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

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-First Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALLUM, James	Fort Garry-Riverview	NDP
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	NDP
BINDLE, Kelly	Thompson	PC
CLARKE, Eileen, Hon.	Agassiz	PC
COX, Cathy, Hon.	River East	PC
CULLEN, Cliff, Hon.	Spruce Woods	PC
CURRY, Nic	Kildonan	PC
DRIEDGER, Myrna, Hon.	Charleswood	PC
EICHLER, Ralph, Hon.	Lakeside	PC
EWASKO, Wayne	Lac du Bonnet	PC
FIELDING, Scott, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
FLETCHER, Steven, Hon.	Assiniboia	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

Thursday, November 23, 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

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 204—The Electoral Divisions Amendment Act

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): I move, seconded by the member from The Maples, that Bill 204, The Electoral Divisions Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les circonscriptions électorales, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Fletcher: Madam Speaker, we are over-governed in Manitoba. In this day and age, with technology, it is possible that a single representative can certainly represent more people. We have larger city council wards than we have MLA areas. The Premier (Mr. Pallister) has clearly demonstrated that you can govern from afar. We don't need as many MLAs that we have now. We should reduce them for the greater good of the people of Manitoba. And this bill should be enacted.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

The honourable member for Assiniboia, on a further first reading.

Bill 209—The Gift of Life Act (Human Tissue Gift Act Amended)

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): I move, seconded by the member from The Maples, that Bill 209, The Gift of Life Act (Human Tissue Gift Act Amended); Loi sur le don de la vie (modification

de la Loi sur les dons de tissus humains), be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Fletcher: I am pleased that the government has agreed to create a legislative committee to look at the important issue of organ donation. However, the concern is that already in the comments the government has ruled out presumed consent. This is an obvious option. The committee should not make decisions on the outcome of the committee before the committee has even heard from stakeholders.

Moreover, unfortunately, the member for Brandon West (Mr. Helwer) made some unfortunate comments about religion and organ donation which I think will perhaps tarnish the discussion.

Therefore, I am reintroducing the bill on presumed consent to ensure it gets a fair hearing.

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

Committee Reports? Tabling of Reports?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Madam Speaker: The honourable Minister for Sport, Culture and Heritage, and I would indicate that the required 90 minutes notice prior to routine proceedings was provided in accordance with our rule 26(2).

Would the honourable minister please proceed with her statement.

Holodomor

Hon. Cathy Cox (Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage): Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Holodomor, and to remember the millions of Ukrainian lives cut short more than 80 years ago in a country often called the breadbasket of Europe.

Translated into English, Holodomor means death by hunger. In 1932 and 1933, an artificial famine in the Ukraine was created through the deliberate seizure of land and crops. Ukraine was forced into a land of human suffering without rescue or escape. Millions of people, including children, starved to death.

Madam Speaker, I am honoured to welcome to the Manitoba Legislature today Mrs. Sonia Kushliak, a Holodomor survivor who was only eight years old when the famine began.

She writes: I have many painful memories permanently etched in my mind of what my parents endured, what they sacrificed to keep their children alive. We survivors witnessed the slow, horrific deaths of family members and neighbours.

Mrs. Kushliak is sharing her personal experience so that this atrocity will never be forgotten.

Madam Speaker, we need to record and share the stories so that we are forever reminded of this horrific tragedy. I am humbled that Manitoba is often—is among the many jurisdictions around the world that formally commemorate the Holodomor on the fourth Saturday of every November.

In honour of this day, volunteers from our Ukrainian community have generously supplied five stalks of wheat to all members in the Chamber today. It's a powerful symbol of remembrance, and during the Holodomor, wheat became a weapon. In 1932, Joseph Stalin's communist regime made it a crime to misappropriate the property of collective farms, punishable by 10 years in jail or even death. Many people were arrested and executed. The law became known as the law of five ears of grain.

Madam Speaker, five stalks of wheat tied together with a black ribbon has become an international symbol for the Holodomor. It is a fitting way for all of us to remember that it is incumbent upon each and every one of us to learn from the painful events of the past and to renew our commitment to the—prevent future atrocities.

Madam Speaker, I ask for leave from the House to request a moment of silence in honour of those who perished in the Holodomor.

Madam Speaker: With the leave of the House, I wonder if we could have members respond first to the ministerial statement and then, with leave, do the moment of silence after everybody has spoken. Agreed? *[Agreed]*

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): On November 25th we will recognize the incredible tragedy that is known as Holodomor. From 1932 to 1933—sorry—from 1932 to 1933, millions of Ukrainians lost their lives from artificially caused famines, which today we recognize in a—as a genocide against the Ukrainian people.

* (13:40)

Engineered by Joseph Stalin to starve Ukrainians and crush their 'country's' independence movement, the Holodomor genocide resulted in millions of lives lost and is one of the most violations of human rights in our history.

Manitoba is proud to have a deep Ukrainian heritage, and some families in our province have close connections to the Holodomor tragedy. As an MLA of Winnipeg's North End, I am proud to come from a community steeped deeply in the history of Ukrainian newcomers.

In 2008, our NDP government was proud to pass a bill to set aside a day for the Holodomor and to ensure young Manitobans—young Manitoban people learn about this genocide.

Today, we continue to stand in solidarity and remembrance with all Ukrainians. We will continue to raise awareness about the immense injustice and do our part in protecting vulnerable people from human rights violations. We also stand in support of citizens of modern Ukraine, who strive to preserve democracy.

Manitoba's Ukrainian community has worked hard to shed light on the Holodomor genocide, and each year they may—the many different organizations partake in public education and commemoration events. I encourage any who is interested to attend these events, and I remember our Ukrainian brothers and sisters today and always.

Miigwech.

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

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

Ms. Lamoureux: I rise to speak about the Holodomor.

I learned about the Holodomor a few years back when I had the opportunity to experience the national museum memorial to Holodomor victims in Kiev, Ukraine. Madam Speaker, the museum teaches us just how horrific the famine was. It portrays the pain and suffering that millions of people experienced.

There are two angels of sorrow at the entrance and they represent the guardians of the souls that starved. The most recognized statue is the young girl clutching a handful of wheat. This statue is titled the

Bitter Memory of Childhood and has been dedicated to the most vulnerable victims of starvation.

Madam Speaker, this merciless famine imposed on the country Ukraine began with waves of deadly deportations of Ukraine's farmers as well as deportations and executions of Ukraine's religious, intellectual and cultural leaders.

This forced famine killed millions of innocent lives. It is important that we take the time to reflect on this tragedy and educate people on our collective history and sorrow.

Madam Speaker, we need to move past the fear and rage that separates us, and more than ever, we need to remember humanity's capacity for brutality and, more importantly, ensure it never happens again.

Thank you.

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): Madam Speaker, I ask for leave to speak to this ministerial statement.

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

Mr. Fletcher: The atrocities that occurred in Ukraine under Joseph Stalin are an example of the horrific suffering that people suffered under communism in the 20th century.

The starvation of the people of Ukraine is one of the five genocides that is recognized by the Canadian government, and I am pleased to have been part of a government that brought the Canadian human rights museum to Winnipeg, and in that museum—and I encourage anyone who's listening or will read this to go to the museum and see each of the infinite number of ways individual human rights have been violated—but the famine in the Ukraine in—has been one of the most stark and frankly the—one of the most telling examples of the evilness that one human can do to another.

Madam Speaker, I'd like to thank the other members for their comments on this auspicious day.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave to have a moment of silence? *[Agreed]*

Please rise.

A moment of silence was observed.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Montcalm's National Public Works Week

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): Every year, the Canadian Public Works Association recognizes the tens of thousands of men and women in North America who provide and maintain the infrastructure and services collectively known as public works. In May of each year, municipalities throughout the US and Canada celebrate the National Public Works Week with open houses, project and facility tours, parades, education, media events, school visits and career events. Municipalities also use the week to recognize their staff, the women and men who play such an important role in the community's quality of life.

The RM of Montcalm was chosen to receive this award as a result of their efforts to increase public awareness to promoting the work that they do for our towns and cities. They engaged the citizens of all ages in a work of variety of activities, provided opportunities for the public to learn more about the services that public works provides and how important these services are to our community.

The CPWA is very impressed with the Rural Municipality of Montcalm's public outreach in the community. With only 1,260 citizens, eight year-round employees, Montcalm's NPWW open house event was well attended. Community members of all ages toured the public works yard and played on the fire trucks. Four hundred and forty dollars were raised for the Manitoba Firefighters Burn Fund and the event was covered in the local media.

The CPWA's NPWW Awards Contest evaluator also credited Montcalm for its public works employees of the year award and for working with a local resident who donated his time and services to capture drone photos in a video of the NPWW open house event.

CPWA is honoured to recognize the Rural Municipality of Montcalm's efforts to celebrate National Public Works Week. Public works services, personnel and our infrastructure—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

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

Mr. Graydon: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Public works services, personnel and our infrastructure assets do not always enjoy a high level

of public awareness, but they are an essential part of our communities. Montcalm's excellent programs and events are a great way to build awareness about the importance of public works.

I invite everyone to please help me congratulate the council and the staff of the Rural Municipality of Montcalm who, for the first time ever in Manitoba, have won this most prestigious national award, helping make Manitoba great again.

I ask for leave to have names of those in attendance today recorded in Hansard.

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

RM of Montcalm: Jolene Bird, CAO; Harold Janzen, councillor; Emile Remillard, councillor; Derek Sabourin, reeve; Paul Sabourin, councillor.

Corporal Nolan Caribou

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): Manitobans were saddened to learn of the death of Corporal Nolan Caribou, who passed away last Saturday while on military exercise at CFB Shilo.

Corporal Caribou was raised in Alberta, but moved to Winnipeg with his family where he graduated from Gordon Bell High school. He served as an infantryman for five years as a member of the Royal Winnipeg Rifles and 38 Canadian Brigade Group. Despite financial barriers, which we're told he met with determination and a desire to serve, he had recently graduated from the University of Winnipeg with a bachelor of arts in sociology.

* (13:50)

Corporal Caribou was focused on his job as an infantryman and took great pride in his work. He was determined to help create a more peaceful world through his work in the Canadian Armed Forces. I understand that he aspired to pursue a career as a police officer. He's been described as a positive person who would give the shirt off his back to help someone else.

One of our own caucus employees worked alongside Corporal Caribou on a winter exercise. He related to me that soldiers had limited time to set up a tent and get a stove running. The soldiers then had to take everything down, put everything together on a sled and run across a field to repeat the task somewhere else. Even though the competition lasted several hours, or at least felt like it, he recalled Corporal Caribou showing tireless

enthusiasm and constant esprit de corps. I am told that Corporal Caribou's determination to win a friendly competition between soldiers, even in the face of grueling mental and physical exhaustion, was truly remarkable.

On behalf of our NDP caucus, and personally, as a member of the Royal Winnipeg Rifles regimental family, I offer condolences to the family and friends of Corporal Nolan Caribou.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Victoria's Quilts Canada

Hon. Eileen Clarke (Minister of Indigenous and Northern Relations): Gives me great pleasure today to recognize Victoria's Quilts Canada. This is a national non-profitable charitable organization whose mission is to provide handmade quilts to people with cancer. Manitoba has only one branch of Victoria Quilts, and I'm very proud to say that it resides within my Agassiz constituency. I am so pleased to acknowledge the Neepawa branch and the volunteers that are present here today: Dianne Nordstrom, Carol Walker and Marg VanBuskirk.

The Neepawa branch was formed in 2013 and consists of many volunteer quilters and a five-person executive. They are a dedicated group of local women who cut and sew as well as volunteers in other communities all across Manitoba. Support, services and donations come from all across the province, and many quilt guilds designate certain days to work on their Victoria Quilt projects. The Neepawa branch currently has an inventory of about 150 quilts at various stages of development.

Since its beginning, the Neepawa branch has fulfilled a total of 374 quilt requests and delivered to 92 communities all across Manitoba. The quilts are a gift and delivered with no cost ever passed on to the recipient or to the person who requests the quilt to be delivered.

On behalf of the Manitoba Legislature, we thank the dedicated volunteers that create the quilts, offer their support and deliver the comfort to those that are battling this illness.

Madam Speaker, I ask that all members of the House join me in wishing this group of volunteers all the best as they continue to fulfill quilt requests and provide comfort and support to all those in need.

Woodhaven Residents Meeting

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Families): I recently had the opportunity to attend a Woodhaven residents' meeting in Kirkfield Park constituency to address some security issues in terms of their area. The neighbours—the neighbourhood has always been—has seen some trouble lately in terms of some—addressing some safety issues in terms of their community. And that's what I love about the Woodhaven residents association, where they're able to take it upon themselves to address some safety issues.

Presentations and invitations were sent out to the Winnipeg Police Service regarding Neighbourhood Watch, Citizens on Patrol and Block Parents.

Over 70 residents of Woodhaven turned out for the presentations and exchanged information and ideas on how to proactively help make our neighbourhood safer and securer for everyone within the Woodhaven area and enjoying it on a day-to-day basis.

Sometimes, things as simple as looking for people that are out of the ordinary in your community when you're taking a walk with your dog or a jog, perhaps, is something that residents can do. It was suggested at the meeting the residents—Woodhaven residents association could develop a Citizens on Patrol group, which I think is a great idea. Not only are they're keeping—that would allow them to keep tabs on their community, but those people in their communities know best what should and shouldn't be happening.

I'd like to thank Andrea Bradie and as well as Rhonda Rokosh for organizing the meeting and for Scott—Councillor Scott Gillingham for attending the residents on behalf of elected representatives.

It is obvious by the turnout that the community is concerned and ready to get to work, roll up their sleeves in terms of making their community better and safer through a community watch type of program.

I'd also like to thank the Winnipeg Police Service, the Citizens on Patrol, Block Parents, for the informational session, and I want to thank the residents of Woodhaven for taking things into their own hands to making sure that their community is safer.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Grandview EMS Station and the Corydon Clinic

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, Manitobans are increasingly concerned with the Pallister government's changes to our precious health-care system. Yesterday, I presented petitions with 1,000 signatures from Manitobans calling on the government to keep the emergency medical services station in Grandview open. Today, I table more than 500 additional signatures.

Madam Speaker, I'd held off on presenting these petitions to give the government a chance to confirm that they would not close the Grandview ambulance station. The government has not acted. These additional petitions show the level of community support for keeping the necessary and vital emergency medical services in Grandview. Indeed, the government has shown a callous disregard for consulting with and considering the input from communities like Grandview. I hope when the government sees the number of people who support having the EMS station stay open in Grandview, and the substantive reasons why the EMS station should be in Grandview, they will change their minds.

It is not just people in Grandview who are concerned. Last Sunday at a forum I hosted in River Heights, major concerns were raised about the closing of the Corydon Primary Care Clinic. Excellence in primary care is vital to keeping people healthy. It is against common sense to close the Corydon Primary Care Clinic. Indeed, it makes no sense to have patients at the Corydon Primary Care Clinic walk or even take several busses more than five kilometres south to Plaza Drive near Bishop Grandin. It's too far away. Primary care should be delivered close to where people are located.

I call on the government to use common sense and keep the Corydon Primary Care Clinic open. Thank you to our panelists Alex Arenson, Shelley Kowalchuk and Judy Walker, and to all who attended our forum.

Merci.

Introduction of Guests

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

Seated in the public gallery from Lord Selkirk Regional Comprehensive Secondary School we have 55 grade 10 students under the direction of Debra McGonigal and Kelly Hawes, and this group is

located in the constituency of the honourable member for Selkirk (Mr. Lagimodiere).

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

ORAL QUESTIONS

Physio/Occupational Therapy Request to Restore Services

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Madam Speaker, I'd first like to acknowledge the victims and survivors of the Holodomor.

I had a chance to visit the Holodomor museum in Kiev a few years ago, and it's truly striking the scale that the devastation wrought by this genocide, and what I took with me from that visit was the lengths that parents had to go to in order to try and ensure that their children could survive that famine. I will always remember that.

There's a striking statue on the grounds there that we share, the same statue here at the Legislative Building in Manitoba, which I think speaks to the connection that Manitoba and Ukraine share honouring the strength, resilience and hope embodied by the Ukrainian people.

