



Speech from the Throne



At the Opening of the
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Delivered by:

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

Lieutenant-Governor of the
Province of Manitoba

Madame Speaker and members of the Manitoba Legislature.

I welcome you to the Fourth Session of the Forty-first Legislature of the Province of Manitoba.

This year's centenary of Armistice Day, marking the end of the Great War, caused us to reflect on many things: our connections to events occurring around the world, our gratitude for those who sacrificed, and our responsibility to honour their memory in fulfilling our democracy.

There are many reasons to feel grateful; to remind us why we must remain committed to improving Manitoba and the lives of all Manitobans. Higher interest rates, unresolved trade disputes, and tax increases at federal and local levels threaten our prosperity. It is now more important than ever that we fix our finances, repair our services and rebuild our economy. We must continue to make Manitoba Canada's most improved province, with lower taxes, better outcomes and a stronger economy.

My government continues to make progress toward returning to balanced budgets, while also providing tax relief for Manitoba families and small businesses. It is reducing wasteful spending on administrative layers so it can invest more in front-line services and infrastructure.

The transformation of the culture and work of the public service will continue. Balanced scorecards, developed with the assistance of international experts, will focus efforts on better outcomes and allow Manitobans to track progress.

The transformation capital contest within core government has stimulated innovation from the front-lines of our civil service. The first set of submissions resulted in more than 50 ideas to achieve better outcomes at lower cost to taxpayers. My government will build on that success by providing more resources for transformation within core departments and across government. These projects will reduce red tape and allow services to be delivered to Manitobans more efficiently.

To further advance transformation, a new Public Service Act will be developed to reflect the principles, values and needs of a modern Manitoba public service. The new act will ensure a safe and harassment-free workplace, within which fundamental values such as ethics, transparency, diversity and inclusion are consistently applied. This new legislation will foster alignment beyond core government departments and across our public service. In addition to enhanced oversight, it will incorporate greater flexibility to support innovation, renewal and engagement, ensuring our public service continues to attract diverse, skilled professionals.

My government is also modernizing its procurement practices. The old practice of different parts of government shopping for the same products and services without co-ordination will end. Savings will be achieved from economies of scale. Evidence-based decision making will be applied in order to shop smarter on behalf of Manitobans.

The current system for the management of Crown land is ineffective and inefficient. My government is committed to modernizing the process to identify Crown land and property available for sale, strengthening public confidence in its administration, and improving the management of those public assets.

My government will reintroduce its bill to end the practice of forcing bidders on public sector work to unionize, so that taxpayers receive more competitive bids and better value for money.

My government will also bring forward a new Referendum Act to restore the rights of Manitobans to vote on major tax increases and provide a framework for calling and conducting a referendum.

My government is committed to delivering better health care services sooner, and is making progress in this regard. The consolidation and strengthening of our emergency departments at the Grace Hospital, the Health Sciences Centre and the St. Boniface Hospital is reducing wait times. A plan to reduce wait times for procedures such as joint replacement, cataracts and diagnostic imaging will be brought forward. Ambulance fees have been reduced by 35 per cent over the past two years and will be cut in half by 2020.

My government inherited a health care system that was among the most complex and top heavy in the country. Work continues to remove administrative layers, eliminate organizational overlap, and shop smarter for support services. The number of service purchase agreements and bargaining units will be reduced so that our front-line service providers can focus on delivering improved care to patients where and when they need it. The new model will be simpler and smaller at the top, with fewer organizations, boards, bargaining units, and service purchase agreements.

The creation of Shared Health will allow our health care professionals to plan programming, including emergency medical services, across the province. Forthcoming amendments to the Regional Health Authorities Act will consolidate four existing acts and clarify the respective roles of Manitoba Health, Seniors and Active Living, Shared Health, Cancer Care Manitoba and the regional health authorities.

