back why one independent MLA is able to do something no other MLA is able to do.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

* (16:20)

Madam Speaker: I'm going to point out a couple of things to the member for Assiniboia (Mr. Fletcher). One, is he cannot be reflecting on the ruling of the Speaker, and that is very much out of order in this House. And I have just ruled on what he is trying to bring up again, that when it's related to rules of the House, it is not considered a matter of privilege. And I would urge the member, he may want to have another good look at the rules because what he is trying to bring up here is not a matter of privilege, and it falls way outside, even according to Joseph Maingot in the second edition of *Parliamentary Privilege in Canada*, what the member is trying to do is not something that is allowed in the House, and he does not have a prima facie case of matter of privilege even on this second matter of privilege.

So that should end the discussion. I have ruled, and that should take care of this. If the member is interested in having some rule changes, he might want to speak to the House leaders on making rule changes. But rule changes and having some dialogue here on rules is completely out of order for this House, and it is not a matter of privilege.

* * *

An Honourable Member: On a point of order.

Point of Order

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Assiniboia, on a point of order.

Mr. Fletcher: On a point of order, and if it needs to be seconded by the member for The Maples (Mr. Saran), so be it.

Can we include all the sections of the references of the publications the Speaker is referring to, because I think there will be clear evidence that there are some interesting citations that would be helpful in establishing, through this point of order, the rights and privileges of independent MLAs. And that's without referring to the previous matter of privilege.

Madam Speaker: I would indicate to the member that rules that we cite here are already identified in Hansard or in various rule books. The member would've certainly received one of the rule books when he became an MLA, and he could certainly go back and look at that, as every other member can. And certainly when we use a rule cited by Beauchesne or Maingot, those are all in our parliamentary rule books that are already a public document.

So I would urge the member to please go to the library and do that search, and the ruling will also be available in Hansard if he is looking very specifically for the comments that I have just made.

And so I would indicate that the member does not have a point of order.

* * *

An Honourable Member: On a separate point of order.

Point of Order

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Assiniboia, then, on a new point of order.

Mr. Fletcher: I move, it's—and, if necessary, the member from The Maples—

Madam Speaker: You don't—

Mr. Fletcher: Just to the point of order.

So I would say that the advantage of being able to cite dozens of books does not exist at the moment, and I would like to have that opportunity in the future to demonstrate that fundamental issues have not been addressed and has nothing to do with the rules of this Chamber. It has to do with the larger issues of what it means to be a member of the Legislature or a parliamentarian in our system.

That's my point of order. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: I would indicate to the member that I have already made a ruling, and I have advised the House that it will appear in Hansard. By raising another point of order, he is reflecting on my ruling, and, as all members know, that reflecting on a ruling of the Speaker isn't allowed and rulings on a point of order cannot be challenged.

THRONE SPEECH (Fifth Day of Debate) (Continued)

Madam Speaker: Further debate on the Throne Speech.

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Logan): Today, Tuesday, November 28th, marks the fifth day of debate on the opposition party's amendments motion to the government's Throne Speech.

Since day one of the debate, I've heard from colleagues on this side of the House compelling narrative on how the policies and programs to be implemented under this Throne Speech will bring

hardship and suffering to many Manitobans who are struggling daily to improve their lot in life.

This morning, just as I was travelling to work, I heard on the radio that several groups are protesting and lamenting the transit fare increase of 25 cents per ride, and the imminent reduction or elimination of some transit routes.

Still on the transit issue I have requested my staff to talk to several constituents randomly by phone or in person to ask how they feel about the city's recent cuts to transit budget. The negative reaction from a handful of constituents spoken to were unanimous. They decry the austerity ideology being foisted on Manitobans and how it will be giving them undue hardships as well as—these are just from my constituency, but I bet other members of Manitoba's constituencies have the same experience.

Many of my constituents are bus riders. I'm so sorry for them and can fully appreciate the—sorry—technical difficulties. Sorry, Madam Speaker.