Madam Speaker, tomorrow the government will cut outpatient physio and occupational therapy services that are provided publicly here in the province. We know that thousands of visits will be cancelled, that dozens of front-line health-care workers will be fired and that services will be eliminated at hospitals across Winnipeg.

Will the Premier (Mr. Pallister) reverse his cuts and restore public physio and occupational outpatient services?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): I want to thank the Leader of the Official Opposition for his comments on the Holodomor and, certainly, we have a significant Ukrainian population in Manitoba throughout out province and we remember for them, but we remember because we are Canadians.

And Canadians and Canada have always been a country where we—when we see atrocities, when we see genocide, when we see a massacre that we speak up, that we shine a light into those dark places, but that we always remember. And the acts that this Legislature have taken are an important part of that remembrance to ensure that we not only recognize

the sacrifice of many, but also never forget of how those sacrifices happened.

* (14:00)

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

Mr. Kinew: We're joined in the gallery today by Manitobans who will be impacted by this cut to front-line services, brought in by this Premier, that will take effect tomorrow.

Marie Kuhn had knee surgery last January and she knows just how valuable this service is. It helped her to recover. It helped her to regain health. She also knows that she would not be able to afford the cost of these services if it were not for the public option. She does not have private insurance that would have covered the bill.

Now, she's also concerned because she may need knee surgery again in 18 months, and as we have established many times in this House, health experts tell us that physiotherapy is mandated, is needed, by people who need knee surgery, and yet, if she is to require this repeat surgery, she may no longer have access.

Will the Premier reverse his decision and restore public physiotherapy services in Winnipeg?

Mr. Goertzen: Madam Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition knows but fails to put on the record that physiotherapy will be available pre-op for those who are undergoing the procedure. It will be available post-op for those who are undergoing the procedure, and there's a clinical team, those who are medical professional—doctors and others—who will be involved in determining what the clinical need of those who are undergoing medical procedures and operations are when it comes to physiotherapy. That is true in many different aspects of our health-care system. The medical professionals will determine what the needs are of their patients.

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

Mr. Kinew: The Minister of Health is trying to muddy the waters to cover up for the Premier's cut. There is no health evidence that suggests that cuts to physiotherapy or outpatient occupational therapy services is in any way beneficial for the public system.

The—we also have another guest with us today, Patricia Klotz. Now, she had an accident in

April 2016 in which she broke her arm. Now, she has needed physiotherapy in order to regain, you know, function and to start to get back to work, and she continues to need occupational therapy, and her private insurance, capped at \$500, will not cover these services. She has been told, as a result of this government's directives, that she cannot come back to those services that she is currently receiving.

That is clearly and directly a cut that is occurring as a result of the directives of this Premier (Mr. Pallister). He has one day left to reverse his decision. Will he do the right thing and restore physio and occupational therapy services in Manitoba?

Mr. Goertzen: Madam Speaker, the member knows, but he fails to put on the record because it wouldn't fit his narrative, that there is an additional \$450 million being invested in the health-care system this year over at any time under the NDP. It's a record level of investment.

We also recognize, of course, that the system has to operate in a way that is there to help those who need help in the future, not just those who need help today. But on this particular issue, the issue of physiotherapy, it is available pre-op, it is available post-op, and there'll be a team of medical professionals who will do a clinical assessment to ensure that the needs of patients in Manitoba are met, Madam Speaker.

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

Public Transit Services Municipal Funding Agreement

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): It's clear that this government is not listening. It's not listening to patients who are demanding that these health-care cuts stop. It's not listening to municipalities across the province when they unilaterally decided to cut—to freeze their funding, just like they didn't listen to school boards when they froze funding across the board, handing them a de facto cut and, in some cases, issuing a 2 per cent cut to school divisions in rural parts of Manitoba.

Premier didn't listen to municipalities when he unilaterally announced he would download responsibility for services onto—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew:—cities and towns with no commitment to help share the cost, and he's not listening to Manitobans who ride the bus, who are raising their voice all week and the week before saying they object to the impact that this government's program of cuts is having on the service that they rely on here in the city.

Will the Premier reverse his plan for cuts? Will he reinstate the 50-50 transit formula?

Hon. Jeff Wharton (Minister of Municipal Relations): I'd like to thank the member for the question.

Again, Madam Speaker, Winnipeg Transit and City of Winnipeg are enjoying some of the most generous funding when it comes to transit funding. As a matter of fact, they're enjoying one of the top three in Canada when it comes to generous money and unconditional funding when it comes to areas that Winnipeggers rely on. They have every opportunity to direct that funding where Winnipeggers need it most.

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

Mr. Kinew: I had a chance to look at the City of Winnipeg budget yesterday, and in the line showing the provincial contribution towards transit services in the City of Winnipeg, it was \$10 million less for the budget that is being tabled this year as opposed to last year.

Only this government under this Premier would call a reduction of some \$10 million generous. And when we look at the impact that that is going to have on seniors, on low-income people, on people who want to make the environmentally sound choice and commute to work on public transit, we know that it's going to have a real harm and a real impact.

An Honourable Member: Fair say.

Mr. Kinew: They talk about—

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew:—fair say, but what about the fair share? Completely absent from this government's agenda.

We are proposing that they do something radical that they've not done so far in their term and actually listen to their municipal partners.

Will they restore the 50-50 transit arrangement?

Mr. Wharton: Again, our government is a massive supporter of public transit and, quite frankly, it's

illustrated by the operating funding that we provide to the City of Winnipeg. And I'm sure members opposite will eventually understand what has been said many times in this House.

The City of Winnipeg has every opportunity to use funding supplied by the Province of Manitoba for any aspect that they deem necessary to benefit the citizens of Winnipeg, Madam Speaker. That is a decision the City of Winnipeg will make, not a decision that this government will make. That's what fair say is all about.

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

Mr. Kinew: Madam Speaker, if a \$10-million reduction is what this government thinks is massive support, I would hate to see what happens when they don't like a program or a service.

This government's refusal to listen to their partners whether in municipalities, whether in the regional health authorities, whether in the school divisions where they continually—continuously download the responsibility for cuts and offload less and less funding to the delivery of services that Manitobans rely on, is truly striking. And we are starting to see it have a real impact on the people here in the City of Winnipeg, as well as other municipalities around the province.

Hundred-dollar bus passes, less bus routes, 25-cent higher fares: When will this government get its act together, listen to the city leaders and restore the 50-50 transit funding arrangement?

Mr. Wharton: I'm certainly pleased to hear that the member opposite has found a new love for municipalities, including the City of Winnipeg. It's very encouraging. I'm—and I'm very glad to hear that.

But, you know, on the eve of AMM, Madam Speaker, coming next week, of course we understand and we recall, and so will the municipalities recall, when—on 2012, when they decided to force amalgamations on municipalities, force them to amalgamate without any consultation. That is not listening to Manitobans. That's not working municipalities—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wharton: We will do it differently, Madam Speaker. We'll make sure that municipalities are heard by this government.

Personal-Care-Home Beds Capital Projects and Funding

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): This government has a dismal track record on personal-care homes. After promising to build 1,200 new care beds across the province, they cancel an 80-bed, \$32-million project—*[interjection]*

* (14:10)

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Swan: —in Lac du Bonnet and a 120-bed project in Bridgwater. *[interjection]*

I don't think seniors' care is very funny, Madam Speaker. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Swan: Then they instituted a miserly funding cap that cuts the amount of government funding by \$227,000 per bed, which will shut out just about every community in Manitoba, and not a word in the Throne Speech about building care-home beds.

How are cancelled home-care beds and unreasonable funding caps supposed to support the health of Manitoba seniors?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): Well, Madam Speaker, I think in that question the member opposite, my friend from Minto, summed up all of the problems that happened under the previous government. They would throw money around and say that everything—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Goertzen: They would simply throw money around, Madam Speaker, to try to make things happen. Of course, they didn't happen.

When it comes to the funding that we're providing for personal-care homes there are many communities who've come forward and said we have found creative ways to make it happen. They're not all in rural Manitoba; though some are in rural Manitoba, many of them are in Winnipeg. In fact, we were pleased to announce just a few months ago 250 new personal-care-home beds, some in rural Manitoba, some in Winnipeg.

That member said it couldn't happen. It is happening, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Swan: Madam Speaker, the executive director of a Winnipeg personal-care home has now revealed that this minister's ordered in-year funding cuts to all personal-care homes in Winnipeg. That care home alone is now dealing with an unexpected shortfall of about \$34,000 they are now trying to manage in-year.

Madam Speaker, this is another direct hit to seniors who rely on quality health care and personal-care homes and a system which should be there to avoid expensive stays in hospital.

Why did this minister order personal-care homes to take an in-year funding cut?

Mr. Goertzen: Madam Speaker, the government has provided increased support when it comes to health care, a record level of health care; that includes increased support when it comes to long-term care.

The member opposite, of course, likes to try to scare people. He said in his first question—and it was impossible build personal-care-home beds. We, in fact, announced 250. There are more projects that are being considered, more applications are coming forward that actually meet the mandate that has been provided, Madam Speaker, and the only thing that's in common on any of those things is the member opposite voted against each of those 250 personal-care-home beds.

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

Mr. Swan: Madam Speaker, a \$34,000 cut from every single personal-care home in Winnipeg alone would mean a \$1.3-million cut to seniors' health care. That's one \$1.3 million on top of a regressive funding cap which makes it all but impossible for communities to finance new personal-care-home projects.

Manitobans know, including Manitobans in Lac du Bonnet, and they're concerned that there's a critical shortage of personal-care-home beds for seniors in the province.

The Minister of Health refuses to build new beds and now he's even cutting funding for existing beds.

When will the minister finally live up to his government's election promise and reverse this latest cut to health care for seniors in Manitoba?

Mr. Goertzen: Well, Madam Speaker, I've learned, sadly, as—though I'm fond for—of the member for Minto—I've learned not to believe everything that he

says in this House. In fact, it wasn't that long ago when he said that the government was hiding the wait times in emergency rooms. We're, in fact, releasing them monthly, and today I was happy to see the wait times be released for October. The average wait times in Winnipeg—it released the wait times for the EDs at Concordia, the Grace, HSC adult, HSC children's, Seven Oaks, St. Boniface and the Victoria Urgent Care centre. They all have one thing in common: the wait times from October 2016, they have all gone down for October 2017.

Economic Development Strategy Request for Government Plan

Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview): Before this week's Throne Speech the president of the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce—an ally, one would think, of the government—Loren Remillard, said that the government couldn't be bothered to come up with an economic strategy. In fact, Remillard said that the government's short-sighted decision making on economic development was going backwards.

After the Throne Speech, Mr. Remillard was still waiting. He's out of luck. There was no economic development strategy in the Throne Speech, Madam Speaker.

Can the minister advise the House when we're going to see a real economic development strategy from this government?

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

I, along with other ministers, yesterday attended the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce annual ministers' dinner. At that event, I had the opportunity to speak with Mr. Remillard. He told me he didn't know what that member was referring to, and he had glowing praise for our government through the Throne Speech.

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

Mr. Allum: Several development agencies have been vocal about the funding cuts that the government has made. The World Trade Centre Winnipeg and the Manitoba Technology Accelerator both saw reductions of 25 per cent. One of the board members of those agencies called these cuts a bloodbath.

Meanwhile, this week's Throne Speech provided little hope for Manitobans wishing to see an

economic development strategy. That means there's no jobs plans for our province.

Will this government stop their short-sighted cuts on economic development and give Manitoba families a jobs plan that they can actually rely on?

Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade): I thank the member for that question because it just brings up the opportunity of—to speak about the good working relationship we've got with all the economic development groups.

We are doing a review of them. We have them actively involved in that review, and we will work with them in the future to develop the best possible relationship and ongoing developments with economic development groups. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

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

Mr. Allum: You know, the president of the Business Council of Manitoba, Don Leitch, said that—and I'm quoting—that business includes making investment decisions in infrastructure—end quote: the very thing that this government has chosen not to do.

And in fact, it's very clear that infrastructure investments translate into good jobs that help to grow our economy and strengthen our province. Infrastructure investments are at the core of a strong economy, Madam Speaker. They create jobs; they create economic development. They help our province to go.

Will the minister tell us today: What are they really doing here? *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Allum: Is there going to be a jobs plan tabled in this House any time soon?

Mr. Pedersen: Madam Speaker, I think the member needs to either get some new reading material or something, because I spoke with Don Leitch last night at the Chambers of Commerce reception that we were at, in which we spoke with many members of the business community, and they're very happy with the direction that this government is taking this province.

Unlike the previous government, this government will work with our partners throughout Manitoba to help build Manitoba and to make

Manitoba the most improved province in all of Canada.

Madam Speaker: I am having increasing difficulty hearing members, whether they're asking questions or answering questions, because of the level of noise and heckling that is going on in this House. I have had to stand or ask for order a number of times, and as we have a number of guests in the gallery I don't think this is the best way of showing people how democracy is carried out in this province.

* (14:20)

So I would ask, please, for some consideration. I've got my sound system turned right up and I'm still having some difficulty and, as you know, I have to be able to hear whether people are using parliamentary language.

So I would ask for some civility by all members for all members as we move forward through the rest of oral questions.

Non-Profit Organizations Multi-Year Funding Agreements

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): Manitoba's non-profits are struggling to retain staff, provide services and plan for the future after this government has put a pause on funding. As the Province's budget nears, these organizations worry that their multi-year funding agreements with the Province will be terminated, which will force them to drastically scale back or shut down completely. These agreements translate into core front-line services for Manitobans that can't be sustained without this minister's buy-in.

Will the minister immediately lift the freeze on non-profits and commit to keeping the multi-year agreement funding?

Hon. Jeff Wharton (Minister of Municipal Relations): I'd like to thank the member for the question. And Budget 2017, Madam Speaker, maintained funding for all community development programs, including Neighbourhoods Alive! and Community Places.

I can tell you, Madam Speaker, that approved project applicants within the Community Places, Hometown Manitoba and Neighbourhoods Alive! have been notified of their approval and we will be in touch with them shortly.

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

Mrs. Smith: The government's freeze-out of non-profits is crippling their ability to make long-term plans to serve their community and hire staff to do the work.

In records obtained through freedom of information laws, we see that a number of organizations who were able to apply for Community Places funding dropped by more than half over the last year. Madam Speaker, I table the information in the House.

Now, this party—partly due to ridiculous timelines from the government, but it's also a repercussion of this minister's plan to dismantle non-profits and kibosh front-line services.

Will this minister admit that he is cutting front-funding to non-profits and—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Wharton: Again, thank you for the question from the member opposite.

I just—I'll just simply read a quote, Madam Speaker, here, and this, again, lends to the fact that our government is listening and working with community organizations. And I quote from Joe Masi: In the end, what we're looking for is the kind of one-stop-shop agency that brings together a lot of business-type programs, as well both municipalities and entrepreneurs to use together.

We are listening to community organizations. We will work with community organizations, Madam Speaker. Unlike members opposite, we will work with communities.

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

Mrs. Smith: The government's Throne Speech reveals their plan to combine four totally distinct social-services strategies to make it easier to hide funding cuts. They will amalgamate the health—healthy child strategy, the Social Enterprise Strategy, the non-profit strategy and the social-impact procurement strategy.

Madam Speaker, these important social funding frameworks that have totally nothing to do with each other except that they all—they are all targets for the government's big cuts.

We've already seen this government use consolidation to freeze funding for the services Manitobans rely on.

Will the minister admit that he plans to do it yet again?

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Families): This government is all about providing innovation in addressing social issues here in the province of Manitoba.

We know that the NDP has taken 'ideological' approach. In fact, in one of their reports, they supported social-impact bonds, but when the union bosses came and told them that they couldn't do this, what did they do? They made a—they flip-flopped. They flip-flopped like a pickerel on a dock, Madam Speaker.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Fielding: And that's why, Madam Speaker, what we are going to do is provide new—
[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Fielding: —and innovative approaches to addressing some of the social issues here in the province of Manitoba.

We encourage the NDP to stand up with us and fight for people to get better social outcomes for Manitobans.

Wasagamack First Nation Airstrip Construction Inquiry

Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook): Wasagamack First Nation has been promised an airstrip for over 50 years. The First Nation is tired of waiting for help from the government, so much so that the residents have started building their own airstrip.