Quality service delivery, patient safety and a culture of client and family-centred care are fundamental to my government's health care reforms. Hundreds of our clinicians are hard at work developing Manitoba's first ever provincial Clinical and Preventive Services Plan. It will be released next summer and will guide future decisions on the delivery of health services. As a complement to that plan, a *Quality, Patient Safety and Accreditation Strategy* is in the final stages of development. It will ensure common standards of care and clear accountability for health care delivery across all of our service delivery organizations.

My government understands the human cost of mental health and addictions. It has responded to the initial recommendations in the Virgo Report by improving access and co-ordination of services for Manitobans with addiction and mental health illnesses. The five new Rapid Access to Addictions Medicine clinics will provide services and connections for patients to community treatment programs and primary care physicians.

A comprehensive implementation plan is being developed to address the Virgo Report's key recommendations and guide improvements to mental health and addictions services across government. As part of this work, a clinical specialty team will ensure a strong focus on acute mental health and addictions clinical services within the provincial Clinical and Preventive Services Plan.

Staying in their homes or community is the preference of most seniors. As part of a broader strategy to enhance supports for seniors in their community, programming across government will help older adults remain independent by creating supportive, enabling environments. Work will continue toward constructing 1,200 additional personal care home beds by 2025.

My government remains committed to reducing the number of children in care, reducing the number of days they are in care and improving outcomes for those children.

Over the past decade, many reports have made recommendations calling for changes to our child protection programs. Based on that advice, my government has developed reform proposals and engaged in extensive consultations with Manitobans, including our Indigenous and federal partners. These proposals include focusing service providers on protective services, increasing community involvement in preventing children from coming into care, improving access to integrated and responsive services, and intervention services that help keep children and families together. The consultations identified the need for stronger supports for reunification with families, and permanency options when it is not possible to keep children within their extended families and communities.

In order to accomplish these important goals, my government will bring forward legislative amendments, including changes to The Child and Family Services Act and The Child and Family Services Authorities Act.

Extensive consultations with Manitobans on a renewed framework for public housing pointed to the need for a flexible approach that delivers cost-effective housing programs that can better meet local housing needs. Tenants in public housing advocated for access to skills training to help them access jobs and economic independence. Vulnerable Manitobans identified gaps in housing options and transitional supports for groups with unique housing needs including youth, especially those leaving CFS care, persons with disabilities, persons navigating the mental health system, those leaving institutions, vulnerable women and low-income seniors. Following the completion of discussions with our federal partners, a renewed framework will enable the provision of sustainable housing for those most in need.

The four-year review of The Accessibility for Manitobans Act is also nearing completion. Guided by the goals of that review, my government will continue to remove barriers to Manitobans with disabilities.

Research demonstrates that preschool children who receive needed therapy services on a timely basis experience fewer challenges in school, reduced isolation from peers, improved academic outcomes and higher degrees of self-esteem and confidence. My government is providing increased support to therapy services for those children in order to address their needs and give them a better quality of life in school, employment and the community.

As part of my government's strategy to reduce poverty, more employable Manitobans will transition from welfare into the workforce. In the past, assessments of employable Manitobans on assistance were informal, non-standardized, inconsistent and often delayed. A new approach will feature more timely and holistic assessments, based on more accurate data as to individual need, and more rapid connections to supports to rejoin the workforce sooner.

My government is increasing access to affordable, licensed early learning and child care spaces for Manitoba families. Investments in new schools, including new child care spaces, represent the largest commitment to new spaces in decades. The new Child Care Centre Development Tax Credit will complement this commitment by leveraging private sector partnerships as an incentive to encourage private investment in the creation of new child care spaces.

Gaming touches many Manitobans and affects the social fabric of our communities. While it contributes significantly to the funding of our social services, further expansion of gaming will be paused pending a review of our gaming strategy.

My government is proud of its efforts to increase the number of women serving on provincial boards and commissions, and in the senior ranks of our public service. Efforts continue to partner with the private sector to increase women's participation in non-traditional occupations, including science, technology, engineering and math.