Okay, try again. Still on the transit issues, I have—okay—hear ye—as I was saying, many of my constituents are bus riders. I'm so sorry for them and can fully appreciate how they will be hardest hit by the Pallister government's cutting of 50 per cent transit subsidy to Winnipeg's budget.

I've been a bus rider for many, many years, and I commiserate with them. Thankfully, at that time, the transit fare is not as expensive as it is now.

Many of my constituents are students and are residents of Manitoba Housing who take transit to school and their part-time work. Likewise, a good number are workers who commute to work daily. Fifty cents a day adds up to \$10 a month, if it is a straight home-to-work or school-and-back routine.

If there are other needed trips to take during the day or additional trips on weekends, the cost can be within easily \$15 per week. To daily wage earners, this is a big hike and a big cut to the family's limited funds that most likely will mean less money for food on the table.

In my home visits to constituents in the past, to members of Logan constituency in the past years, I have learned that many of them work in the Health Sciences Centre, also located in the Logan constituency. They were happy then that their employment at HSC has provided them the income to support themselves and their families.

Unfortunately, the jovial mood of the past years has changed.

* (16:30)

I was approached by a few constituents who are employees at HSC recently who are deeply concerned their job security is at risk. They are anxious and afraid that they could be the next to go, or they will cause hardship on their colleagues with less seniority in the job, as the more senior employees like them can bump those employees with lesser seniority.

Incidentally, this anxiety and uncertainty is not isolated to Health Sciences Centre employees. The very same situation is happening or has already happened to staff at Concordia, Victoria, St. Boniface, Grace Hospital, Deer Lodge Centre, Seven Oaks hospital as well as some rural hospitals and medical facilities.

I know personally of several staff working full time before at St. Boniface Hospital and are now down to 0.7 work hours and several others have bumped their colleagues of even lower job category. They took a lower position so as to maintain being fully employed. It seems the paid consultants and members of the Conservative government who recommended and acted on these cuts do not fully appreciate that the ones to be affected by these cuts are real people who have families and children to feed. They carry house mortgages or pay rent and definitely have many bills to be paid, utility bills to be paid.

Madam Speaker, I am old enough or too old, in fact, to be around and experience two Conservative governments in Manitoba. We came in Manitoba, I and my family, during the last few years of an NDP government in the early '80s. In 1988, it was replaced by a Conservative government which remained for the next 11 years. It was during those years that we—of the Conservative government—that we saw deep cuts to health-care services and the elimination in hospitals of in-house food preparation, thanks to a 4-million Connie Curran consultancy recommendation to source frozen hospital foods instead. I recall a friend who was recuperating from a medical procedure and she asked family members that she be brought home-cooked food, as microwaved frozen food tasted awful.

Under the Conservative government, we saw privatization of government services, including the sale of MTS, a crown jewel at that time.

Back to health-care cuts: in the '90s, we witnessed the picket—I witnessed the picket lines in front of Health Sciences Centre. That long and bitter strike of nurses were, in the end, after months of striking, they got nothing from the government. Many were devastated and have left the province with heavy hearts.

I remember during those times as well were—I participated in the picket lines and protest demonstrations against privatization of Home Care. Thankfully, Home Care was saved because thousands voiced their opposition to privatization of Home Care. The Conservative government relented to pressure from thousands of protestors, but not the privatization of MTS. Hundreds of Manitobans spoke against the sale of MTS during months of committee hearings which lasted until early hours of the morning. Despite valiant efforts of NDP official opposition members and many hundreds of public—of Manitobans who attended the committee hearings and presented at that hearing, the bill to sell MTS received royal assent.

And who were the Conservative folks who received huge financial rewards then and received another windfall when Bell bought MTS last year? That is another story for another day.

This health-care *déjà vu* we are witnessing is hurting many Manitobans. The cuts not only affect the livelihood of staff and health-care workers, it definitely and severely affects their delivery of health-care services. Heaven forbid that the closure of emergency services in four hospitals should result in death or aggravation of existing illnesses of many Manitobans.