Madam Speaker, residents are dying because they can't be flown out to seek proper medical attention. This is appalling. In light of recent events, I'm sure this government, this Premier (Mr. Pallister), can appreciate needing immediate access to medical treatment.

Will the minister tell us how this government will help the people of Wasagamack build their airstrip?

Hon. Ron Schuler (Minister of Infrastructure): I'd first of all like to wish our neighbours to the south a happy Thanksgiving, and as they sit at their tables they will be indulging on Granny's turkeys and possibly Peak of the Market vegetables.

And, Madam Speaker, all of those businesses we want to assure them that our government is there for them when we provided more than \$500 million, again, for roads and bridges and for repairs. In an historic announcement again this year we are going to be standing up for the roads and bridges and for repairs and our airports.

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

Ms. Klassen: I wonder if this minister knows that it costs \$80 for one single turkey in our remote community.

The Throne Speech states that the Manitoba government will make maximum use of available federal funding under phase 1 of the Investing in Canada fund and committing our full provincial allocation under the established Building Canada Fund, and yet this government underspent the airports budget by 15 per cent last year.

We know what our federal cousins have committed to this province.

How many of the millions of dollars in federal funding available for Manitoba will this government invest in Wasagamack's airstrip?

Mr. Schuler: Our government has committed to doing robust consultations with our First Nations and—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Schuler: Madam Speaker, we appreciate the passion from members opposite. We would encourage them to speak to their federal cousins. We do know that First Nations are a federal jurisdiction, but we will continue to work our First Nations to ensure that they get the kind of services that they need.

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

Northern Road Conditions Maintenance Responsibility

Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook): It's very easy to speak to our federal cousins. I wish you guys would try it.

The roads we see in the North are treacherous. The terrible highway—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Klassen: The terrible highway conditions have led to several serious accidents, even death: Highway 280, Tom Cochrane's 391 and Provincial Road 304, just to name a few.

Bloodvein First Nation was excited to have year-round access, but no one is maintaining the first 50-kilometre stretch after the Bissett junction.

Can the minister tell this House what plans his government has to ensure that northern roads are kept in optimal condition, and will he table the maintenance agreement for that 50-kilometre stretch on Highway 304?

Hon. Ron Schuler (Minister of Infrastructure): I'd like to point out to members, in the last 17 years of the NDP not a mile, not a yard, not a foot and not an inch was ever completed on the Freedom Road. Our government went out, spoke with the federal government, and we've already completed phase 1 in 17 months.

Madam Speaker, phase 2 is now going out for tender, and I'd like to point out to the House that the member asking the questions, she voted against every dollar for this project.

Northern Manitoba Programs for Youth

Mr. Kelly Bindle (Thompson): Madam Speaker, youth are the fastest growing demographic and the future of our province.

* (14:30)

The Look North Report Action Plan recognizes the need to focus on engaging youth in the community, in enterprise and in the local economy.

Will the education—will the Minister of Education and Training please update this House on what our government is doing to help youth in the North achieve their potential?

Hon. Ian Wishart (Minister of Education and Training): I'd like to thank the member for Thompson for the question. And I'm always happy to discuss our—how our government is helping to build a brighter future for youth in northern Manitoba.

The Youth Build Program, run by the Boys & Girls Club of Thompson, Manitoba, provides at-risk youth aged 18 to 29 years with training in carpentry and construction. Our government has invested over \$200,000 in this program that will benefit 363 youth in northern Manitoba and give them credits that they can use both in high school

and employability training and opportunities for work placement in the community.

These are the kinds of programs that'll help build northern Manitoba.

Red Tape Reduction Legislation Impact on Service Provision

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): We know this government's red tape witch hunt is one-sided and short-sighted.

We've learned through freedom of information that 20 employees at Manitoba Public Insurance had to tally regulations for this government. We know this process took several months. At the same time, this government is cutting MPI services across the North. You know, Madam Speaker, in Flin Flon, a vehicle assessment after an accident now happens in the Canadian Tire parking lot.

Does the minister agree that a better use of MPI employees' time would be providing much-needed services for Manitobans?

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Crown Services): It's certainly nice to finally get a question on Crown corporations. And I know the members opposite are always nervous—[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Cullen: —to ask questions about Crown corporations. After 17 years they drove the corporations into the ground. So, clearly, we've taken steps to make some changes at the Crown corporations—Madam Speaker, changes for the better.

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

Mr. Lindsey: We know this government's red tape witch hunt is about this government's agenda of cuts disguised as efficiency and not about helping Manitobans.

Through freedom of information, we've learned again that four people at Manitoba Housing corporation worked full time for 11 weeks to comply with Bill 22 and an additional person worked 85 per cent of full time for a similar period.

Can the Minister of Finance explain why his red tape witch hunt is more valuable than helping Manitobans find homes?

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

Regulatory accountability matters to Manitobans. We heard after—night after night in committee, Manitobans saying that these measures in Bill 24 have real merit. We were pleased to see that set of measures pass in the Legislature. It will provide real value to Manitobans.

These are regulatory matters that need to be attended to. We are attending to them. We will continue to count and measure and get better value for all Manitobans.

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

Mr. Lindsey: In early October we learned that this government forced Manitoba Hydro to redirect more than a dozen staff for three months on a red tape witch hunt. Now, through freedom of information, we've learned that two employees at the Liquor and Gaming Authority have spent at least 222 staff hours—roughly a month—hunting down rules to appease this government. That's 222 staff hours that could have been spent preparing for cannabis legislation.

Does this minister think that this red tape boondoggle is more important than preparing for the future?

Mr. Friesen: Madam Speaker, Bill 24 included a provision around veterinary boards, non-profit boards, who are paying upwards of two, three, four thousand dollars for an annual audit requirement.

This bill saw that audit requirement changed to make it more reasonable. It was asked for by veterinary boards. That's the kind of measure that that member calls a boondoggle.

We will stand up for Manitobans who are asking for these reforms.

Health Services in The Pas Funding Changes Impacting Care

Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas): I recently received a call from a constituent who lives at Pineview Manor in The Pas, and because of this government's cuts she's been left without night staff to help her. That means she's had to sit all night on a bedpan.

Patients' safety and well-being are at risk. Will this government admit that its cuts are hurting Manitobans?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): In fact, Madam Speaker, there has been an increase in funding for—

not only for the Health budget of \$450 million, a record level of funding, but there's been an increase for every regional health 'inuthority', including the health authority that the member references.

However, if there is an individual case where a Manitoban has not been treated appropriately in any part of our health-care system, I would be happy to look into it for the member. She just only needs to speak with me.

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

Request to Reinstate Clinic

Ms. Lathlin: Right now doctors in The Pas are no longer accepting new patients. If we had The Pas health clinic that was originally promised we wouldn't have this problem.

Right now our people in The Pas have a walk-in clinic with very reduced hours, with a schedule that changes every month, and have no choice but to sit in the ER for hours.

All Manitobans, no matter where they live in the province, want quality facilities and timely access to care. The Pas health clinic was designed to house more specialists and more doctors, and it was ready to be built.

Will this government reverse this decision, pay attention to the real needs of Manitobans and give them the clinic that they had asked for?

Mr. Goertzen: Madam Speaker, apparently The Pas health clinic had been ready to be built for 17 years under the former government, and I don't know all of the details in terms of why the former NDP government refused for 17 years to build the clinic. Perhaps she could speak to some of her colleagues who sat in Cabinet. They might be able to give her an explanation.

However, it is true that when it comes to doctors we continue to work to ensure that we have more primary-care physicians. I was pleased last year that we were able to recruit 89 new primary-care physicians around Manitoba, and that was, in many cases, a record number of doctors. We have a record number of doctors practicing in Manitoba right now, but we know there is more to do, and we are dedicated to do it, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: The time for oral questions has expired.

PETITIONS

Corydon Primary Care Clinic and Misericordia Urgent Care Centre

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

The reasons for this petition:

The current patients of the River Heights coronary primary-care clinic—[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Gerrard: —located at 1001 Corydon Ave. and local residents are very concerned and dismayed with the plans to move and merge this incredibly important, centrally located clinic to Plaza Drive in St. Vital.

This clinic is valued for its accessibility, superb staff and quality service. Removing the clinic from this area will have a negative impact with serious, far-reaching, negative repercussions which would outweigh any theoretical monetary savings that may result from its relocation.

This clinic is on a major bus route, within walking distance for area residents and is easily accessible for the elderly, as there are many non-congested routes for Handi-Transit, care workers and taxi services to pick up and drop off patients.

The proposed Plaza Drive location in St. Vital has a lack of any direct or consistent access by public transportation, is typically compounded by massive, ever-present traffic congestion and will result in the payment of costly taxi fares for people on limited incomes.

This move, combined with the closure of central Misericordia Urgent Care, which serviced the needs of downtown, Wolseley, River Heights, Fort Rouge, Spence neighbourhood and Polo Park area, extremely downgrades access to the health-care system in areas populated by many seniors and others with limited means.

* (14:40)

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to cancel plans to close the Corydon Primary Care Clinic.

To urge the provincial government to reopen the Misericordia Urgent Care Centre.

Signed by Susan Moffatt, David Rozniatowski, and Kaitlin Reilly, and many others.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

House Business

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader): Pursuant to rule 33(8), I am announcing the private member's resolution to be considered on the next Thursday of private members' business will be one put forward by the honourable member for Minto (Mr. Swan). The title of the resolution is Cuts to Outpatient Physiotherapy and Occupational Services.

Madam Speaker: It has been announced that the private member's resolution to be considered on the next Thursday of private members' business will be one put forward by the honourable member for Minto. The title of the resolution is Cuts to Outpatient Physiotherapy and Occupational Services.

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Government House Leader): Would you continue Throne Speech debate.

THRONE SPEECH (Second Day of Debate)

Madam Speaker: Resuming debate on the proposed motion of the honourable member for Seine River (Ms. Morley-Lecomte), standing in the name of the honourable member for Point Douglas.

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): At the onset of a new session in this House I'd like to take an opportunity to share a bit of my life and the lives of the constituents in Point Douglas.

As both Point Douglas's first woman and Manitoba's first indigenous MMIG family member to be elected to Manitoba Legislature, of which I take as a sacred responsibility of trust and dedication

Boozhoo, aaniin, Kinew Ikwe nindizhinikaaz. Makwa doodem. Winnipeg, Duck Bay nindoonji.

Translation

Hello, my spirit name is Golden Eagle Woman. I am from the bear clan. My family is from Winnipeg and Duck Bay.

English

So I just told you my traditional name is Golden Eagle Woman. I'm from the bear clan, and my family's from Winnipeg, and I originate from Duck Bay.

But my English name is Bernadette. I'd like to acknowledge that we're gathered here today on Treaty 1 territory, home of the Anishinabe, the Cree, the Oji-Cree, Dene and Dakota people and the homeland of the Metis nation.

This acknowledgment is one that I believe that we should be starting every House sitting with, and if this government wants to continue the relationship, that nation-to-nation building, I think that this is a good way to start, by starting that in this House.

I must begin by thanking and honouring all the people that have supported me along my life's journey, which has led to me to this moment, particularly my family: my husband Chris; my daughter Makena, who's up above; my two sons, Aron and Matthew; my two beautiful granddaughters, Ellie, Jaelynn; my mom; and my amazing eight siblings.

I was born and raised in Point Douglas and elected to run as its representative during our constituency's spring by-election in the hopes of continuing the great work of my predecessors, while also endeavouring to be a leader for my community in our pursuit of progressive support and services advocacy and change for Point Douglas and all of the people of Manitoba.

To that end, I would like to recognize the dedicated support of all of my colleagues: members from St. Johns, Fort Rouge, and Logan; and fellow caucus members. Our team of organizers, including Lindsay Stewart, Evan Krosney, Felix Meza, Krishna Lalbiharie, Judy Wasylcyia-Leis, Kathleen Lukas, and the Manitoba New Democrats-Young New Democrats, our network of labour support organizations, countless volunteers and community members, but especially the constituents of Point Douglas themselves who entrusted me to represent them.

My life story is known to many in my community and mirrors the lives of many Point Douglas constituents. At a very young age my mom and dad separated. My mom found herself a single parent to three young children. With my dad being the discipliner in our home I began to rebel, running away from home and often hanging out with the wrong crowd.

My mom, out of frustration, feeling helpless because I wouldn't listen to her, called CFS and I was apprehended and I ended up living in a group home. I was fortunate enough to have an amazing social worker as well as a support worker that not only worked with me, but worked with my mom and I was able to go home.

Like so many in my community, my family life was one situated in poverty, abuse and the intergenerational effects of the residential school with my mom being a residential school survivor.

At times, I felt little to no hope, which consequently led me to make difficult decisions and often unhealthy ones. And owing to my experience living in a group home, I later became a youth-care worker working at Marymount. I know full well how critically important it is to have access to places that can provide a safe space, healthy relationships and the support to make some life-changing decisions.

Very disappointing when our members opposite continually cut critical services to shelters, programs that support low-income families and women experiencing domestic violence and hopelessness—and homelessness. It is my sincere hope that we can work together in this Chamber to restore funding to these critical services that helped me and my family get out of this situation.

I dropped out of high school after having my first son at 17, which was easily one of the most challenging but rewarding times of my life. I credit him for saving my life and putting it into perspective as he became my first priority. My second son came along soon after. Often struggling to make ends meet due to low-paying jobs, I decided to make a change in my life: went back to school, upgraded my education, went to Red River, became a child-care worker. I also had the support of an ex, my ex-partner, who's the father of my two older children, while I was working full-time.

While in school, I was learning about social behaviour. I learned how my father was treating

my mother was not normal. He was physically, emotionally abusive, which is what I looked for in a partner. I ended up leaving my partner because—wasn't normal, didn't want to bring my kids up in that environment. He was also an alcoholic and thankful to social housing, I was able to get into emergency housing, leave that relationship, get out of poverty later in life. But without that, who knows where I would have been?

As a single parent, I relied heavily on social assistant, though that wasn't enough, and I continued to live in poverty. While working towards my certificate, I was hired on at Marymount, and I worked there for 12 years, and I had many supportive people in my life that supported me throughout that journey.

I relied on Manitoba social services to get me through 'tough'—tough transition periods: shelters, community organizations and food banks. These are essential services to help low-income families get themselves out of poverty.

Manitobans often get—put themselves in dangerous situations without having safe, affordable housing and access to resources that can support them, especially education. Collectively, cutting the Rent Assist benefit and hiking Manitoba Housing rent of low-income earners doesn't help families get out of poverty. It just creates that sense of no hope.

After my time at Marymount, I was hired at—in the Seven Oaks School Division, where I worked as an educational assistant while attending school for six years. Got my bachelor of education, bachelor of arts, became a teacher and worked in many different schools, had relationships with many amazing parents, students and colleagues.

As a mother and grandmother, I know how important education is for a child. It's upsetting for me to see so little investment from this government in education, skills training and opportunities for young people so that they, too, can build their future. This government's actions of increasing tuition and cancelling student tax credits just deters students from furthering their education. Had I not had that support of being able to have a program that provided support to me, I don't know if I would have had—went back to school and had an education. I probably would have still been in that relationship.

This government is asking students to pay thousands more for their degree and see tuition continue to rise during their time in school, which is

often difficult enough, and now they're having to pay 25 cents more for transit to get there. Who knows if they're even going to have enough money to get there? They may be walking in the cold, if at all going.

* (14:50)

I lived through poverty, an abusive relationship, being a single parent to two young boys and continuing my education, but nothing could prepare me for this: the day my sister went missing. I have helped to develop a missing persons and person-at-risk tool kit which provides important tools to families and to help 'eade'-ease the saddened and confusing time for families by providing advice. This tragic event also led me to becoming an advocate on violence prevention against indigenous women and girls, which led to me co-founding the Manitoba coalition of families of missing and murdered women in Manitoba and Drag the Red.

As recognition of my work in the areas of missing and murdered violence prevention, women and indigenous rights, children youth advocacy, I'm honoured to receive the Order of Manitoba, the Aboriginal Circle of Educators Young Leaders award, Ka Ni Kanichihk's Oscar Lathlin Memorial Award—who was also an amazing indigenous leader that also sat in this House. I'm also proud to have served on the executive board of directors of the Native Women's Association of Canada, the Manitoba Moon Voices and the indigenous police advisory committee.