My government is committed to making communities safer. For too long, our rates of violent crime, incarceration, and recidivism have increased while our approach to prosecutions and corrections stayed the same. A comprehensive review of the criminal justice system was initiated in 2016, including analysis of the costs, delay and numbers in the system. That review identified areas where change was necessary. Increasing drug use, particularly of crystal meth, further underscores the need for reform.

The *Criminal Justice System Modernization Strategy* is based on four pillars: crime prevention, targeted resources for serious criminal cases, more effective use of restorative justice and responsible reintegration of offenders. The changes outlined in that strategy are beginning to see positive results. The review of cases is occurring earlier, enabling serious cases to be brought to trial more quickly. For less serious charges, more use is being made of restorative justice. More resources are being provided in the community to reduce the risk of repeat offences.

An important component of these reforms is public accountability for results. Beginning in 2019, Manitoba Justice will report annually on key measures such as recidivism rates, time to disposition of offences, and custody counts. As a complement to these reforms, the manner in which policing services are delivered in Manitoba will be reviewed. Opportunities to modernize The Police Services Act will be identified in order to support innovative solutions and improve policing services.

Impaired driving is a leading cause of death on Manitoba roads. In response to this danger, an Immediate Roadside Prohibition program will be introduced in order to allow police to address lower-level alcohol-related cases more quickly using administrative penalties.

The technology associated with autonomous vehicles is evolving rapidly, and jurisdictions across North America are developing plans to test this technology on public roads. To maintain an investment-friendly climate for this technology in Manitoba, and to ensure alignment across jurisdictions, my government will bring forward legislative amendments to allow the safe testing of autonomous vehicles on provincial roads.

My government is enhancing supports for victims of domestic violence through two new pilot programs that, if successful, will be expanded throughout the province. *The Family Support Worker Program* will assist complainants who have been in an abusive relationship to navigate through our family court process. It will complement the family law modernization strategy and provide a full range of services to victims of domestic violence.

Too often, the needs of victims have been overlooked as their partners were provided with programming through restorative justice and diversion programs. Victims of domestic violence, as well as offenders, need assistance to move forward with their lives. They will be provided with support to participate in the restorative justice processes, and the opportunity to take programming that will provide meaningful and healthy tools to help them process their experience.

This important work will complement my government's review of resources available to those in need of protection from domestic violence, and its efforts to raise awareness and prevent sexual harassment in the workplace. In addition to these projects, work will continue to support victims through funding to non-profit partners such as the Canadian Centre for Child Protection, Candace House, and the Manitoba Organization for Victim Assistance.

Manitoba couples and families that wish to separate or divorce, or settle child custody, spousal and/or child support and property matters, are forced to rely upon a court-based system that is adversarial, too costly, too complex, and too slow. For many, the process is inaccessible and unaffordable.

My government will introduce legislation to pilot a first-in-Canada family resolution service in Winnipeg over the next three years. The objective of this new service is to provide timely dispute resolution, and to support healthier, stable, long-term family relationships, reduce mental and physical illness associated with conflict, and support family members dealing with domestic violence. It will include a one stop, guided process with early triage, assessment, and follow up. There will be mandatory facilitated resolution to help families reach consensus, referral services tailored to individual couples and families, support to finalize and file an agreement, and the assistance of an adjudicator to make prompt and fair decisions.

My government will introduce legislation to better and more efficiently protect Manitobans in the marketplace, while minimizing regulatory requirements that unnecessarily impact the public, businesses, and other stakeholders. Protections against unsolicited, high-pressure sales tactics used by direct sellers will be expanded.

The Vital Statistics agency will implement changes that will connect individuals to the agency directly, instead of through third-party vendors. This will improve the protection of private personal information and reduce service costs for clients.