On another issue that was clearly overlooked in the Throne Speech last week is immigration. It is counter intuitive and mind-boggling that a program so successful as the Provincial Nominee Program only merited a small paragraph of 50 short words from the Throne Speech. Many of us are well aware of the benefits immigration has done to all of Canada. Under the NDP government, it has—this program has been improved by leaps and bounds. We know it was—and we duly acknowledge it was started during the Filmon Conservative government; that's a very good program. In 1999, the last year of the Conservative government, some 500 nominated applicants were processed. Starting in year 2000, under the NDP government, 1,095 applicants received nomination papers. The numbers even grew to several thousands yearly, that by 2014 immigrants

through MPNP accounted for 75 per cent of all newcomers to Manitoba. From 1999 to 2014, over 150,000 have immigrated to Manitoba, including 30,000 to Manitoba's rural communities.

Also, from 2000, when MPNP for business was introduced until 2014, there have been 737 businesses started and over \$245 million invested in the province. Manitoba also enjoyed a high immigrant retention rate of 86.7 per cent. When the Conservative government—when the Conservatives initiated the program in the late '90s, up to 1999, when they lost government, there were 3,725 arrivals in this program. In 2014, alone, just in that year alone, there were 16,222 arrivals. That upward trend continued for the next two years under the NDP government. By the time the Conservatives took power in 2016, MPNP is well recognized nationally as the best nominee program in Canada. So, for members of the Liberal Party and the Conservatives, the crying that the NDP government, quote, destroyed, unquote, the program, is totally and patently false. And, in making those statements, they are destroying their credibility.

If a program is working under any government or political party, it should but—it should be acknowledged. Simply give credit where it is due. We in this side of the House appreciated the MPNP started by the Conservative government, so much so that under our watch we intentionally nurtured and enhanced it to benefit the whole province.

Another Conservative government initiative that we fully agree on and made enhancements to, was the project initiated by then-Premier Duff Roblin. Under the NDP government, expansions made to the floodway were on budget and on time, and the floodway have protected Winnipeg and had averted what could have very well be billions of dollars in damages to people's homes and to the serious economy and infrastructure.

* (16:40)

Knowing how much stimulus to the economy immigration makes, why is the Conservative government making it harder for immigrants to apply by imposing many restrictions, chief of which is the \$500 application fee? As early as this year, the Pallister government's head tax of \$500 per applicant, which took effect early this year, had its not-so-positive results already.

I don't have the exact figures yet, but I inquired from some staff members at the nominee program

office, and I was told, without giving me the numbers, that the applications to the program have dramatically been less, and the nominees' letters–nomination letters issued far less than the previous years.

Madam Speaker, fees to the nominee program is the wrong approach. A head tax on newcomers is the wrong decision and sends the wrong message to newcomers. It's regressive and adds unnecessary barriers to new immigrants.

The Provincial Nominee Program has been an incredible success. The New York Times praises the programs, in fact, on Manitoba; and Maclean's called it Manitoba's miracle in the December 6, 2010, article.

The overwhelming majority of nominees are successful; 90 per cent find employment within their first year of arrival. A focus on family-sponsored immigration is important. Nominees are most likely to stay in Manitoba if they have connections through family and friends.

We believe the provincial nominees–the applicants to the Provincial Nominee Program will be well served if the \$500 head tax is removed. It shows that the Province values newcomers, which immigration being a critical key to our success, so we should not dissuade applicants to the nominee program. And we believe that focus on the family connection and community connection should be continued.

Madam Speaker, 20 minutes is barely enough time to point out the many inadequacies we find in the Throne Speech. We get it, pursue value-for-money projects. Funding programs that keep citizens educated, working, healthy and safe, and not cutting funding to these services are truly value for money as they will provide substantial savings in the long run besides achieving higher quality of life for all. Offering support to vulnerable citizens who needed a hand up to even come close to a level playing field in the real world that we live in will in the end yield tremendous financial savings as big-item expenditures as health and mental-care costs, incarceration costs are greatly reduced.

When you put people first before profits, you will be surprised peace and order, health and wellness, robust economy are just a few of the rewards that can be expected.

