



Speech from the Throne



At the Opening of the
First Session of the
41st Legislature

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Delivered by:

The Honourable Janice C. Filmon, C.M., O.M.

Lieutenant Governor of the
Province of Manitoba

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

Hon. Janice Filmon (Lieutenant- Governor of the Province of Manitoba):

Madame Speaker, and members of the Manitoba Legislature: I welcome you to the First Session of the Forty-first Legislature of the Province of Manitoba.

Manitoba's New Government believes in the values of integrity, caring, inclusion, common sense and teamwork. These are the values upon which our great province has been built, and upon which we will govern.

We acknowledge that we are on Treaty 1 territory, and in the heartland of the Metis people. Together, we share a rich, vibrant and tolerant cultural landscape that makes us the envy of the world.

Manitobans are also the most generous and charitable people in Canada, giving both of their time and resources to so many worthwhile causes. It is in that spirit of national pride and citizenship that we stand with the people of Alberta in the wake of the terrible circumstances and suffering in Fort McMurray. Manitobans know all too well the tragedy and heavy burdens of massive natural disaster. And they join our government in extending concern and support to our Alberta neighbors. We acknowledge the courage and dedication of all those working on the front lines to protect property and life from the fires – both in Alberta and here at home in Manitoba.

Our mandate and future course is clear. Manitoba's New Government is committed to making Manitoba the most improved province in all of Canada: to better health care and education for Manitoba families; to better jobs that will inspire our young people to make their Manitoba their home into the future; and to an open, transparent government that earns and deserves the trust of Manitobans.

Strengthening Manitoba's Economy

Jobs and economic growth are at the centre of our plan for a better Manitoba. A stronger economy will allow us to improve front line services in health care and education; and will enable investment in programs and initiatives most important to supporting Manitoba families.

A strong fiscal plan is the necessary foundation for sustained growth. Manitoba's New Government finds itself facing significant fiscal challenges, the full extent of which was not previously disclosed to Manitobans. This magnifies our shared challenges. But our collective will is strong and we will meet these challenges together.

Manitoba's New Government will immediately commence a comprehensive value for money review across government, as a first step toward restoring prudent financial management.

Manitobans embrace change and Manitoba businesses are champions of innovation. Manitoba's New Government will partner with business and community leaders to create new and innovative economic opportunities. And we will continue to support and protect jobs in vital areas of our economy. The aerospace sector is one such example. Manitoba is home to the third largest aerospace industry in Canada.

Manitoba's New Government will continue to advocate for focused engagement and specific funding commitments from our partners in the federal government, to ensure the proposed changes to the *Air Canada Public Participation Act* provide a net investment and job creation benefit for Manitoba's aerospace industry.

We will embrace municipal partnerships. Members of our cabinet will meet with their counterparts at the City of Winnipeg and municipalities from across Manitoba to provide them with a fair say on strategic infrastructure investments.

And we will ensure long-term, assured and targeted infrastructure investments of no less than \$1 billion per year while making flood protection a top priority. To that end we will take immediate action to work with our partners in the federal government on flood protection infrastructure, beginning with the outlet needed to alleviate flooding around Lake Manitoba.

Our government will establish a Premier's Enterprise Team, comprised of business leaders who will make recommendations that will result in new jobs and stronger economic growth in our province.

And we will engage in focused discussions with indigenous leaders to develop a framework for meaningful ongoing consultation. And together we will work to build strong, mutually beneficial relationships based on a spirit of partnership and trust.

Many jobs in Manitoba depend on trade and Manitoba's New Government is committed to pursuing enhanced trading opportunities. For too long, Manitoba has been isolated from its neighbours and has forsaken the cooperative opportunities they present.

Our government has already taken the first step towards joining the New West Partnership Trade Agreement with Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia. We will work diligently to complete the negotiations necessary to conclude this important initiative. And we will seek the support of this Legislature for the Trans-Pacific Partnership, in order to send a strong and united signal that Manitobans are ready, willing and able to trade with the world.

Manitoba's New Government is committed to realizing additional tourism potential. We will increase our investments in the promotion of

Manitoba's many unique attractions to visitors from all over the world. We will launch Yes! North to promote partnerships needed to attract new companies, assist entrepreneurs, and foster quality jobs and a stronger economy in northern Manitoba.