The Consumer Protection Office will modernize client service strategies by strengthening relationships with community partners, developing diversified information materials, broadening the scope of the office's social media and digital presence, and adding new features to the Consumer Protection Mobile App. This will provide Manitobans better access to key information on their rights and responsibilities as consumers. The Consumer Protection Office is also developing an integrated approach to improving education and awareness for consumers and businesses across all branches of the Consumer Protection Division.

A review of The Funeral Directors and Embalmers Act, The Cemeteries Act and The Prearranged Funeral Services Act will be conducted, with a goal of making our funeral, burial and bereavement legislation more responsive to the diverse needs of Manitobans.

Improving educational outcomes for our elementary and secondary students is fundamental to their personal success and the future prosperity of our province. Education has the ability to transform the lives of Manitobans and open doors of opportunity and personal enrichment. It can also transform our province, by ensuring we have the education, skills and training to meet the challenges of the global economy today and in the future.

Manitoba is fortunate to have dedicated teaching professionals, support staff and administrators who want our students to succeed. They deserve to work and serve in a high-performing, student-centered education system that allows them to use their skills to ensure students reach their full potential. Parents deserve to know their children are being given every opportunity to reach their highest level of achievement.

My government understands the scope of the challenges involved in repairing elementary and secondary education, and fundamental to our success is a focus on outcomes. For the first time in 20 years, Grade 12 provincial test results at the school division level have been made public, enabling Manitobans to be better informed.

During the past 15 years, Manitoba's K to 12 students have fallen behind students in other provinces in core areas such as literacy, math and science. Those outcomes measure our young people's preparedness to compete and succeed in the workforce after Grade 12, or in a post-secondary university or college.

The commission on K to 12 education will be the first in-depth review of our child education system in decades. It will provide a path forward to make the changes necessary to ensure student outcomes improve and young Manitobans are better prepared to become the leaders of tomorrow. The commission will engage with parents, education professionals, international experts, students, stakeholder groups and any Manitoban willing to share his or her ideas for improving K to 12 education in our province.

My government continues to respond to the recommendations of the College Education Review in order to improve student outcomes and better align college education with our universities and labour market needs. Work will continue on the implementation of these recommendations, including mandate letters, performance-based funding, better rural and regional co-ordination, streamlined program approval, more focused capital funding priorities and enhanced quality assurance. The goal is to deliver higher quality vocational and professional education with increased participation and graduation rates for Manitoba students.

Recent reforms to scholarships and bursaries have substantially increased supports for Manitoba students, especially those who are financially disadvantaged. An enhanced promotional effort will attract more matching contributions from the private sector, ensure alignment to labour market and community needs, and improve student access through a streamlined portal.

My government recognizes the importance of collaboration and consultation with our growing Francophone community across all sectors of government. A strong Francophonie means a strong Manitoba.

At the start of its mandate, my government committed to supporting the vitality of Manitoba's French-speaking population with the adoption of The Francophone Community Enhancement and Support Act. It proudly acknowledges the work of the Francophone Affairs Advisory Council and the Francophone Affairs Secretariat as they strive to enhance government's capacity to offer services in French and support the community in its development. All departments and public bodies have now completed and adopted a multi-year strategic plan for French-language services. These plans will be implemented in order to ensure progress in the delivery of services and information in French for all Manitobans.

A vital non-profit sector is the primary contributor to Manitoba's reputation as the most generous province in Canada, and my government is determined to sustain and strengthen this sector. Provincial supports will be streamlined to better address community needs, reduce red tape, and leverage matching funds.

Led by our Manitoba 150 Celebration Committee, plans to mark our province's upcoming sesquicentennial are well underway. With a focus on commemorating the past, celebrating the present and looking forward to the future, a year of celebration will include events in every corner of our province. As one of the first Manitoba 150 projects, my government is working with the Hudson's Bay Company History Foundation to digitize its microfilm copies of the Hudson's Bay Company's pre-1870 post records and make them available to the world online.