These recognitions I perceive less as acknowledgement of myself, but more of the collective work and responsibility that we as community advocates, as seekers of justice, of social justice, as anti-poverty activists, as preventers of violence, as MMIWG family members and allies and, finally, as legislators, we must hold dear from which we must never waver.

With all humility and grace and assuming the sacred responsibility as Point Douglas's MLA and to all peoples in the province, I assure you that I will work hard to realize a better Manitoba.

Life, as we say, and as I know, is fraught with many challenges. But let us work hard and passionately to honour the sacred responsibility entrusted to each of us here and within our communities, and for our constituents.

Miigwech, Madam Speaker. I thank everyone and I would now like to move to moving the Throne Speech amendment motion.

I move, seconded by the member of St. Johns, that the motion be amended—oh, I have to do the—*[interjection]* Okay. Sorry. Okay.

I move, seconded by the member from St. Johns, That the motion be amended by adding the end of the following words:

But this House regrets that the provincial government has

- (a) failed to protect front-line health-care services that Manitoba families and seniors depend on by pushing ahead with the closure of emergency rooms, urgent-care centres and the elimination of outpatient physio and occupational therapy services; and
- (b) failure to invest in upstream interventions in health care such as primary prevention, pharmacare and home care in order to keep Manitobans healthy at home;
- (c) indicated an intention to cut more front-line workers on top of the thousands of job losses already ordered, hiring Manitobans hard, especially in—hitting Manitobans hard, especially in northern communities like Churchill—which was not even mentioned in the Throne Speech—and fails to have a jobs plan for the future to address technology changes; and
- (d) failure to offer a climate change plan which sees all revenue from a price on carbon directed to initiate the—to initiatives that fight global warming and help low-income Manitobans access green options;
- (c) an indicated plan to further download responsibilities for services on to municipalities across the province, including road renewal, after freezing grants for two years and eliminating an historic cost-sharing agreement with municipalities for public transit; and
- (f) repeatedly failed to prevent a comprehensive duty-to-consult framework with Manitoba's indigenous people and has ignored the pathway to reconciliation led out by The Path to Reconciliation Act, the Truth and

Reconciliation Commission calls to action and the United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous people—

Madam 'spearer'—Speaker, I'm going to start again. Sorry about that.

I move, seconded by the member from St. Johns, THAT the motion be amended by adding the following of—the following words:

But the House regrets that the provincial government has:

- (a) failed to protect front-line health services that Manitoba families and seniors depend on by pushing ahead with the closure of emergency rooms, urgent-care centres and the elimination of outpatient physiotherapy and occupational therapy services; and
- (b) failed to invest in upstream interventions in health care such as primary prevention, Pharmacare and home care in order to keep Manitobans healthy at home; and
- (c) indicated an intention to cut more front-line workers on top of the thousands of job lost already ordered, hitting Manitobans hard, especially in northern communities like Churchill, which was not even mentioned in the Throne Speech; and
- (d) failed to have a jobs plan for the future to address technology change; and (d)—
- (e) —sorry. failed to offer a climate change plan which sees all revenue from the price on carbon directed to initiatives that fight global warming and help low-income Manitobans access green options; and
- (f) indicated plans to further download responsibilities for services onto municipalities across the province, including route—road renewal after freezing grants for two years and eliminating an historic cost-sharing agreement with municipalities for public transit; and
- (g) failed to put forward a comprehensive poverty reduction strategy that raises families and children out of cycle of poverty and has instead cut funding for prevention supports, increasing tuition for post-secondary education and put the availability of child care further out of reach for many Manitobans.

As a consequence of these and many other failings, the provincial government has hereby—or, has thereby lost the trust and confidence of the people of Manitoba and this House.

Miigwech, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable member for Point Douglas (Mrs. Smith), seconded by the honourable member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine),

THAT the motion be amended by adding at the end the following words:

But this—

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense?

An Honourable Member: No.

Madam Speaker: But this House regrets that the provincial government has:

- (a) failed to protect front-line health-care services that Manitoba families and seniors depend on by pushing ahead with the closure of emergency rooms, urgent-care centres and the elimination of outpatient physiotherapy and occupational therapy services; and
- (b) failed to invest in upstream interventions in health care, such as primary prevention, pharmacare and home care in order to keep Manitobans healthy at home; and
- (c) indicated an intention to cut more front-line workers on top of the thousands of job losses already ordered, hitting Manitobans hard, especially in northern communities like Churchill, which was not even mentioned in the Throne Speech; and
- (d) failed to have a jobs plan for the future to address technology change; and
- (e) failed to offer a climate change plan which sees all revenue from a price on carbon directed to initiatives that fight global warming and help low-income Manitobans access green options; and
- (f) indicated plans to further download responsibility for services onto municipalities across the province, including road renewal, after freezing grants for two years and eliminating an historic cost-sharing

agreement with municipalities for public transit; and

- (g) failed to put forward a comprehensive poverty reduction strategy that raises families and children out of the cycle of poverty and has instead cut funding for prevention supports, increased tuition for post-secondary education and put the availability of child care further out of reach for many Manitoban–Manitoba families.

As a consequence of these and many other failings, the provincial government has thereby lost the trust and confidence of the people of Manitoba and this House.

And I would ask for the members if there is leave to accept the motion as printed. *[Agreed]*

THAT the motion be amended by adding at the end the following words:

But this House regrets that the Provincial Government has:

- (a) *failed to protect front line health care services that Manitoba families and seniors depend on by pushing ahead with the closure of emergency rooms, urgent care centres and the elimination of outpatient physiotherapy and occupational therapy services; and*
- (b) *failed to invest in upstream interventions in health care such as primary prevention, pharmacare and home care in order to keep Manitobans healthy at home; and*
- (c) *indicated an intention to cut more front line workers, on top of the thousands of job losses already ordered, hitting Manitobans hard, especially in northern communities like Churchill, which was not even mentioned in the Throne Speech; and*
- (d) *failed to have a jobs plan for the future to address technology change; and*
- (e) *failed to offer a climate change plan which sees all revenue from a price on carbon directed to initiatives that fight global warming and help low-income Manitobans access green options; and*
- (f) *indicated plans to further download responsibility for services onto municipalities across the province, including road renewal, after freezing grants for two years and eliminating an*

historic cost sharing agreement with municipalities for public transit; and

- (g) *failed to put forward a comprehensive poverty reduction strategy that raises families and children out of the cycle of poverty and has instead cut funding for prevention supports, increased tuition for post-secondary education, and put the availability of child care further out of reach for many Manitoba families.*

As a consequence of these and many other failings, the Provincial Government has thereby lost the trust and confidence of the people of Manitoba and this House.

* (15:00)

Debate is open—oh.

The amendment is in order and debate is now open.

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): It gives me great pleasure to rise and put a few words on the record and to point out some of the highlights in the Throne Speech, things that were important to this province.

The type of background that went into the Throne Speech, the consultation process of talking to Manitobans, the thousands and thousands and thousands of Manitobans that were talked to prior to, consulted and listened to—first time in many years—since we were elected they have been listened to, and Manitobans have appreciated that and every year, more of them respond.

So just give you a few highlights, and one of them being agriculture. And because of my background, my agricultural background, it's—and the constituents that I represent—it's very important to me that we do address this because it's been neglected for years. Seventeen years it was neglected under the NDP rule, both under the Doer government and under the one that followed that—the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Selinger) when he was leading the NDP, leading the sinking ship, Madam Speaker.

So we've acted on the advice received from the University of Manitoba scientists in 2014. NDP commissioned a report to eliminate ideology and ineffective use of anaerobic digesters in hog barns. We continue to enforce some of Canada's most stringent environmental protection laws. But in 2014, the NDP were told to quit with the anaerobic digesters. They used it, though; they used it to stop the hog industry in the province of Manitoba.

And so just to put a few facts on the record that they're not aware of because they don't do good research: Manitoba farmers have been raising pigs since the province was first settled. Early statistics show that Manitoba farmers had 17,000 pigs on farm in 1881. Since then that number has grown dramatically to almost 3 million on the farm in July of 2016. The sow herd in 2016 was estimated at 319,000 head, producing 8 million pigs of which 4.5 million were raised to market weight in the province and the rest were shipped as weanlings to finishing barns in the United States.

So the trade with our neighbours, north and south, is very, very important to agriculture in this province. Manitoba is the largest pig producing province in Canada, accounting for almost 30 per cent of national production and is the largest exporter of weanlings to the United States. Hog production farmgate receipts are over \$1 billion a year, and the NDP wanted to squash that. They wanted to stop that.

The hog industry accounts for over 20 per cent of all farm receipts or almost half of all farm livestock receipts in Manitoba. And if you compare that to the 2015-2016 fiscal year, the last full year that the NDP was in power, Manitoba Hydro's net profit was only \$49 million thanks to their mismanagement—their mismanagement—of a Crown corporation.

But they wanted to squash agriculture that was actually making money. And, Madam Speaker, it's not just the hog industry itself; it's that feeding industry. In Manitoba, we're the farthest of any province from the ports of export. We're the farthest from that, and so when we value add what we grow here it's very, very important. It's important to our economy, it's important to our workforce and the province can grow and grow. But with the NDP that felt that the province only existed within a cement circle around Winnipeg and they ignored the rest of the province. It almost ruined an industry that has—
[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Graydon: —had farm-gate receipts of \$1 billion a year. They tried to ruin that, Madam Speaker, for no reason, no reason whatsoever. Due to the expansion of Manitoba's beef sector, the number of beef cows increased by 3 per cent and the number of beef replacement heifers increased by 2 per cent since we formed government. Under the NDP, it was

going downhill. It was going downhill very quickly, actually.

We amended Manitoba's building codes to create farm-focused requirements. Requirements are important; not ideology. Their ideology wasn't important at all. They just wanted to squash an industry. We have modernized the funding guidelines for Keystone Agricultural Producers with the passage of Bill 35, and its member farmers and farm-product purchasers will benefit from reduced complexity and red tape as well as savings, which, of course, they voted against.

We have attracted over \$750 million in capital investments for protein production from crop and livestock sources since we were elected. This includes Roquette's announcement of a \$400-million new pea-processing plant in Portage, with over 150 new jobs. That's—150 new jobs was about what the NDP were chasing out of the province on a monthly basis in their last couple of years.

Their failures—and should I highlight some of their failures just so that they understand? Because some of them are new here, they don't know their history. And the reason that there is as many new ones as there are now is because the other ones didn't listen. I hope the new ones here will listen and help make Manitoba the place that it should be: a great Manitoba province again.

The NDP prohibited building new and expanded hog barns with anaerobic digester technology. That's what they did. They just dumped on them. They took \$5.7 million from cattle producers through a mandatory \$2-a-head cattle tax, and to support a cattle-processing plant that was never built. It was never built, but they took that money out of our back pockets, not once but twice. They did refund it the first time. My brother and I got back our \$50,000 the first time. We never got it back the second time. That was money out of the back pockets of the producers in this province.

And due to the NDP mismanagement under The Water Rights Act, our province has been set—seen a backlog in the processing of drainage licences and applications. It's terrible, Madam Speaker, the neglect that the NDP government had for agriculture in Manitoba. The neglect in the drainage licences resulting in an annual production and monetary loss for Manitoba farm families and, in turn, detrimental impacts on the province's economy and ecology. The amount of money that farmers put into the—growing

the products that they have to market and got nothing back to look after the infrastructure.

* (15:10)

But instead—but instead, Madam Speaker—the minister for Infrastructure was buying Tiger Dams. He was buying Tiger Dams, that he didn't know whether they worked or they didn't work. And he didn't go to Treasury Board for those either for some reason. And it's something that may have cost them a little bit of—more of their credibility.

Mr. Doyle Pivniuk, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with the institution of a 3-cents-per-litre-mark fuel tax, the NDP were more committed to increasing input costs for our farm families than they were to supporting our agriculture industry. And those that have got full bellies sitting in here criticizing what I'm saying should be thinking who produced it. The people in rural Manitoba have worked hard to grow Manitoba in spite of what the NDP government did for 17 years.

In 2010, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the NDP and Manitoba Hydro announced a route for the Bipole III.

An Honourable Member: Where did it go?

Mr. Graydon: Where did it go? Good question. It went halfway to Regina, and then almost to the border—southern border, then came back south of the big city of Winnipeg and back up on the east side. It created a huge, huge expense. It cost \$1 billion more than if it would have come down the east side where it belongs. And it crossed through some of the prime agricultural land in Manitoba.

And farmers raised their concerns. They raised it at meetings; they raised it here in this very Chamber. They came and proved to this Chamber that it was a big mistake. But the NDP paid no attention. They referred to them as howling coyotes. That's what they thought of agriculture—howling coyotes. *[interjection]* And you were one of them, sir, from Elmwood. The member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), who wouldn't even run under the NDP banner—he had to paint a bridge yellow and have that in his front yard instead of the NDP banner in the last election because he was afraid he would lose. And he was right, he would have if he hadn't had his yellow bridge there. But that's the member for Elmwood—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Order.

Mr. Graydon: Crown services, Mr. Deputy Speaker—we followed the Public Utilities Board's direction to establish Efficiency Manitoba. There was a reason for that. We created a real energy savings with fewer administrative costs than what is currently being done. That's the foresight, looking into the future to make Manitoba great again. For the 'first'—first time in Manitoba's history, our government has given authority over to PUB to analyze Manitoba Hydro's current and future debt. When we have a corporation with \$25 billion debt, that's equal to the Province of Manitoba, and that's thanks to the former NDP government through their mismanagement, their meddling, their political meddling in a Crown corporation.

MPI launched a drug-impaired driving strategy for the first time ever in Manitoba, giving Manitobas the information they needed to make safe decisions and prevent driving while on drugs.

And we've been handed a mess with this cannabis. It's going to be very, very expensive to monitor everything because it's—everything is new. But this is being handed down to us from a Liberal government. And we've had the senator scream out in here today about something, too, but I forget what it was.

Manitoba Hydro ended the expensive Bipole III transmission line agreement, the TLA, a project labour agreement that increased the costs—they increased the costs by forcing Manitoba workers to join one of two unions. Forced unionization—isn't that wonderful? That's their idea of democracy. *[interjection]* And the member from Gimli—or from Flin Flon stands up and raves about it. He doesn't have a union card either, but he believes in forced unionization. He believes in costing more money to produce less.

Our government cancelled the unnecessary and wasteful expansion of the Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries physical expansion plan saving the taxpayers \$75 million—\$75 million. We saved the taxpayers another million dollars by taking away the NDP vote tax. But here we saved 75 times that doing the right thing, the right thing that they neglected to do. They never looked into anything. They couldn't read and comprehend.

Their failure to build a bipole line down the east side cost more than a billion dollars in unnecessary costs.

And under the NDP, Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries signed an offer to lease 50,000 square feet of retail space downtown for 20 years, for 20 years without first completing a business case, market assessment or feasibility study. That's just because they wanted to give some of their friends a little more money.

The same as the individual that did the Tiger Dam. Yes, let's buy the Tiger Dams because he is a great donor to my campaign. Doesn't matter whether it worked, don't need to do a feasibility study on stuff.

That was the methodology used by the former NDP government for 17 years, and that's why today a big corporation—Crown corporation or a Crown jewel has less than 5 per cent equity—less than 5 per cent equity in a \$25-billion company.

Every single major hydro capital project commissioned by the NDP was behind schedule and over budget, creating serious issues for the Manitoba Crown jewel. Wuskwatim, not a large dam, over budget by 1.1 billion, 85 per cent higher than expected and over two years delayed. How can you do that? Political meddling on behalf of the NDP government.

Bipole III expected to cost over \$5 billion—more—\$1.5 billion over budget and nearly a year behind schedule. It's more than a year behind schedule and a long way over budget. Keeyask skyrocketed by \$2.2 billion to \$8.7 billion and nearly three years delayed.