So I entreat the Pallister government to listen, reverse the cuts to front-line services, invest in

people and reap even bigger material and tangible rewards in the end.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Families): And it's very honoured to give my comments in relating to the Throne Speech and what I'm hoping to do is four things. I think I'll have some time today and probably finish up tomorrow, but I was hoping to make some just general comments, No. 1, in terms of the Throne Speech, in terms of the direction the government's going. And then I do want to go into some theme areas that we do talk quite a bit about, fixing the finances and repairing a lot of the services. And I'm going to keep a lot of my comments directed towards the health-care system as well as the family system, as I'm the minister responsible. And then I do want to talk also about rebuilding the economy, a theme that we talk about quite a bit, Madam Speaker, as well as listening to Manitobans, which I think is key to turning around our economy, key to turning around the fortunes of our province over the last number of years.

So, again, I'm just—I want to recognize that I think this is an important document. Throne Speech are always documents—it's a visionary document of where you want to go. It sets your legislative agenda for the year to come, so it's an important area and it signals to not just advocates but to government, to our own supporters as well as advocacy groups of where we want to go and the direction we want to go.

And I can tell you that I think this is a very extensive document. It's a full document and it's a somewhat important direction for Manitobans.

I know that we are, again, setting a new course, and as a lot of the speakers mentioned before, change is not always easy, and that's really something that we focus in on. I think if you've seen us in government there's been a number of sectors that we've looked at. We've looked at the health-care sector now, dramatic changes that are happening here, I think, for the better. There's dramatic changes that are happening in all aspects of government, including our finances, including things like in the Child and Family Services areas, including things with our relationships with indigenous organizations and leadership as well as everything from the criminal justice system onward.

And our government really inherited a large, growing debt. Let's face facts. We know that the

finances have been a problem in the past over the last 17 years and specifically in terms of the amount of money that we go to service our debt. It's upwards almost to a million—a billion dollars a year, in fact, of what we use to service our debt. I think it's the third biggest department in terms of the debt servicing that's a part of it.

We also know that a first time in generation the government has not spent more, so we're looking to do a little bit better in terms of our finances, and when you do look at things, you've got to take a trip backwards, I guess, in terms of where we are in terms of our finances and that's the best way, sometimes, to learn is to look at the past, and we know that we had some of the largest deficits in Manitoba history. We are going towards, Madam Speaker, about a \$1.7-billion deficit with pre-credit rating downgrades over the last number of years, largely to do with the opposition and the way they handled the finances here of the province of Manitoba.

And tax increases, we know the whole story of the PST, and so our Throne Speech really identified that we need to fix the finances. And we've taken some important first steps, I think, in that journey towards balance, in terms of maintaining a point where we're spending—we're not spending more than we're bringing in.

The deficit reduction, you know, we introduced and talked about this in our first years of our government, you know, to reduce the deficit over eight years. And you know you hear some people, probably from our supporters, that said you're not going fast enough in terms of your deficit reduction that's a part of it. Some people said you're going too fast. There's people that don't necessarily like the changes that are being made. It's hard with changes, so I think sometimes, you know, when you heard criticism from both sides, maybe you're hitting a good stride, and I think that's exactly what we're doing.

And from a government point of view I think what I'd like to remember for us is someone in a government that we're going to underpromise and overdeliver.

The federal government, I know in the '90s, did a lot of that where you had underestimations in terms of what the deficits would be and they came in a lot better than they are, and I can tell you that's what this Manitoba government has been doing.

I, you know, chaired finance for the City of Winnipeg for about six budgets, so I enjoy looking at the budgets, and there's always a moving target in terms of the budgets, in terms of how you're doing throughout the year, the first, second and third quarter financial reports. But really the document that you need to look at is the year-end totals. And one thing that is important, a part of our track record in terms of finance, is the fact that we're about 140—over \$140 million better than what we predicted on the first front. So I think we're living up to some of those commitments that we made on the doorsteps when we were campaigning, in terms of fixing the finances.