For too long, Manitoba's approach to economic development has lacked focus, driven by short-term, politically expedient decisions. In the coming weeks, my government will release the results of the review conducted by Dave Angus and Barb Gamey, which included consultations with over 500 representatives of business, industry, economic development organizations and academia. Informed by that report, an action plan will also be released, including goals, and priorities, a restructuring of Manitoba Growth Enterprise and Trade and its programs, and clear mandates to ensure alignment with regional and sectoral partners.

My government remains committed to advancing reconciliation with Indigenous Manitobans. It has made it a priority to renew its consultation framework in order to ensure respectful and productive consultations with Indigenous communities. Their entrepreneurial contributions to the growth of our economy are welcomed, whether it be in forestry, mining or the new retail cannabis market.

Look North is a long-term strategy to unleash the economic potential of Manitoba's north for generations to come. The Look North Steering Committee, co-chaired by Chuck Davidson and Onekanew Christian Sinclair has identified six priority areas, including northern mineral and resource potential, Indigenous engagement and partnerships, strategic infrastructure investment, housing, an enterprise eco-system of support, as well as education, training and workforce development.

The new economic development strategy will respond to the Look North Steering Committee's recommendation to establish a lead entity to support economic growth and development in northern Manitoba, develop a marketing and communications strategy for *Look North*, and foster partnerships and strategic alliances to create northern jobs.

Northern mineral and resource development was identified as a priority through the *Look North* consultations. Achieving clarity for both communities and industry with respect to engagement and consultations is the key to creating jobs and opportunity within this sector. A comprehensive engagement with First Nations, led by co-chairs Ron Evans and Jim Downey, has provided direction for a mineral development protocol between Manitoba and First Nations. The partnership between the Red Sucker Lake First Nation and Yamana Gold Inc. to advance the Monument Bay gold-tungsten project serves as an example of how engagement and enhanced community participation is essential to successful mineral exploration and development projects. The implementation of the Mineral Development Protocol framework with willing First Nations communities will build upon this example.

My government will complement this important work by seeking ongoing dialogue with the mining industry through a Liaison Committee on Mining and Exploration. The committee will offer advice on land use planning and regulatory regime, orphaned and abandoned mines, relationship building with communities, and exploration challenges and solutions.

Manitoba's oil and gas taxation regime is outdated, complex and an administrative burden for both industry and government. In concert with a modernization of our petroleum database, a comprehensive review of petroleum production taxes and Crown royalties will be undertaken, with a goal of simplifying the tax and royalty structure.

Tourism is a vital part of Manitoba's economic development strategy, and the early signs of success in response to our Plan 96/4 Tourism Investment Program are encouraging. In 2017, tourism revenue in the province increased by \$100 million over the previous year, to a total of \$1.6 billion.

Building on this success, and following consultations with over 135 individuals and organizations involved in tourism, a renewed tourism strategy will form part of the new economic development plan. That strategy will align the roles played by tourism organizations, enhance tourism attractions and experiences, and increase tourism visitation and spending.

My government is proud to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Provincial Nominee Program, which has attracted skilled workers and business investors from all over the world to help build Manitoba's economy. We look forward to welcoming international students through the new International Student Entrepreneur Pathway and Graduate Internship Pathway.

In response to the federal government's decision to legalize the recreational use of cannabis, my government has sought to ensure that Manitobans are safe, whether or not they choose to use cannabis. It has designed a Made-in-Manitoba wholesale and retail distribution system that combines the best of the public sector's role in wholesale and regulation with the retail skill of private entrepreneurs, including many from the Indigenous community.

A social responsibility fee will ensure that all private sector retailers share in the health, education and policing costs associated with cannabis legalization. Following closely after the initial phase of retail store development, my government will move to an open market through a streamlined application process in order to ensure Manitobans can access safe, regulated cannabis supplies.