That's the type of planning, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and if you continue to do that, failing to plan is planning to fail and that's exactly what the NDP government did. They planned to fail, and now they wonder—[*interjection*—as some of them sit in the back chirping, not listening, because they wouldn't listen before. That's why so many of their colleagues aren't here—that's why so many of their colleagues aren't here. [*interjection*]

In fact, one of the individuals that's doing a lot of chirping couldn't even turn his cellphone off and cost himself \$5,000. I don't know if we're financing that or not, but we really should check it out. We could show him how to use his cellphone, but after the years that he's been here he should have known.

The NDP lost a multimillion-dollar lawsuit that the taxpayers will have to pay. The taxpayers will have to pay because the NDP decided to rip up a contract with the Manitoba Jockey Club and

Assiniboia Downs—no checking into anything. They didn't need to do that. They were so smart that the judge just said you're going to have to pay the bill. No, the taxpayers have to pay the bill because their mismanagement. There's so few of them here right now they're lucky they could buy lunch.

* (15:20)

And, as a result of the NDP mismanagement the Power Smart program spent almost half of their budget on overhead while chronically underspending on the real programs.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would certainly think that I'm going to need more time because I've only got through two pages. So if I could get leave ahead of time, I would really take that.

But first time in Manitoba's history, we're developing a business case to build four new schools, using private, public and partnerships on—and have them built on times and on budget.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is a very strange term to them. They wouldn't know in budget and on time. They don't understand that. And on top of that, they don't listen.

Our government is enabling more than \$35 million in direct support to Manitoba students in 2017-2018 through the Manitoba scholarship—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Member's time is up.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for St. Johns—[*interjection*]

Order. The honourable member for St. Johns.

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): That is certainly a very hard act to follow. I didn't realize it was Comedy Central today, this afternoon.

I do, Deputy Speaker, I just want to reflect on a couple of the things that the member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon) just mentioned. I do want to say that, you know what? I've heard the member say it a couple of times now: make Manitoba great again. I mean, we've heard that repeatedly in the States from the—Trump. I do want to point out to the member for Emerson that Manitoba is great. We don't have to make Manitoba great again; it is great.

People always ask me what is it like to be an MLA, and I always repeatedly say to people that one of the blessings that you get when you're an MLA is that you get to meet so many phenomenal

Manitobans and you get to see phenomenal work and communities in Manitoba.

So I actually take, and I would imagine that most Manitobans would take great offence to what the member for Emerson says when he says let's make Manitoba great again. I think that he needs to correct himself officially on the record and actually apologize to all of Manitobans for what he's saying.

The second thing I want to correct or remind the member for Emerson is when he was yammering on about whatever he was yammering on about, he mentioned that he couldn't—he doesn't remember what the honourable member from River Heights was discussing today or trying to talk very loudly in the House today. And, actually, I think that that's also egregious. The member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) was trying to draw attention to First Nations' plight here in Manitoba, in respect of being isolated. That's actually what he was talking about. And the member for Emerson put it on the official record when he was debating the Throne Speech that he couldn't remember what the member for River Heights was talking about. That's what he was talking about. He's talking about and he's trying to draw attention to the conditions in which indigenous people face here in Manitoba.

So I think that he should also apologize to the people up north that he, by omission, is actually disrespecting as well.

So I will—just want to say couple more words, Deputy Speaker, in respect of my sister colleague, the member for Point Douglas (Mrs. Smith). I do want to congratulate her on her member or her maiden speech. I think the member was under a little bit of time constraints in respect of her full potential things that she could share. And I just did want to share a little bit that I think is really salient, particularly today, as she gives her—she gave her maiden speech, that it is important to understand or to note that actually the member for Point Douglas became the MLA for Point Douglas in the very constituency that her sister Claudette Osborne went missing from. And I think that that is—again, I think I've said it before—it is a testament to her commitment to Manitoba, to constituents, to people of Point Douglas, but, certainly, it is a very concrete example of the member's love for her sister and dedication for her sister. So I just want to honour her for that and again say that, just point that out.

So there's obviously, Deputy Speaker, a lot to discuss and a lot to put on the record in respect of

this Pallister government's third Throne Speech. It feels like just, actually, yesterday that we were debating the last Throne Speech, and with many of the same concerns about what was actually missing from the Throne Speech. And we note that there was no mention of an increase to minimum wage.

And I think that it's—should be noted and congratulated that only yesterday or a couple of days ago the provincial government of Ontario passed legislation legislating a \$15 minimum wage and, in fact, it will go up to \$14 and then—this year—and then \$15 the following year. So going pretty fast towards creating a society and a workforce in which folks can do better financially, that we all want to do. Everybody wants to do better financially to be able to support for their families. So I do want to just offer my congratulations to Ontario in respect to their legislation moving towards a living wage.

And, I mean, if you juxtapose that to what the Pallister government has done since it got into government in April of 2016, certainly, we are nowhere close to a living wage of \$15 an hour. In fact, this government thought that it was sufficient to offer a 15-cent minimum wage—like—and again, we keep repeating that. It's literally three nickels or \$6 a week, and somehow the members opposite seem to think that this is a good thing. They seem to think that this is enough. They seem to think that it is sufficient for Manitoba families, that three nickels or \$6 extra a week is good enough for Manitoba families. It is not.

And then, certainly, it is not good enough when this Pallister government puts the conditions in place so that the City of Winnipeg has to cut transit routes, but also raise their dollars to go to taking the bus to 25 cents per ride. So what the Pallister government did was it put an increase of 15 cents or \$6—and this is just one aspect of the myriad of egregious things that the government has done—but it has put in place so that Mayor Brian Bowman had no choice but to raise bus fare by 25 cents. So people are already short an extra 10 cents based on the minimum wage increase, if you can even call it that.

So I—that was what we were talking about last Throne Speech and, certainly, it's what we're talking about again because I think that we've made it explicitly clear that this government is not listening to Manitobans, because, certainly, nowhere would you hear Manitobans say, yes, I'm good and I'm satisfied with a 15-cent minimum wage increase, and I'm good and satisfied with a 25-cent raise or

increase to bus fare. Nowhere would you have heard that. But this government thought that that was totally appropriate.

I do want to just concentrate on what is in many respects, I think, very, very concerning and, really, the antithesis to where we need to be moving in respect of reconciliation. So, when we look at the discussion or the introduction of what looks like the child—No. 2, The Child and Family Services Amendment Act, Guardianship Support, I think that we have to put on the record here that when we heard in the Throne Speech yesterday that the government was moving towards, you know, moving towards more guardianship of indigenous children in care, I think that there was a collective—in the community, certainly a collective gasp at what does this actually mean and what does—and how will this actually manifest itself in the communities.

* (15:30)

I do want to take a moment to read into the record the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action. And actually, as has been noted, No. 1, the first call to action, is child welfare. And I quote: (1) we call upon the federal, provincial, territorial and Aboriginal governments to commit to reducing the number of Aboriginal children in care by providing adequate resources to enable Aboriginal communities and child-welfare organizations to keep Aboriginal families together where it is safe to do so and to keep children in culturally appropriate environments regardless of where they reside.

That is pretty straightforward. I do want to provide a little bit of history for folks here in the House in respect of the negotiations of the devolution of Child and Family Services. And I can tell you that nowhere in those discussions or those negotiations, when there was negotiations toward devolving child welfare, nowhere was there discussion about adoption or permanent guardianship outside our communities and outside our families.

So, in the very, very genesis of these discussions that led to the devolution of Child and Family Services, all of that was off the table. That was explicitly clear, from leadership across the board in Manitoba, that there would be no discussions about adopting out and permanent guardianship of our indigenous children outside of our communities and our families.

So I know that the minister has noted that, in question period, that he will be consulting and working with indigenous communities and organizations, but I don't know why, then, we're seeing this notice here of a Child and Family Services Amendment Act (Guardianship Support). Why is there already something in the queue? Why is there something already been developed without the consultation and the discussion with indigenous communities and organizations?

And I know that the response—because it is the typical response from members opposite—is they're going to say, well, we have spoken and we have consulted. But actually, let me put it on the record that this government has not. Consultation isn't a meeting, a couple of meetings with different agencies, telling the agencies what is going to happen. That's not consultation. So I need to make myself explicitly clear because I think that members opposite or the government don't really seem to get the concept of consultation.

I understand that the minister has had some meetings with agencies, but I also equally understand, Deputy Speaker, that those meetings felt more like being dictated what the child-welfare reform agenda was going to look like.

I also know that the minister has not met with the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs in respect of—very, very specifically, in respect of guardianship legislation. It has not met with Cora Morgan and it has not met with the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs in general.

Now, again, it should be noted, for those folks that don't know, that AMC, the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, represents 63 First Nations here in Manitoba and often is the lead in respect of CFS across Manitoba, alongside Southern Chiefs Organization and MKO, who represent both the southern and northern.

It is very concerning that the minister or the Premier (Mr. Pallister) would embed language about guardianship—permanent guardianship—into the Throne Speech and already have an—a legislation or an act ready to go without talking to the very people that have been doing this work for over 20 or 30 years.

And, you know, and again, we keep hearing that we're going to be consulting or we are meeting with, but the reality is that this government has not.

And so I think that it should be explicitly understood that, you know, this House, only a couple of years ago apologized to individuals, to children who are now adults in—for the '60s scoop—and at the time that—I don't know to who, but, clearly, it did—it sounded like a good policy. Let's adopt children out, let's adopt them out across the world and—because that's in their best interest. They need permanence. They need families that are going to love them. But, actually, they have—they had and they have families that love them, and it is nothing short of potentially the same thing if there are not protections in this legislation to ensure that children are not offered—or families are not offered permanent guardianship of indigenous children outside their communities, outside their extended families and without the explicit authorization and support of CFS agencies.

I can tell you that there are many CFS agencies that actually have policies that no child is adopted out or given permanent guardianship outside the community. My home community of Sagkeeng First Nation has a policy that no child is adopted out. And those are explicitly derived and—from the residential school experience and also the '60s scoop in—experience, because the reality—*[interjection]*

I'm having a hard time hearing, sorry.

The reality is that the legacy of the Indian residential school system and the '60s scoop is absolutely devastating in the lives of individuals. And, you know, even as I stand here trying to put official words ensuring that there are safeguards and there are protections of indigenous children who cannot speak on their own behalf, you know, we hear a lot of talking and laughing. And, you know, I don't know if people really understand the effects of what it does to communities and I don't know if members in this House—how would they feel if that was their legacy? How would they feel if you grew up as an indigenous person, as an indigenous child going to funeral after funeral after funeral for a variety of different deaths: suicide, alcohol poisoning, murder, all kinds of things.

And, you know, I don't—I hope that people understand that this is the direct result of those things. And in this era of reconciliation, which everybody, you know, expresses breath that they're in support of, but it is more importantly to put into practice. We cannot have legislation that has children being—families being given permanent guardianship to communities outside our indigenous communities and outside our extended families.

And I have shared this, I think, in the House that I was apprehended by CFS when I was around six and I was in CFS care for about six months, I believe. And while I was grateful to have a little bit of a break and a little bit of a reprieve from the trauma and the abuse that I was going through from my mom, at the end of the day all I wanted was to be with my mom. It doesn't matter—all—if you were to ask every single child in CFS, I would suggest to you that 99.9 per cent of children want to be with their families. They don't want to be given guardianship—permanent guardianship and go and live with a different family that is not their family.

And so, you know, instead of—I hope that the member—or I hope that the minister takes this very, very seriously.

* (15:40)

And here's the other piece that I want to put on the record: I would suggest to this House that if the legislation didn't have those intrinsic protections and safeguards to keep indigenous children in our communities and in our extended families, I would suggest that there would be a lot of protest.

You know, I—some of the early protests out here we see during Oka and I think that that was a moment where our indigenous people refused to accept what is bestowed by the government, and certainly I would suspect that if this is a piece of legislation that potentially takes our children out of our communities and out of our extended families, I would suggest to you that there are going to be a lot of protests. Our people will not stand for that. Our mothers, our women will not stand for that.

In fact, there's a grandmother council that they march every year in September and it's to protect children from sexual abuse and from poverty. I can imagine that once those grandmothers get a piece—or, hear about this legislation without any protections—if there is not, I can tell you that this House, this Pallister government, will have to deal with those grandmothers, those indigenous grandmothers, and I feel sorry for anybody that would have to try and justify a piece of legislation that would take—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member's time is up.

The honourable minister—just one second, here. The honourable member for Burrows.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): It's great to rise today and have an opportunity to speak in response to the Throne Speech.

This is now the third Throne Speech under the Pallister government and we have noticed a trend. This government continues to neglect the commitments that they were elected on.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Manitobans are also catching on to this government's attempt to blame everyone around rather than actually put in the effort, take action and actually answer questions. For example, this government continues to blame our federal government. Here are the facts: this Pallister government seems to be the only government that cannot work with the federal government, and that's saying something. The inability to work together, whether that be on health care, investments in our North or the legalization of cannabis, well, it demonstrates that this government's unwillingness to communicate and work towards a goal, towards a prosperous future.

Madam—or, Mr. Deputy Speaker, allow me to touch on a few specific points that were mentioned in the Throne Speech. This government claims that they want to work with our post-secondary institutes. However, we know from their action that this is not the case. Education is something our province has always been proud of. Between low rates and tuition rebates, people across Canada have decided to spend their university careers here in Manitoba, but because of this government's decisions we now have students leaving our province. We have students who cannot attend school because of the financial barriers and uncertainty due to the lack of unstable tuition. I personally have friends who have been in post-secondary school for the last decade, and because they spaced their education out, they are no longer entitled to the tuition rebates.

We want to encourage students to study here in Manitoba and further build their lives here after their studies. Unfortunately, the changes this government is making is doing the complete opposite. Students are being forced to leave because they don't know how much their education is going to cost next semester. They are being forced to leave because they were counting on the rebate to pay off their debts and perhaps use a—as a down payment on a house. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this government can't pull the rug out from students. It's not fair and it's damaging our economy.

This poor example of the government not listening and not taking care of Manitobans is also evident with the recent bill that passed, The Local Vehicles for Hire Act. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's our job, as elected officials, to bring forward what Manitobans have to say, and after countless hours of committees and citizens being told that they are not allowed to present—which, by the way, has never been done historically—this government forced through the bill, Bill 31, with zero hesitation or remorse, causing thousands of Manitobans to lose their careers.

This government could be civil by doing what other provinces have done, by providing some form of compensation to those who are losing their careers because of this bill, or else implement or suggest to the City that fare standards be mandatory for any ride-sharing company to compete with our current taxi board industry. These are very reasonable solutions that this government is not even willing to entertain.

This government should also be concerned about the safety of Manitobans and how this bill does not fight for our safety in any way.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, on the topic of safety, I'd like to talk about the justice system.

First off, I'd like to state that I am incredibly grateful for those who work within our justice system, as they protect us and make us feel a lot more comfortable. People within our justice system work hard and they should be acknowledged for it.

My concern is that Manitoba still has the highest violent crime rate and highest number of people in custody awaiting trial.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this government recognizes that this is an issue and claims that there is a plan, yet nearly two years into their mandate numbers have not improved, and there is still no plan except to take away resources and cut funding to programs that have consistently good outcomes.

It's about taking care of those in poverty, those who are homeless, those struggling with mental health and addictions. If this government would start to address some of these real, everyday issues, well, then incarceration rates and reoffending rates would go down.

I was disappointed during yesterday's—or two days ago, the Throne Speech, when we heard this government's plan for our justice system and that it

involved, and I quote: tough on crime and tough on what causes crime, because, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is not the answer. This government needs to be smart on crime. We need restorative justice programs such as youth justice committees, yet no action has been taken.

We need programs like the John Howard Society and Elizabeth Frye association, residential bail programs and senior safety aid programs, yet this government continues to cut funding to these justice programs that have consistently good outcomes.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we've waited a year and a half and we're still waiting for an addiction and mental health strategy, yet many people suffering from these issues are still only able to find assistance within our justice system. I hope the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Stefanson) realizes how imperative it is that we utilize and build capacity for those organizations that are successfully diverting offenders. If this government wants to learn more they can always read or refer to our Liberal Brain Caucus Health Report too. It actually does more than just points out the issue; it talks about and provides 91 recommendations.

Mental health and health care in general should be this government's No. 1 priority. However, from what we have witnessed in the closing down of emergency rooms, the refusing to negotiate with the federal government and wasting our dollars, the cuts to our patient physiotherapy, to the mature women's health clinic, to the Metis health program, Manitobans are fearful of what else this government is going to do.