* (16:50)

And, again, we're not at the place where we can call it a Manitoba miracle as of yet. They're still spending a lot more money than we are. But I think we're taking a balanced approach where we're providing the services and support. We're reforming some of the services and support, and yet we're getting to a place where we're in a better place financially. And this is actually the first time in over five years that we've been in a better place, where we've actually, again, finished in a better, stronger position than what we predicted in the budget. So that's important.

On the 'expenditure'—on the expenditure side, we've also made a lot of progress in terms of making sure that our spending document isn't out of control. And that's an important document and elements that we've talked about in the Throne Speech which is important for our government, and it's important for Manitobans in terms of taking a balanced approach where we're not having out-of-control spending. We have one of the lowest general growth rates in expenditures in decades. And we've got strong, prudent spending within the departments and a cautious approach to proving some projects. And sometimes you get criticized from groups saying you're making—taking too long to make some decisions on these things. But we want to be regimented in these things. We want to make sure the precious dollars that we have left, that we're doing it and spending it in a way that makes sense.

We also wanted to ensure that where we're going is a direction, is evidence based in a whole bunch of different ways. And so that's why we hired, in a number of areas, KPMG. KPMG is a consulting firm, of course, that directed us from a government-wide basis, looking across government, where you

can get value for money. And I think that's always important when you're looking at governments and ensuring that you're getting value for money. And that's the starting point in terms of what we can do.

I mentioned our debt-servicing level that was identified in the Throne Speech, that we're spending close to \$1 billion, and that's important information. That's \$1 billion that you wouldn't have to spend on things like health care, things you wouldn't have to spend on things like education or roads or sewers and things that are important to Manitobans.

We've also kept our commitments in terms of providing a lower taxation level, and our budgets over the last number of years and what's been identified in the Throne Speech is providing supports. In terms of things like the basic personal exemption, we're close to 2,100 individuals who are off the tax rolls altogether, that aren't paying taxes. And I can tell you, from a portfolio where the vast majority of the spending goes to vulnerable Manitobans in a whole bunch of ways, that's something that can mean a difference for individuals. So very proud to do that.

We also have a part of our Throne Speech, our commitment to reducing taxes. And that's something that we're very committed to doing.

Part of the process, too, as well, is not just fixing the finances, but you want to make sure we're doing this in a way that's going to maintain our services and, really, that's been a theme for this government: repairing the services that were damaged. And, again, so, when you take a look at where you need to go in the future, you really need to take a look at where we've been in the past. And so let me just preference the fact that when we started in government, we had some of the longest wait times in the place, even at places—I know the Speaker shares kind of a local community hospital with the residents in my area of Kirkfield Park. And, in terms of the Grace Hospital, for a number of years, had the longest wait times not just in the city, Madam Speaker, but had the longest wait times in the country.

Now they've improved that a little bit, which, I think, is a positive trend, but it just shows you that a number of the hospitals we're talking about, we were at a place where you had long wait times, where people were waiting hours and hours and hours in the waiting rooms. So that's why one of the systems—and why we need to repair some of the services.

We also know from a CFS system—I'm going to talk probably a little bit more extensively in terms of this later on in my presentation. But the amount of children in care in the CFS system has dramatically gone up. We know that over 85 per cent increase in the amount of children in care that has gone up over the last decade, more in the last 10 years alone, and over 73 per cent of the days in care. And that's really what we should be looking at in the CFS system: the amount of time that an individual spends in the child and family services system. We know the outcomes are horrible for these individuals, and so the better we can get in terms of preventing people from going in the child and family services system and reducing the amount of time they're spending is important. That was a track record of the former government that we really need to come in and we need to make some changes.

The last part of the services and support that I will be addressing in my comments here today and probably tomorrow is in terms of the education outcomes. We know the education outcomes for Manitobans under the previous NDP government were—let's just say they—I'll just put it out on the table. They are the worst in the country in a whole bunch of different areas.

So we really need to focus in on areas that we think make a lot of sense, going back to the basics in so many different ways. We need to re-engage in the education system to become—and to get better outcomes. And that's why we are making so many important changes. And I'm going to go through a number of them here.