My government recognizes the growing contributions of businesses and organizations within Manitoba's agri-food sector. The food and beverage processing sector is the largest manufacturing employer in the province, employing over 10,000 Manitobans and accounting for 2.1 per cent of the provincial Gross Domestic Product. Over the past two years, we have welcomed over \$1 billion in new private investment from organizations such as Roquette, Simplot, HyLife, MDI Holdings Corp, and Maple Leaf Foods.

My government will make new investments in capital modernization and training to enhance its capacity to assist our agri-food sector to capitalize on the global market opportunities in protein extraction. To further promote investment in this sector with our industry partners, Manitoba will host a Protein Innovation Summit to showcase successes, build new relationships and gain knowledge to guide that growth strategy.

The Made-in-Manitoba Climate and Green Plan is an important part of our province's economic strategy. My government continues to invest in clean energy, climate mitigation and adaptation. Manitoba Hydro's investments will reach \$5.3 billion over the next five years, delivering clean electricity to Manitobans, Canadians and Americans, thereby reducing global emissions. Through the Climate and Green Plan, a series of programs and projects to reduce emissions have already commenced, with more on the way. Coal-based power generation has been eliminated. The Conservation Trust will soon announce its inaugural projects to enhance the resiliency of our natural infrastructure to climate change challenges such as flooding, storms and wildfires. Efficiency Manitoba will work to reduce energy consumption and the Expert Advisory Council will soon provide its advice as to how best to achieve greenhouse gas reductions through carbon savings accounts.

It is disappointing that the federal government has rejected the proposal to price carbon in a manner that recognizes Manitoba's significant investments in clean energy. The imposition of an unfair, escalating federal carbon tax on Manitobans will be opposed.

Building on the passage of The Sustainable Watersheds Act, my government will bring forward regulations to better plan the use of water resources and enhance drainage, conserve wetlands and store water within our local watershed districts. These plans will allow Manitobans to farm our best lands better by expanding tile drainage and irrigation, while conserving natural areas, sequestering carbon and reducing downstream flooding.

My government remains committed to sustaining our levels of investment in strategic infrastructure including transportation, water management, schools and hospitals, and cultural projects. In particular, it remains determined to advance construction of the Lake Manitoba Outlet without delay.

My government encourages regional partnerships to deliver more effective planning for growth, sustainable transportation and cost-effective water and wastewater infrastructure. Regional approaches to development help reduce duplication and make better use of municipal and provincial resources. They contribute to the capacity of accountable, effective municipal governments and build strong regions.

Over the next year, my government will encourage and work with members of the Winnipeg Metropolitan Region to develop and adopt a regional strategy to improve and co-ordinate land use and development in the region. It will promote co-operation between area planning districts and municipalities in the delivery of services, economic development strategies and development of infrastructure in the region.

Consultations with the City of Brandon and the Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba regarding the future of Brandon's Keystone Centre are now complete. A new governance and funding framework will be implemented to ensure the continued success of that important Westman facility.

Following the review of the tax increment financing process, a new approach will increase private investment, mitigate taxpayer risk and promote the strategic use of tax increment financing to maximize benefits to Manitoba. This strategy will form part of the new economic development plan, building on success in encouraging development – not just downtown, but across Manitoba.

Two years ago, my government embarked on an ambitious plan to make Manitoba Canada's most-improved province. After a decade of debt and decay, it began the important work of fixing the finances, repairing our services and rebuilding our economy.

Manitoba's road to recovery is a long one, requiring both courage and care. Much progress has been made, but much work remains to be done. It is an onerous challenge, but my government has responded as Manitobans have always done. We confront our challenges. We don't run from them.

We face them together, united by the unshakeable belief that better days are ahead; that a brighter, more prosperous future awaits our beautiful province.

I now leave you to the business of the session, knowing that you will favourably !
discharge your duties and responsibilities. !

May Divine Providence continue to bless our province and guide this Assembly in !
all of its deliberations. !

God Bless Manitoba. !

God Bless Canada. !

And God Save the Queen.