And, as a result, Manitobans have had trouble making ends meet. Manitobans are worried about whether they can afford crucial services like their prescription medicine or healing processes. Manitobans are worried whether they will get quality service they need and they're fearful to take ambulances often—they often point out where they are willing to jeopardize their own health out of the fear of an ambulance bill. And this ambulance bill was supposed to be cut by 50 per cent and, again, we're nearly two years in and it has not been cut remotely close to that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's not too late. I enjoy the example of the former Conservative premier, Gary Filmon, because he made a mistake similar in wanting to close down the Seven Oaks Hospital, but after he learnt that it was a bad idea he reversed his decision and, honestly, people respected him for it.

Our Premier (Mr. Pallister) should consider doing the same thing.

Another good thing the former premier, Gary Filmon, did was create the Provincial Nominee Program with the federal government. It was a program that Manitobans could be proud of. Unfortunately, we no longer have that program, at least what it once was. The Provincial Nominee Program is an economic program and if tapped to its fullest potential it can contribute to a more prosperous Manitoba. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this program impacts the lives of applicants and sponsors and their families. There are people all over the world who want to call their home Manitoba. They see that our province is full of opportunities and it provides a way for families who are thousands of miles apart to reunite.

*(15:50)

The Throne Speech mentioned that there would be an announcement made soon, so I guess the Throne Speech was an announcement for another announcement. Anyways, I look forward to the announcement, and I can only hope that it is the removal of the unnecessary \$500 fee or the reinstatement of the family-focused stream. Mr. Deputy Speaker, many applicants are already taking enough risks as it is. They are making the decision to leave their home, use their savings, risking it all in a place they are unfamiliar with in pursuit of a better life, so we should do what we can to help immigrants have a strong foundation once they get here.

On that note, I should reiterate that this government needs to ensure that those living here are taken care of. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to talk about our North and how this government commitment to release the duty-to-consult framework, especially for the Look North project, has yet to come to surface. This government claims that they will develop a strategy to work with the federal government to ensure that all Manitoba First Nations have access to clean running water. However, I do not have much faith in this commitment because of this government's inability to work with the federal government. And, to be frank, it seems like this government is just passing the buck. Nothing prevents them from fulfilling this commitment and taking the initiative themselves.

We also need to take care of our seniors. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this government failed to address the issues concerning our seniors. We have

not seen improvements in supportive housing. As well, we have not seen much progress on their promise of personal-care homes. In the last two years that this government has been in power, thus far they have only added 258 beds, which is about a fourth of what they promised. Will the government have enough time to actually reach their 1,200 personal-care-home beds that they promised?

And what about supportive housing? What about retirement residences or independent living and hospices? Mr. Deputy Speaker, Manitobans are in need of these facilities, too, but they have not yet been mentioned or even acknowledged by this government.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, what about senior day programs? This past summer, fees have more than doubled from \$8.85 to \$17.70. We need to be encouraging our seniors to stay active, enjoy life, visit with their friends, enjoy—keep their minds sharp and so forth, but that's what these—and that's what these adult day programs do. Unfortunately, because of this increase in fees, many seniors are going to have this part of their lives cut away from them.

In the Throne Speech, this government said that they will be introducing a new provincial housing strategy. This sincerely worries me because of something that happened in Burrows. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this government was forcing my constituents out of their Manitoba Housing homes—after they've been living there for decades—into much smaller, poorer quality and inconvenient locations with no wiggle room for explanation or willingness to compromise. After three months of working with my constituents and many conversations with Manitoba Housing, the minister responsible finally called and said this was all an error. If it was truly an error, this government should be ashamed by the size of error. Regardless, I'm thrilled for my constituents and I'll leave it at that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there has to be a sense of fairness for those residing in Manitoba. Allow me to share an example where members of Burrows are feeling that they are being mistreated. One of the beautiful things about Canada is how our vehicle licensing works. For example, if a person gets their licence in Ontario, they are eligible to drive all over Canada, whether it be through the means of motorcycle, semi-trucks or a class 5 driver's licence. As our country's diversity continues to grow, provinces and territories need to keep up with each other to maintain a fair and qualified level of training

for everyone driving on our roads. For example, right now a person can take their knowledge test in Punjabi in Ontario at any time, unlike the newest rules here in Manitoba where the waiting period for taking a test with an interpreter is close to two months. We should be improving our system, working towards these goals and ensuring that those waiting to take their test in another language have the ability to do so. Our province encourages our diversity and we want those who immigrate to Manitoba to succeed, so anything we can do to help, we should be putting forward.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we can appreciate that changes like this take time, but for those currently being affected by this government's new rules there should be a certain level of flexibility. Ideas have been brought forward—and I shared them with the House today—for improving our system, including having an interpreter for the first testing attempt rather than only being eligible for the third test, shortening the waiting periods for testing considering driving is a career for many people here in the province, by creating driving handbooks and reading materials in various languages, ensuring that the reader understands the rules of the road to the best of their ability and knowing that these are options should also be made clear, for example, having them in a visible spot on the website easily—easy to navigate.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in no way should driving test standards be jeopardized in making these changes, but changes do need to be made and we need to take care of our Manitobans as these changes are made.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, just before I bring forward the Manitoba Liberal Party amendments, allow me to just say how truly grateful and honoured I continue to be to represent the people of Burrows here inside of the Legislative Building, and I will continue to work very hard for them.

I move, seconded by the member from River Heights,

THAT the motion be amended by adding after clause (g) the following clauses:

- (h) failed to commit to reversing the decisions to dismantle collaborative health-care teams, increase senior management positions in health by creating another bureaucratic arm of the government with shared health services, or to fire the two lactation

- consultants, two recreational therapists for mental health patients and two audiologists; and
- (i) failed to commit to improving issues relating to supportive housing, independent living, hospice and personal care homes, or reversing the decision to raise costs on senior care programs; and
 - (j) failed to commit to community and employ input and evidence-based outcomes for health-care changes, to lowering ambulance fees by 50 per cent this year, or placing insulin pumps and hearing aids under medicare; and
 - (k) failed to commit to implementing an addictions plan to respond to the growing meth and opioid crisis in Manitoba, or implementing recommendations from the 2016 Liberal Caucus Brain Health Report; and
 - (l) failed to commit to reversing the decision to only allow large, out-of-province retailers to sell cannabis in Manitoba; and
 - (m) failed to commit to reversing the decision to end funding to the John Howard residential bail program; and
 - (n) failed to commit to reversing the decisions to make student bursaries funding largely dependent on private funding, or to cancel the tuition fee tax rebate; and
 - (o) failed to commit to funding the Wasaganak airstrip; and
 - (p) failed to commit to providing fair compensation for taxi owners; and
 - (q) failed to commit to ending the practice of clawing back the Children's Special Allowance from kids in CFS, particularly those who are unpaid care; and
 - (r) failed to commit to recognize the role of agriculture producers and support them in reducing Manitoba's carbon footprint; and
 - (s) failed to commit to not allowing MLAs who own and invest in agriculture companies to vote on the carbon tax; and
 - (t) failed to commit to better polling reliability for getting input from Manitobans; and
 - (u) failed to commit to improving the outdated technology system utilized in government departments; and
 - (v) failed to commit to including the criminalization of mental illness and addictions in the justice system review, or to the development and implementation of a provincial suicide strategy; and
 - (w) failed to commit to reversing the decision to charge Provincial Nominee Program applications; and
 - (x) failed to commit timely construction of the road network connecting communities on the east side of Lake Winnipeg; and
 - (y) failed to commit to addressing the urgent need for First Nations housing or developing emergency management protocols for northern and remote communities; and
 - (z) failed to commit to implementing, together with First Nations and Metis people here in Manitoba, a plan to improve nutrition and to decrease diabetes in our province; and
 - (aa) failed to commit to developing strategies to work with the federal government to ensure that all Manitoba First Nations communities have better access to improved nursing stations, health care, clean running water, Internet and phone connectivity, teachers, and land and air transportation; and
 - (bb) failed to commit to fulfilling the 2016 Throne Speech promises of creating a new provincial housing strategy providing for self-regulation for Manitoba's paramedics, reforming conflict-of-interest laws, or the Look North recommendation of updating and releasing the duty-to-consult framework for indigenous communities; and
 - (cc) failed to commit to fulfilling the provincial government's election promises of supporting urban zones, raising the personal tax exemption to the national average, fast-tracking the construction of 1,200 personal-care-home beds, opening a dedicated stroke unit, developing a mental health and addictions strategy and to work positively and respectfully with indigenous people and communities.

* (16:00)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable member for Burrows (Lamoureux), seconded by the honourable member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard),

That the motion of the amendment for the adding after the clause (g) the following clauses:

(h) failed to commit to—

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Dispense.

The subamendment is in order. And because there was a few things that weren't actually read exactly like the amendment, is it to the—okay to the House that we actually pass—that we consider the subcommitment as printed on the document? [Agreed]

THAT the motion be amended by adding after clause (g) the following clauses:

- (h) *failed to commit to reversing the decisions to: dismantle collaborative health care teams; increase senior management positions in health by creating another bureaucratic arm of the government with Shared Health Services; or to fire the two lactation consultants, two recreational therapists for Mental Health Patients and two audiologists; and*
- (i) *failed to commit to improving issues relating to supportive housing, independent living, hospice and personal care homes or reversing the decision to raise costs on Senior Care Programs; and*
- (j) *failed to commit to community and employee input and evidence based outcomes for health care changes, to lowering ambulance fees by 50% this year or placing insulin pumps and hearing aids under Medicare; and*
- (k) *failed to commit to implementing an addictions plan to respond to the growing meth and opioid crisis in Manitoba or implementing recommendations from the 2016 Liberal Caucus Brain Health Report; and*
- (l) *failed to commit to reversing the decision to only allow large out of province retailers to sell cannabis in Manitoba; and*
- (m) *failed to commit to reversing the decision to end funding to the John Howard residential bail program; and*
- (n) *failed to commit to reversing the decisions to make student bursaries funding largely dependent on private funding or to cancel the tuition fee tax rebate; and*
- (o) *failed to commit to funding the Wasagamack airstrip; and*
- (p) *failed to commit to providing fair compensation for taxi owners; and*
- (q) *failed to commit to ending the practice of clawing back the children's special allowances from kids in CFS, particularly those who are in unpaid care; and*
- (r) *failed to commit to recognizing the role of agricultural producers and support them in reducing Manitoba's carbon footprint; and*
- (s) *failed to commit to not allowing MLA's who own or invest in agricultural companies to vote on the carbon tax; and*
- (t) *failed to commit to better polling reliability for getting input from Manitobans; and*
- (u) *failed to commit to improving the outdated technology systems utilized in government departments; and*
- (v) *failed to commit to including the criminalization of mental illness and addictions in the justice system review or to the development and implementation of a provincial suicide strategy; and*
- (w) *failed to commit to reversing the decision to charge Provincial Nominee Program applications; and*
- (x) *failed to commit timely construction of the road network connecting communities on the east side of Lake Winnipeg; and*
- (y) *failed to commit to addressing the urgent need for First Nations housing or developing Emergency Management protocols for northern and remote communities; and*
- (z) *failed to commit to implementing, together with First Nations and Metis people in Manitoba, a plan to improve nutrition and to decrease diabetes in our Province; and*
- (aa) *failed to commit to developing strategies to work with the Federal Government to insure that all Manitoba First Nation communities have better access to improved nursing stations, health care,*

clean running water, internet and phone connectivity, teachers and land and air transportation; and

(bb)failed to commit to fulfilling the 2016 Throne Speech promises of creating a new provincial housing strategy, providing for self-regulation for Manitoba's paramedics, reforming conflict of interest laws or the Look North Recommendation of updating and releasing the "duty to consult" framework for Indigenous communities; and

(cc)failed to commit to fulfilling the Provincial Government's election promises of supporting Urban Aboriginal Economic Development Zones, raising the personal tax exemption to the national average, fast tracking the construction of 1200 personal care home beds, opening a dedicated stroke unit, developing a mental health and addictions strategy and to work positively and respectfully with Indigenous people and communities.

The subamendment is in order. Debate is in process.

The honourable member for river-Brandon East.

Mr. Len Isleifson (Brandon East): I was going to say what a great honour it is to stand up and speak to a great Throne Speech, and now I get to add on to my glory, speaking against an amendment from the opposition, and now a further amendment, which are very regressive and taking us backwards. So I'm going to try to speak to all of it—

An Honourable Member: You scared 'em away.

Mr. Isleifson: —and scare 'em away and whatever happens.

But, again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise in the House and put a few words on record, and, of course, responding to this Throne Speech makes it even more special as it provides me with an opportunity to not only talk about the great results of the past, but look into the future, as well.

While I have the opportunity, though, I do want to put one thing on record, one correction. The previous presentation, the member from Burrows had mentioned that no one had spoken to a bunch of folks that were very concerned with sing—things that were going on in Manitoba Housing. And I do have it on very good authority and know that the minister

himself had personally spoken to each one of them. So I want to thank the minister for reaching out.

You know, I find it really, really interesting, because it's hard to believe that 19 months have gone by so far. We're in the—that far into our mandate. And each and every day, I wake up and I feel blessed that I have the distinct honour of representing my constituents in Brandon East. And every single member of this House should also feel, as their career is based on doing what is right by putting their constituents first, and ensuring that we, their elected officials, work hard on their behalf to fix the finances, repair our services and rebuild our economy.

This year's Throne Speech sets forth our government's commitment to put Manitobans first. We know that good governments made difficult decisions necessary to ensure the protection of sustainable, quality services for our citizens. We also know that during a decade of debt, decay and decline, that the NDP never made a difficult decision. This type of governing and government has changed 19 months ago as our government answered the call of Manitobans. They spoke loud and clear that a new government was needed, and they wanted a government who was not afraid of hard work and was not afraid to make a commitment to repair the damage, to correct the course and to move towards a balance in a sustainable way.

Manitobans understand that we inherited a tremendous debt burden that resulted from unsustainable spending growth based on unwise, political-motivated spending and poor decision making by the previous government. For example, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I witnessed the previous government spend more money on health care at the time while creating some of the longest wait times in Canada.

Manitobans have been asking for an improved system for years and they have every right to expect the government to act on their behalf. Change was asked for and change was made.

Manitobans realize that their new government, the Pallister government, is taking steps to implement improvements and investments that will improve patient care with a system that is both integrated and sustainable. The services people rely on, such as the Provincial Oncology Drug Program, for example, are priorities for this government. The 2017-18 budget saw an increase of 9.4 million for new oncology drugs, bringing our investments over \$60 million.

Our government is also committed to helping Manitobans who may be struggling with drug or alcohol addiction. Investments are being made in prevention and early intervention activities as these are crucial to minimizing harm and reducing costs associated with substance abuse.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, most recently this government passed legislation that I believe balances the medical assistance in dying legislation by respecting both the faith-based institutions and our—
their patients. This is what good governance does. It listens to the people and makes decisions based on practicality and common sense. This is one example, and I use this because it is so fresh and so practical that every member of this Legislature stood together because it was the right thing to do.

Tuesday's Speech from the Throne outlines an important pathway for the government as we move into our new session, but also allows some further reflection on the work of the last 19 months. One such worthy note was The Cannabis Harm Prevention Act. With new federally imposed regulations slated to come into effect on July 2018, this act addresses the health and safety concerns that will arise when cannabis consumption is no longer illegal. Unfortunately, it was another example where the opposition showed their lack of concern for our residents by voting against this very bill that provides for their safety and their health.

The previous session also paid witness to some very important private members' business, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This business sets the tone for future private members' bills and private members' resolutions that will have a significant impact on Manitobans, bills such as The Service and Therapy Animal Day Act by my colleague from Fort Richmond, The Civil Service Amendment Act from my colleague from North Kildonan, and my own bill, The Missing Persons Amendment Act (Silver Alert), will serve all Manitobans in providing improved services and opportunities for years to come.

The Throne Speech provides us all with a vision of a government moving forward. Since the 2016 Throne Speech, our government has continued to engage Manitobans in focus discussions about the future of our province. Tens of thousands of Manitobans have told us that they want a government that includes the very citizens it was elected to serve. We have always welcomed the input and advice of all Manitobans, and I mentioned last

year, we continue to pursue an open and transparent government that Manitobans have come to expect.