For instance, No. 1, in terms of some of the health care—and I'm going to just relay, Madam Speaker, a few points. But we know in the health-care system, we are not afraid to spend money. In fact, sometimes it gets reported that these are cuts. What I can tell you is that's not true and our Throne Speech identified our funding commitments in so many different ways on a visionary basis.

But we know that there was over \$450 million more that are invested than the previous government in the last years since coming to office, investments in the health-care field, which is so important. Even through—even though Manitoba's emergency rooms per capital in Canada has—we have some of the highest. We also, as mentioned, had some of the longest wait times in the country. Manitoba lacked the key health-care professionals and Manitoba really was the bottom of the barrel in terms of

wait times for things like surgical and diagnostic procedures, which we think is something that's going to reduce the health outcomes for Manitobans.

And we're encouraged that our forms for clinical services are showing early indications of reduced wait times for emergency rooms. And I know the Minister of Health has talked about that, where you're seeing, initially, over the first months of the major changes that are happening, some reductions in the wait times that people are experiencing. And I think, Madam Speaker, as the further reforms that are happening in the health-care system, you're going to see further reductions in terms of some of the aspects that are there.

We know also that we've made some substantial investments, Madam Speaker. There's over 89 new doctors that have been added to Manitoba's physician network, which we think are important investments. And so, another example where we're willing to invest in areas that make sense for Manitobans.

Our government is also committed to reducing the paramedic—the ambulance fees that—in half of the course of our government. And, as of April 1st, 2017, we had reduced these fees, a maximum of \$425 and a promise of further reduction to \$250 in 2019. And Manitoba deserves a predictable, reliable service—that's a part of this—and making sure that the dollars and cents for this important services are there.

Many Manitobans suffer from chronic health conditions, which is why we are so committed to working with our health-care providers and community organizations to develop a comprehensive approach to chronic disease prevention. And I know the members opposite have talked a lot about disease prevention. If you can invest in the prevention, making sure that people don't have to go to the care, that's important.

We've also taken special focus on things like opiate use, and we know how much of a crisis that is, not just in the United States, but in Canada. And a team of experts have identified and will be addressing some mental health and addiction resources that we think are extremely important to the system.

On a local basis, I can tell you that some of the changes we're making in terms of the ERs, for instance, you know, going from six emergency rooms to three emergency rooms—we think that will the patient flow will be much better. And I, as probably yourself, Madam Speaker, are very excited

about the new aspect of the Grace Hospital, where there'll be enhanced services and supports. It's one of the main three hospitals that will be part of it. It's operating right now. They've seen, actually, reduction the amount of wait time they're having in the hospital probably because of some of the technologies that they have in terms of the time management aspect of it.

But it's going to be even better for people on the west side of Winnipeg and, really, people all over the city of Winnipeg will be able to benefit from this. When you have consolidated some of the services and supports, and specifically, some of the specialists that are there, you're going to see some added results. Also in the west part of Winnipeg, you have the Deer Lodge Centre that focuses in on seniors and that sort of care, and that will be enhanced at the hospital.

So we're extremely pleased. And, you know, we don't just do these changes lightly. We take a look at evidence-based. And that's exactly the Minister of Health did, and we talked a lot about that in the Throne Speech, that making sure that any changes we're making to the system is evidence-based, and that's what the Peachey report did. It had experts from across the sector that suggested of what changes we need to make. It was obviously commissioned under the NDP government and so we're a little surprised that they're not endorsing kind of the plan which was generated under their administration.

With that being said, you know, we truly think that some of the changes, especially in the ERs, will make a difference in terms of reducing them. And, again, we're seeing some stark changes right of the bat with it.

I do also want to focus, Madam Speaker, on some substantial changes that we're having in the Families Department. And I'm going to address a few. I know the time is running short. But in terms of child care is one, for instance. And so, we are working right now with the federal government to develop an affordable child-care system where we're going to produce better results, and so we're excited to work with them. There is agreement to—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable minister will have five minutes remaining.

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, November 28, 2017

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