And we will focus on the sustainable development of our natural resources, including forestry and mining, to pursue additional opportunities for balanced growth and job creation.

Better Care for All Manitobans

Providing the best possible care to families, seniors, children and patients is the most fundamental role of government. This requires ongoing vigilance and support, while protecting the jobs of the dedicated front line workers who provide those services.

Manitoba's New Government will take immediate steps to reduce ambulance fees for Manitobans in critical need. We will establish a Wait Times Reduction Task Force, made up of experts who will guide our decisions as we implement initiatives to reduce the time that Manitobans spend waiting for specialized or emergent care. And we will take initial steps toward implementing our plan for the construction of additional personal care home beds.

Manitoba's New Government will also address the urgent needs of our most vulnerable.

We will immediately introduce *The Protecting Children Act* to make it easier for government departments, child and family service authorities, community service providers and law enforcement agencies to share information and collaborate when dealing with victimized and at-risk children. This legislation is the necessary first step towards the establishment of a made-in-Manitoba collaborative model that puts children first.

We will also begin discussions towards developing a comprehensive mental health strategy, which will include mental health and addictions programs and services emphasizing better coordination and access.

A Brighter Future with Better Education

Education is the path forward to personal success and growth for all young Manitobans. Investing in education benefits not only the present day student, it is an investment in our province's collective future.

Manitoba's New Government will immediately begin discussions with front line education stakeholders towards the development of a long-term literacy plan for our children. This plan will include measurable goals to allow us to track progress on improving student literacy throughout their educational career.

We have already begun consultations with leaders in Manitoba's business and post-secondary education communities around increased funding for scholarships and bursaries available to Manitobans seeking higher education. These discussions will continue to be focused on strengthened partnerships with, and increased investment by, the private-sector creators of Manitoba jobs.

Creating a Clean, Green Manitoba

Manitoba is home to diverse natural areas including vast plains and parkland regions, northern tundra, boreal forests and inland seas. We must preserve and protect this natural heritage for future generations to use and enjoy.

Manitoba's New Government will begin discussions with our federal partners and other jurisdictions as we develop a made-in-Manitoba climate action plan. This plan will include carbon pricing that fosters emissions reduction, retains investment capital and stimulates new innovation in clean energy, businesses and jobs. We will consult in the development of land-use and conservation measures that sequester carbon, improve water quality and foster adaptation to climate change.

A More Honest, Accountable Government

Trust and integrity are at the heart of what Manitobans expect from their elected government.

Manitoba's New Government will enlist the direct help of Manitobans in evaluating our progress toward specific results. Our goal is to make Manitoba the most improved province in the country. We will develop measurements to report on our progress towards restoring our public finances to balance, reducing health care wait times, strengthening our infrastructure, improving literacy rates and restoring trust in the integrity of government.

High taxes and red tape stifle job creation and economic growth. Manitoba's personal, corporate and payroll taxes have grown to be the highest amongst our neighbouring provinces. Manitoba's New Government will abolish the 'vote tax' subsidy for political parties, and will restore Manitobans' right to vote on major tax increases. We will establish a team of business, labour and community agencies to find and reduce unnecessary red tape.

We will restore the right to a secret ballot vote in workplaces, to foster a more open and respectful labour environment that protects workers' rights and freedoms. And we will allow all Manitobans, whether union members or not, to participate in bidding on work for publicly tendered projects.

Manitoba's New Government will ensure that by-elections are called within six months of a vacancy, unless they occur within one-year from a general election. We will establish a fixed election period – so that the start of the election is known – while adhering to the current fixed election date requirements.

Legislative Agenda

In the course of this session, Ministers in Manitoba's New Government will present to this Legislature a number of specific proposals for review. Members will also be asked to consider estimates for the requirements of the public services of the province in the next fiscal year, as well as the most recent Public Accounts.

Our Concluding Pledge

These are the early commitments and intentions of Manitoba's New Government, to whom the people of this great province have entrusted their collective concerns. The resulting responsibilities are great. But they will be borne earnestly – with respect, purpose and humility – in the interests of all Manitobans.

I leave you now to the faithful performance of your many duties and trust that, in meeting them, you may benefit from the guidance of Divine Providence in all your deliberations.