Our government continues to seek input from Manitobans as we prepared for the federal governments move to legalize marijuana. Each Progressive Conservative MLA held town-hall meetings to gather input on this very important subject that will impact the lives—pardon me—input the lives—pardon me—impact the lives of many as this rolls out in July. As previously mentioned, we only have one chance to get it right as we continue to move Manitoba forward. Thousands of people provided input, and our government listened and have adapted a strategy that does exactly what we heard.

Consulting with the public has led to many beneficial improvements in our economy and in our environment, and I'm very proud to be a part of a government that has such great foresight into the future of our province. For example, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the passing of Bill 7, The New West Partnership Trade Agreement Implementation Act, a trade agreement between British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan allows for Manitoba to examine the expansion of its GDP by participating in both current and future domestic trade agreements. The Proceedings Against The Crown Act was amended to enable orders made against the government of Manitoba under a domestic trade agreement to be enforced as a court order. In addition, The Consumer Protection Act and The Prearranged Funeral Service Act were amended to ensure that provisions of these acts will not constitute barriers to trade. These are examples of what good governments do, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

* (16:10)

After a decade of debt, Manitobans are realizing a decrease in the provincial deficit as we continue to fix the finances; after a decade of decay, we now see improvements in services as is evident with the decrease in wait times in health care; and, after a decade of decline, we are rebuilding the economy. Change in Manitoba is key to ensuring our path to improvement continues throughout this province. Yes, change is hard to do at some times and is a—definitely a challenge for most of us here in Manitoba.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the tag line, and I quote, I love Brandon, is felt by thousands of people across North America. I do not think that I have ever gone

to a place in North America where I did not run into someone who has lived in Brandon, went to school in Brandon or has friends or relatives who live in Brandon. Along with my colleague from Brandon West, we work hard to ensure our constituents are heard. We are their voices in the Legislative Assembly, regardless of political affiliation. We know that Brandon is the second largest city in the province of Manitoba, and under the leadership of Mayor Rick Chrest, we are very crucial roles that we play in ensuring the success of our province together. At a population of almost 49,000 residents within the city boundaries, we realize the potential of not only the city but the entire Westman region.

The Throne Speech verifies the work our government is doing in co-operation with the City of Brandon and the Provincial Exhibition, for example, where we are creating a substantial and sustainable funding governance model for the Keystone Centre. These partnerships create benefits for the entire area as they are opportunities that are made to attract not only local but national and international events.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I've mentioned many times in this House about my affiliation and passion for health care in our province. I am extremely pleased to work with and for a government that recognizes the importance of all types of health, including mental health. Manitoba is undertaking the development of a focused provincial mental health and addictions strategy that will look at ways to improve access to and co-ordination of mental health and addiction services in this province. We have launched surveys on mental health, substance abuse, addictions challenges and others in Manitoba as part of a 'demelopment' of a mental health and addictions strategy. These surveys allowed Manitobans to share their views, help us develop a focused provincial mental health and addictions strategy that will definitely improve access to and co-ordination of mental health addictions services in our province. We know that those providing mental health services in Manitoba have incredibly valuable input, that they will help us develop a focused provincial mental and addictions strategic plan.

We are taking steps in the right direction by listening to residents and front-line providers. We want all Manitobans to be aware of the supports and services available here in Manitoba. As an example, in Budget 2007, we saw an increase of \$1.6 million for trauma services for refugees, a great example on working with our partners here in Manitoba. *[interjection]* Thank you.

For the 2017-18 fiscal year, the federal government will provide Manitoba with \$3.63 million for initiatives to address mental health and addictions. Over the next 10 years, the federal government will provide Manitoba with a total of \$399.6 million in targeted funding for home and community care and mental health and addiction initiatives. I think it would be very wise for all of us in this House to thank the Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living (Mr. Goertzen) for his efforts to bring so much needed support to Manitobans.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Throne Speech outlines and continues to support what Manitobans have come to expect from this government in regards to improving our province. We know that the NDP did nothing about emergency room wait times as facts are on record that under the NDP government, Manitoba had the longest ER wait times in the country. In fact, under the NDP, Manitobans could fly to Toronto and back faster than being seen in a Winnipeg ER. According to the Canadian Institute for Health Information, the average ER wait time in Manitoba was 5.13 hours under the NDP, compared to a national average of 3.10 hours. The average wait time in Manitoba are finally on the decline but, yes, we do have a long way to go. *[interjection]* And, you know, the member from Point Douglas goes on and on and on. I should let her know that I worked in health care for 21 years, so, believe me, this is facts.

When we continue to look back, we realize that under the NDP—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Order.

Mr. Isleifson: —Manitoba also had the displeasure of being the owner of the longest ER length of stays from admission to discharge in the country at 4.1 hours. Just imagine waiting in an ER for five hours to get seen and sitting in an ER for four hours waiting. It ends up for a long day. I do want to mention, too, that the national average was 2.5 hours.

Our government is committed to working with the professionals and front-line staff to realize quality improvements for persons utilizing the system. Patient care—it's a top priority, and this Throne Speech continues to support these improvements into the future. *[interjection]* Not the ones that speak to me.

Anyways, despite the growing strains on resources—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, order. There's a lot of noise going on in the Chamber right now. It's hard to listen to the speaker, so if we can have a little bit of quietness and have the speaker continue.

Mr. Isleifson: Thank you again, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I know sometimes it's tough to hear the truth.

So, again, despite the growing strains on resources and stress on health-care workers, the NDP government allowed problems to grow. They promised to get rid of hallway medicine, and they did; they put it into highway medicine where Manitobans—too many Manitobans had to travel elsewhere to get the care that they needed.

The NDP allowed physician recruitments to stall, Mr. Deputy Speaker. More doctors left Manitoba than anywhere else in Canada. Worse yet was the fact that they had no plan on how to fix it. On the other hand, we have all heard loud and clear in the Throne Speech, and we even heard today, that the PC government's physician recruitment efforts in both rural and northern Manitoba have seen 89 new primary-care physicians begin their practice.

Madam Speaker—or, pardon me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are setting a new course with a broad and ambitious plan, one that will focus on learn-long-term, sustainable measures that will fix our finances, improve the services and rebuild the economy.

We know that change is never easy, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but our government is not losing sight that this work needs to be done to make our province better in the long term so that we can and will become Canada's most improved province. For the first time in a generation, the government has not spent more than was planned. Our government is fixing the finances of the province by restructuring how a province attracts investments, by restructuring our economic development efforts and by ensuring the key economic indicators that show optimism remain that way.

We are committed to ensuring value for money for Manitobans. This includes enhancing the role of the Public Utilities Board, encouraging new capital project construction through public-private partnerships and utilizing new funding models such as social impact bonds. We are also working to provide better health care here in Manitoba through recruiting more doctors to practise in rural Manitoba, co-ordinating medical services for all Manitobans

and broadening access to mental health, addictions and chronic-care treatment spaces.

We are working to reduce the number of children in care through new partnerships and new programs with our newly launched CFS reforms. Our government is committed to improving Manitoba's justice system by reforming family law in this province and by eliminating delays in prosecutions. We are also focused on reducing the number of domestic and family violence cases here in Manitoba through the Status of Women secretariat. And the minister will lead a Cabinet committee focused on 'enching'—ending, pardon me, such violence.

We are proud to partner with indigenous people here in Manitoba to renew our duty-to-consult framework, to engage on issues of mutual importance. This is in tandem with the reconciliation strategy that sets the stage for meaningful engagement and collaboration.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have received a number of calls and visits from individuals in my consistency of Brandon East who are extremely pleased with the direction of inclusiveness that our government is taking. In addition, many of my friends work in health care and are constantly in touch with me, encouraging us and asking us to keep doing what we're doing.

* (16:20)

My doors are always open to hear all concerns, bouquet and, yes, even complaints. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm happy to say I listen. I am so deeply honoured to represent the great folks of my constituency, and after 19 months in office, I remain humbled at the opportunity to serve and I look forward to another session of this Legislature that will continue our efforts to make Manitoba the most improved province in Canada.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): And I'm very pleased to rise today on the Throne Speech debate, and there have now been an amendment and a subamendment, and I guess, technically speaking, I'm supposed to be speaking to the subamendment, or is it the amendment and the subamendment, or is it Throne Speech amendment and subamendment? Well, I'm getting permission here to go anywhere.

Now, I just want to make a comment on the speech by the member for Brandon East

(Mr. Isleifson) just past. He's talking about the outcomes of—sorry—the wait times in the hospitals and, you know, he wasn't here a couple years ago when the CIHI report clarified that while Manitoba had higher—some hospitals had higher wait times, Manitoba had the best outcomes in the country.

And so I say to—many, many times, as I went around and knocked on the doors during the election 19 months ago, if the issue came up about the wait times—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, order.

Mr. Maloway: —I would ask the—I would ask the person, well, you know, would you rather get in to see the doctor, you know, 10 minutes early and not have a good outcome, and pretty well everybody—pretty well everybody—I think everybody agreed with me that the key here was outcomes. There is no point presenting yourself at a hospital—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. It's hard to hear the speaker, so if we get everyone to quiet down a bit if we have discussions.

Mr. Maloway: And, matter of fact, none of the members over here have any trouble hearing me, but I will speak up a little louder.

But the fact of the matter is that it's something to be said for the fact that Manitoba had the best outcomes, and that's what we're looking for. Wait times are important, but they're not as important as the outcome. And you want to think about that for the moment. If you actually have a system that gets you in an hour earlier, but then you end up having a bad result and have to come back again, or maybe not come back at all, then, you know, how is that a benefit?

So I'd ask the member, rather than just reading his prewritten notes here by command central up there in the—upstairs, he should take that into account, and I'm sure he would agree with me that the outcomes are important.

Now, I'm also aware within the last month—became aware that my constituency president did inform us that the Conservatives have changed the calculations for wait times, so they've now kind of changed the criteria to rig the system to their benefit so they can argue that they've got this improvement. And I'm surprised the press have not picked up on this because this is not from just one source that I received this information, but from several right now, and so now they're—they've changed their

system from, I believe, one based on averages to one based on a medium—*[interjection]*—median, and that's an explanation for why their numbers are showing better at this time.

So I have to say that broken promises are, you know, our big issue with the public, with any successful party in an election, and I have to say that the Premier (Mr. Pallister), you know, made it very clear during the election—very clear. On several occasions he indicated that no front-line services nor the jobs of the front-line workers who deliver them were going to be threatened. And that was very, very clear. And so, you know, people are getting somewhat—are a bit surprised now when they find out that this is—was not true, that this was just an outright broken promise on behalf of the—this Premier and this government.

Now, I remember the last Conservative government that lasted—well, a Conservative government. The first government to last only one term, I guess, in the history of Manitoba was Sterling Lyon's government, and I don't recall Sterling Lyon making any statement about that he was going to protect all the front-line workers. So, when he became the premier, he didn't have any promise to break there. He just went about downsizing the civil servants, and how many civil servants he reduced, I'm really not sure at this point, but there was a lot of—he—you know, he was the sort of premier who, every time he fired somebody, called a press conference.

So reality was the public was thinking, oh, my goodness, he's really—you know, he's really reducing the size of the civil service, but reality, a lot of it was smoke and mirrors, and he really wasn't doing it as much as people thought.

Well, now, that's the—sort of the opposite approach to this Premier. This Premier is actually doing it, but he's trying to pretend that he's not.

And he's trying to—and I know he's read past books on past premiers and their experiences, and, I'm sure, in a way to try to avoid some of the past mistakes and stay here longer than just a four-year term. And so I guess he would have learned from Sterling that it's best to say that we're going to—that we're not even going to win the election if there's a fear out there in the public that we're going to be reducing front-line jobs.

Well—so Sterling Lyon happily, you know, proceeded with his reduction of staff and, you know,

he was getting not huge amounts of support for this. But, when he went into the election in four years, I remember his ads at the time when he realized that everything was going down the drain for him. He had this advertising campaign called Don't Stop Us Now. I don't know whether anybody here remembers those ads. These are famous ads, eh, of a government that got into the election, was in there, like, maybe a couple of weeks, and all of a sudden, things started to look very bad overnight. So he's always advertising in the last three weeks was like Don't Stop Us Now.

And that was very—you know, that was a very big learning experience for Conservatives, the modern Conservatives, that the goal of—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Maloway: —Conservative governments now is to try to not, you know, end up like Sterling Lyon in the ditch after four years.

And so Gary Filmon tried to maneuver his way through, and the member—the Liberal member, I believe, mentioned this a little earlier, that back in 1996, the Filmon government, after they had won another majority—I think they were a little bit surprised about how well they did in two—in 1995. But, anyway, in 1996, they decided to reduce the Concordia emergency room hours and close it overnight.

And the member for Burrows (Ms. Lamoureux) was talking about Seven Oaks, but, in fact, they did pick on Misericordia, and they did follow through. Rather than doing a full closure there, they—which they just did now, they reduced it to an urgent-care. And that was an outcry at that time.

Madam Speaker in the Chair

Now, in Concordia's situation, only two months passed, and there was a uprising in the constituency, and Bonnie Mitchelson and other Conservatives up there went after Gary Filmon, and Gary Filmon saw the light, and Gary Filmon backed off.

Well, now, you know, roll forward to where we are right now, and we have the member for Rossmere (Mr. Micklefield) the other day, and I—you know, I listened to his speech, and it was—you know, it was entertaining. But he's talking about all this reaction he's getting, and he's been presenting—he's presenting all this response he's getting, but he's not telling us what the respondents are saying. So I have to tell you that, you know, I might just sort of help

him out a little bit here and, you know, give a little more information.

* (16:30)

And he talked about how he's, you know, was at a—some people's house and spent the evening with them having dinner and that—and he's getting active out there trying to, you know, I guess communicate the government. They talk about having—doing surveys and they're doing surveys to see, you know, what—consulting with the government. But that kind of hides what's really going on out there. He's not that clued out. He knows what the results of the last poll were, and if he does some 'extrapolation' he's going to know that he's probably in second place out there right now. So he better be doing some consulting. But to come in here and say, oh, you know, I'm getting—we're consulting with the people—no. You do the consulting first before you decide to close the emergency ward. You got it backwards, the member for Rossmere (Mr. Micklefield), you got it totally backwards. You went and announced the closure and now you want to do the consulting.

So your results are—I think are predictably bad, because my office has told me today that we have another, you know, 50 responses, I think probably from Rossmere, you know, on the closure of the emergency room. People are not getting over this. The member for Rossmere thinks that, oh, well, you know, if we go out and survey them some more they're going to kind of see the light on this and they're going to see how smart we really are, shutting down the emergency ward, and, you know, the fact of the matter is it's own—his own supporters. That's who is sending me these surveys and putting up signs in their windows.

It's—they say, you know, they put on their form, I voted—one guy who's a trucker, he's been demanding that I make a sign for him, a special sign right across from the Rossmere Golf and Country Club, and he wants me to put on the sign, I voted Conservative, big mistake, never again. And, you know, I mean, that's going to be an expensive sign. And so—and he goes on a tour—a—goes on a trip for two weeks, driving through the States, and he comes back and he phones my office wondering where his sign is. You know, he's already got a nice sign, but it's, you know, it's one of the stock signs. He wants a special one.

So, you know, this is a serious problem, the way the Premier (Mr. Pallister)—the Premier is just like a bull in the china shop. He decided, this is the way it's going to go, he has his secret meetings with his little

group and decides that these are the decisions that are being made. And none of these 40 members that are elected here, you know, to be part of this, none of them are part of this. They don't have a clue what's going on. They're reading it in the newspaper with the rest of us, right. That's what's really going on over there. And I say, you know, well, if you want to operate like that you're going to end up like Sterling Lyon. You better get those ads ready. Get those don't-stop-us-now ads ready because you're going to be needing them quicker than you realize.

So I can tell you that this does not—that, you know, this does not bode well for this government going forward, and the reality is that people, you know, people know what's going on with this government, because you cannot, you know—look, they have a different approach. I'm not going to give my sources here because I know they'll—well, it's on the—be on the record. But you know something, the old government, the old Gary Filmon government, they were in a position to advise the new—the newbies, the new people, and they were advised, don't do what we did in the Filmon government. Don't try to do any consulting—*[interjection]* Yes. Consulting, that's right. Don't—the taxicab industry. Don't do any consulting because we made a mistake. We decided we were going to consult, and before you know it we blew a whole year consulting with nurses and doctors and workers, and that bought lots of time so they could all get organized to fight us back effectively. So what you have to do—the advice to this government was, from the old Filmon regime—was just make the announcement and move ahead. Don't consult with anybody. And that's what they're doing. They're taking it, actually, advice from the old Filmon government on how to successfully do this restructuring process. And I, you know, time will tell whether they're going to be successful in this or not. But, clearly, it would seem to me that if they were to at least do some consulting with the groups, they would have, like, less hostility with the public.

Let's talk about Bill 30 because the minister, former minister, is here, attentive, and they should notice that she's probably sad that there's no more petitions to be read here. But the fact of the matter is that this government has a lot of very irritated people that was totally unnecessary. You know, they had—they left 100—over 100 people not being allowed to present in committee, which is unheard of, never happened before. They have a large number of cab owners here who are going to lose most of their equity, which could be—

An Honourable Member: Small-business people?

Mr. Maloway: Yes, small-business people that this government purports to represent, and they basically unloaded them on the City of Winnipeg and didn't look out for any compensation issues and didn't even want to actually listen to them. And they think for a moment that the cab drivers, their families, their friends are not going to remember this, you know, a couple of years down the road, when all they had to do was simply, you know, accept what we considered friendly, constructive amendments to the bill on compensation for the drivers, compensation that is being offered in Australia. All they had to do—they still could have downloaded the responsibility for the cab situation. They could've still done that by accepting the amendments for compensation requiring the City—matter of fact, that would've been a win for them because they would've off-loaded, they would've off-loaded to the City of Winnipeg. They would've got their way there. But they would've taken care of the cab industry by requiring that they have proper compensation and, more important, safety issues.

And we all know that the safety issues are very important: having the strobes and the cameras and the panic buttons and the training procedures that are required currently. They would have gotten a political win out of that had they done that. Now, the mayor would be complaining. You know, the mayor would complain that, well, you know, the Province had the best of both worlds because they off-loaded the responsibility for the cabs onto the City, and not only that, they required us to take care of the safety issues and the compensation, but they would've been net winners out of it. Instead, they end up being absolute losers because of the reaction of the taxicab industry and the long memories that they're going to have.

So no wonder member the member for Rossmere (Mr. Micklefield) has all these problems that he wants to talk about. I mean, if anybody's going to need some counselling, it's going to be the member for Rossmere because, you know, not only is he losing his emergency ward, and, you know, it's like he's been set up. He's been set up to fail, and, you know, I feel sad because that's—it's his boss, it's the Premier (Mr. Pallister) who did all this. You know, he should just simply send out a letter: Dear Constituents, Phone the Premier. He's shutting down your emergency ward. He's taken the taxi—he's taken your taxi business away from you without compensation.

* (16:40)

That's what he should be doing, and he should be rerouting all those phone calls down to the Premier's office. Bonnie Mitchelson did that. Bonnie Mitchelson: No, no, no, don't blame me for this. Premier, you're the one making these decisions. You carry the can. Why should I be out here explaining, and he recognized what he had done. But she's not going to get anywhere if you just say, yes, sir, to the Premier, you know, somebody over there has got to take him on. Somebody's got to take him on, sit him down and explain to him what the proper approach would be. You know, I just started—I just got started here on this speech and now we're—[*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Maloway: —and now the member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon) wants to get involved.

Well, Madam Speaker—oh, Mr. Deputy Speaker was here before.

Madam Speaker, I wanted to—with these comments I wanted to—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain): Well, Madam Speaker, it's certainly my privilege to get up after the member from Elmwood's history lesson, fable and a bit of comedy act here in the Legislature this afternoon to put a few facts on the record.

I'm going to start off with a few facts about the Throne Speech that I gleaned by reading Wikipedia last night. That's where we start with facts.

The Throne Speech is "an event in certain monarchies in which the reigning sovereign, or a representative thereof, reads the prepared speech to members of the nation's legislature when a session is opened, outlining the government's agenda and focus for the forthcoming session . . . When a session is opened the address sets forth the government's priorities with respect to its legislative agenda for which the cooperation of the legislature is sought. The speech is often accompanied with formal ceremony and is often held annually, although in some places it may occur more or less frequently whenever a new session of the legislature is opened.

"Historically, when monarchs exercised personal influence in overall decision-making in government, a speech from the throne would outline the policies and objectives of the monarch; as such the speech was usually prepared by the monarch's advisers, but

the monarch supervised the drafting of the speech at least to some extent and exercised final discretion as to its content. In constitutional monarchies today, whether by law or by convention, the head of state (or the representative . . .) reads the speech from the throne, but it is prepared by the ministers" of Cabinet.

This time-honoured tradition, complete with the pomp and ceremony that I love, took place this week with the opening of the Third Session of the 41st Legislature with Lieutenant Governor, Her Honour Janice Filmon reading our government's agenda for the next year.

The speech itself contained content that addressed a broad spectrum of priorities for our government, taking into account the needs of all Manitobans. I'm certainly pleased that our government will be continuing on the course towards our goal of making Manitoba the most improved province in Canada in our first term.

This isn't flashy work, Madam Speaker, and, in fact, our approach to changing things that haven't been working attracts a fair amount of negative comments from the opposition benches, their friends in union leadership roles and, of course, our friends in the media. I would suggest that deep down the majority of my friends across the way would agree that change had to happen. They know the out-of-control spending that their government was known for in the last few years of their mandate was not sustainable. The deficit continued to grow, and there was little improvement in any performance indicators across the majority of government departments.

Now, not all the members across the way were part of the Selinger government. In fact, there are new members that continuously try to distance themselves from that government and the decisions it made. Yet each and every day in this Chamber the NDP continues to advocate for more and more spending and for returning to the ways their government operated. The message should've been clear, Madam Speaker, when our government was elected, the tax-and-spend mentality the NDP was rejected by a huge majority of Manitobans.

We have chartered a new course, and are committed to ensuring we get value for any money we spend as we are spending the money of hard-working Manitobans. These Manitobans make their hard-earned dollars go a long way in their

households, and they expect their government should do the same.

Madam Speaker, we won't make any apologies for being cautious in our spending and for ensuring everyone in the government ranks and civil service is pulling their load. The work of effecting change is not easy. It's not popular with some, and, of course, you have people who hate any type of change. But we won't be deterred as we know we are proceeding on a path whereby we are ensuring core government services will be sustainable now and into the future. As well, we will continue to work with our partners in private industry, where it makes sense to grow our province in a fiscally responsible way.

As the MLA for a rural constituency, the great riding of Riding Mountain, I was—

An Honourable Member: Hear, hear.

Mr. Nesbitt: Thank you, thank you.

I was pleased to hear the supports we will be providing to our agricultural producers as we move forward. The agricultural industry is a key driver of productivity and prosperity. The diversity of agriculture in the province plays an important role in maintaining economic strength and generating socioeconomic stability across the province. Agriculture contributes to Manitoba's gross domestic product through net profits and incomes, including wages, depreciation and investment income. Historically, agriculture's direct and indirect contribution to GDP ranges between 4.4 and 4.8 per cent.

Our government, in partnership with the federal government, will invest \$176 million over the next five years to capture emergent—merging market opportunities and improve environmental outcomes. Private organizations continue to be a key driver in the agricultural industry, with \$750 million being invested in the protein industry and growing plant, livestock and dairy sources here in the province.

A great example of this is the single largest private investment in Manitoba history by Roquette in a new pea processing plant in Portage la Prairie. Besides creating new marketing opportunities for producers, this plant will create 150 direct jobs, and I think we all know the spinoff of that in Portage la Prairie.

Growing the beef and hog industries across Manitoba is a goal of our government. We have worked to remove pointless and burdensome red tape

that has held back expansion of these sectors of our agricultural industry. We are doing this while also ensuring our environment is being protected.

It is estimated that between one in 10 jobs depends on direct and indirect spinoffs from agriculture. Agricultural supports growth and employment in the rural economy by providing a market for services needed by the industry. Agriculture contributes 62,000 jobs to Manitoba's economy and it directly employs approximately 30,000 workers. With over 255 companies in Manitoba's value-added food-processing industry, the sector provides 23,600 jobs. I'm proud that our government intends to work with producers and agricultural organizations to take advantage of opportunities to grow this important industry.

In my backyard, we have the Keystone Centre in Brandon, which is an important part of the landscape of western Manitoba. The definition of keystone is a central, cohesive source of support and stability. I would suggest whoever came up with the name of this massive agricultural and recreational complex back in 1973 was bang on. The facility's main 5,102-seat arena, Westman Communications Group Place, is the home of the Brandon Wheat Kings of the Western Hockey League and the annual Royal Manitoba Winter Fair. It has also been the host of many national events and will play host to the 2019 Tim Hortons men's curling championships.

Aside from Westman Communications Group Place, the Keystone Centre also features an exhibition hall for trade shows and agricultural events, two smaller hockey arenas and the Brandon Curling Club. This complex is an important asset for not just Brandon but for all of western Manitoba, and indeed the entire province. I'm pleased that our government will work closely with the City of Brandon and the Provincial Exhibition board to arrive at a sustainable funding and governance model to ensure this asset is maintained and strengthened moving forward.

Manitobans elected a Progressive Conservative government to make changes to a health-care system that was broken. The NDP continued to pour money into health care each and every year, but yet the results remained the same. They hired experts for advice on a reorganization of EMS resources across rural Manitoba and for a review of health care in Winnipeg. These reports were delivered but not acted upon. We will never know why, but we can

only assume the NDP of the day felt it wasn't politically wise to make any change.

* (16:50)

Our government has taken a different approach by utilizing this expert advice, combined with receiving input from health-care workers and Manitobans, to make changes to a system that had the longest wait times in emergency rooms in Canada, the highest wait times for surgical and diagnostic systems in the country, and the lack of key health-care professionals, including a real scarcity of doctors wanting to practise in rural Manitoba.

We acted on the Peachey report that was commissioned by the NDP government and are well into a plan to have three fully equipped emergency rooms in Winnipeg while converting other facilities into urgent-care and specialized centres that support the health-care needs of Manitobans.

But, Madam Speaker, the work is far from done, but our government is very encouraged that early indicators are showing reduced wait times at emergency departments across the city. Also, over the past year, we have hired 29 new paramedics and unveiled a plan to create a predictable, reliable ambulance service that reduces our reliance on on-call and callback staffing in rural settings.

We acted on a report commissioned by the NDP by reworking the numbers with the latest statistics to ensure that ambulance stations would be located more strategically and be staffed 24-7 with the goal of reaching 90 per cent of all Manitobans in under 30 minutes 90 per cent of the time.

Along with taking steps to improve service utilizing full-time paramedics, Manitobans are now paying less when they need an ambulance. Our government reduced the charge to \$425 on April 1st, and we have committed to further reduce this fee to \$250 by 2019.

The doctor shortage in Manitoba has been well documented, and no area has been left unscathed. Emergency rooms were closed due to a lack of physicians, and, in many cases, rural residents were forced to leave their communities to access a medical appointment. Our government believes that all Manitobans deserve timely access to health care no matter where they live. To that end, the Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living (Mr. Goertzen) announced this fall that 89 new doctors—89—have been added to Manitoba's physician network.

Ongoing physician recruitment and retention efforts are a key priority of our government moving forward.

An Honourable Member: Eighty-nine. Wow.

Mr. Nesbitt: Eighty-nine, yes.

Part of the challenge of being a general practitioner in rural Manitoba is the isolation from colleagues and specialists to collaborate with on diagnosis and treatment strategies. Our government is currently reviewing the feasibility of a provincial on-call consultation service to better support rural and northern health-care staff with emergency specialists. Ensuring that medical professionals have timely access to real-time clinical expertise, no matter where they choose to practise, will assist in ongoing recruitment and retention efforts for rural and northern communities.

When I campaigned in the last election, I did so on the promise that our government would add an additional 1,200 personal-care-home beds across the province over eight years. And I know in my constituency of Riding Mountain, we certainly need some more personal-care-home beds. I am pleased that our government has embarked on fulfilling this province—promise with the approval of two hundred and 'sifty'—seventy additional beds in Carman, Steinbach and Winnipeg.

Mental health-care supports have not kept up with demand. Our government has engaged a team of experts to develop a strategy to improve access and co-ordination of mental and addiction resources across Manitoba. We are also exploring implementation of a peer-support program in emergency rooms to assist Manitobans experiencing mental health crisis. Often, an emergency room is the first point of contact for someone who's in mental distress, and we want to ensure the proper resources are available all across this great province.

Investing in strategic projects across Manitoba contributes to communities and the way of life in Manitoba. I saw that first-hand in my hometown this summer, when as I—when I was able to announce contributions from the Building Canada Fund for projects that provide real value for the money invested.

The Shoal Lake regional airport, a busy hub for flight training, agricultural crop spraying and recreational pilots, received a total of \$342,000 from the federal government, provincial government and local municipality, to resurface a runway that was

25 years old. As well, the local recreation complex will have additional dressing rooms built to support the demand of several regional hockey teams. That certainly contributes to the economy of my community of Shoal Lake.

Besides contributing to the rural way of life, these regional assets create an economic spinoff for our community and, in turn, to the Province. These are the types of investments that I am proud of, Madam Speaker, as they give municipalities a hand up with strategic infrastructure investments, while at the same time ensuring there's a definite economic benefit to the community and province.

As a government, we know we must invest, and we will invest wisely with an eye for a return on investment. Our government will continue to make key strategic investments in Manitoba by making maximum use of federal funding under phase 1 of the Investing in Canada fund and committing our full provincial allocation under the established Building Canada Fund. Leveraging federal funding and working with our municipal partners allows us to invest in shared provincial and municipal priorities that benefit our taxpayers.

Our government will continue to work on fixing the finances of the province, which is absolutely essential to the future economic and social health of Manitoba. It is no secret that our government inherited an unsustainable financial situation, which included missed budget targets, downgraded credit ratings and deteriorating public assets like highways and bridges. Despite raising and broadening the provincial sales tax and increasing fees for all sorts of government services, the former NDP government moved farther away from balancing the budget. The annual deficits were added to the growing debt in Manitoba, which, in turn, increased the amount of interest paid to happy moneylenders down east. After being elected, our government set the tone at the top by reducing the number of Cabinet positions and political staff. Our government MLAs took the lead, forgoing salary increases this year and for all the years remaining in this term. Budget 2017 set the course for better financial results. But, again, the work continues.

A new public transformation strategy will challenge public servants to better understand and meet the needs of citizens. Combined with our

efforts to reduce red tape across government departments, this strategy is designed to ensure citizens get the help and timely information they need when they have to interact with government.

Madam Speaker, I'm proud to be a member of a government that cares about outcomes and results, a government that is not afraid to make the changes necessary to improve the lives of all Manitobans, a government that knows the value of money collected from taxpayers and ensures it receives the best value for every dollar spent. Our government members have a wide range of experience in public and private sectors. Our team shares in the vision of making Manitoba Canada's most improved province in our first term, and that priorities and progress shared in this Throne Speech shows that we're well on our way to that goal.

Thank you.

Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview): I'm delighted to follow my friend from Riding Mountain and to support—stand in support of our amendment to Tuesday's Throne Speech.

I have to say that I have great respect for my friend from Riding Mountain and I like him, personally, a great deal, as I do all members of the House. But I've come to enjoy his good nature here in the House. I have to say, I'm very disappointed by his speech this afternoon. *[interjection]* Yes, my friend from Minto reminds us that he drank the Kool-Aid.

And I'm disappointed to see him—it's okay to use notes and whatnot, but I'm disappointed to see him sticking so closely to the script, because the script, Madam Speaker, is very bad news for the people of Manitoba. And it's incumbent upon him to speak up for his constituents about the kind of province that we want to have and the kind of communities we want to build and the kind of place we want to live in and raise our children and raise our families. And he seems not to care a whit for any of those—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

When this matter's again before the House, the honourable member will have 19 minutes remaining.

The hour being 5 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, November 23, 2017

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