

**Third Session - Fortieth Legislature**  
of the  
**Legislative Assembly of Manitoba**  
**DEBATES**  
and  
**PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report**  
**(Hansard)**

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**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Fortieth Legislature**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
ALLAN, Nancy	St. Vital	NDP
ALLUM, James, Hon.	Fort Garry-Riverview	NDP
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	NDP
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	NDP
BJORNSON, Peter, Hon.	Gimli	NDP
BLADY, Sharon, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	NDP
BRAUN, Erna, Hon.	Rossmere	NDP
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EWASKO, Wayne	Lac du Bonnet	PC
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GAUDREAU, Dave	St. Norbert	NDP
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Liberal
GOERTZEN, Kelvin	Steinbach	PC
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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, March 18, 2014

*The House met at 1:30 p.m.*

**Mr. 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.

Good afternoon, everyone. Please be seated.

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

**Mr. Speaker:** Introduction of bills?

### PETITIONS

#### Beausejour District Hospital— Weekend and Holiday Physician Availability

**Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

And these are the reasons for this petition:

(1) The Beausejour District Hospital is a 30-bed, acute-care facility that serves the communities of Beausejour and Brokenhead.

(2) The hospital and the primary-care centre have had no doctor available on weekends and holidays for many months, jeopardizing the health and livelihoods of those in the Interlake-Eastern Regional Health Authority region.

(3) During the 2011 election, the provincial government promised to provide every Manitoban with access to a family doctor by 2015.

(4) This promise is far from being realized, and Manitobans are witnessing many emergency rooms limiting services or closing temporarily, with the majority of these reductions taking place in rural Manitoba.

(5) According to the Health Council of Canada, only 25 per cent of doctors in Manitoba reported that their patients had access to care on evenings and weekends.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government and the Minister of Health to ensure that the Beausejour District Hospital and primary-care centre have a primary-care physician available on weekends and holidays to provide area residents with this essential service.

This petition is signed by D. Dawson, L. Tomasson, R. Bonneteau and many, many more fine Manitobans, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** In keeping with our rule 132(6), when petitions are read they are deemed to have been received by the House.

Further petitions? Seeing none, we'll move on to committee reports?

### TABLING OF REPORTS

**Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation):** I'd like to table the supplementary information for Estimates for 2014-2015.

**Mr. Speaker:** Any further tabling of reports? Ministerial statements?

### ORAL QUESTIONS

**Mr. Speaker:** I currently have no guests at this point to introduce, so we'll proceed directly to oral questions.

### Budget 2014 NDP Promises

**Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, Manitobans deserve a government that demonstrates it understands true Manitoba values, but this budget that the government is proposing fails Manitobans because it fails to reflect those values.

Manitobans are honest people. Honest people keep their promises, but this budget cements NDP dishonesty by breaking its word.

Now, the government said that it would not hike the PST. It called such a suggestion ridiculous and nonsense, and yet it proceeded to do so. This budget does not reverse that broken promise; it maintains it.

This government promised and it ran on the promise that it would balance the books. This year's budget posts a 400-plus-million-dollar deficit.

So the spenDP's budget fails Manitobans in many ways, and the fact of the matter is that the NDP ran for re-election on a counterfeit mandate and received a mandate which they had no intentions of fulfilling.

Will the Premier admit that his party made these promises and broke them, but it made them to Manitoba families with no intentions of keeping them?

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, this budget creates good job opportunities for young people in Manitoba. This budget launches a 5-and-a-half-billion-dollar infrastructure program that will create 59,000 jobs—58,900 jobs in Manitoba by the very methodology the Leader of the Opposition used when he was in office.

Mr. Speaker, this budget will provide steady economic growth in Manitoba at a time when the global economy has shown great fragility and slowness in terms of its overall recovery, and this budget continues to protect essential services for Manitobans in health-care services to families, services to children, and it does it while keeping Manitoba one of the most affordable places to live in the country. The bundle of hydroelectricity, auto insurance and home heating rates are on average \$2,500 lower than all the—all across the country.

So this budget has a plan for the future, unlike the slash-and-burn approach of—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The honourable First Minister's time has expired.

**Mr. Pallister:** Manitobans are burning because of the broken promises of this government, Mr. Speaker, and the credit grabbing continues.

Manitobans are humble people, and this budget fails Manitobans because it's a budget from a government that's a credit-grabbing government.

We have now over 200-plus spenDP ribbon cuttings funded by the highest tax hikes in Canada, which the NDP promised they would not invoke. Yet the NDP insist on running around and taking credit while Manitobans get the bill.

And what's the result of this strategy that the Premier alludes to? Bottom of the barrel, 10th out of 10 in every major indicator. Stats Canada says we

have the lowest wage growth of any Canadian province year over year, and what does that mean, Mr. Speaker? Oh, except for NDP MLAs, who give themselves a raise with a vote tax they don't work for. Manitobans are working harder than their neighbours, they're making less money, while the NDP parades around like a peacock.

Now, would the Premier admit that with all this NDP bragging, it's coming at the expense of working Manitobans and their families?

**Mr. Selinger:** Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition wanted to cancel the floodway project in Manitoba. This morning, with the federal government, we announced that the floodway came in on time and under budget by \$38 million, and that \$38 million will be now allocated to flood protection in Brandon, Melita, Souris, Waterhen, Duck Bay, St. Clements, East and West St. Paul. Those communities will be protected as we go forward with future flood protection.

And while all of that was happening, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition wanted to cancel those projects. He voted against them. He would not protect Manitobans from flood protection. We know that. Manitobans know that.

\* (13:40)

**Mr. Pallister:** Manitobans know braggarts when they see them, Mr. Speaker, and they're seeing them today again.

Manitobans are accountable people. Manitobans don't blame others for problems of their own making. They take ownership of them.

This Premier is a blame placer, Mr. Speaker, including blaming members of his own caucus for his own wrongdoing. And the reality is feds, floods, Filmon, city of Winnipeg, local councils, school boards, it doesn't matter, they're all wrong according to the Premier. He and his colleagues are right.

The spenDP cannot look in the mirror. They cannot accept responsibility, and the real problem facing real people in this province right now is the feckless failure of 15 years of ignorant government. Failure, failure, failure, failure to hold the line on tax hikes, failure to partner with other provinces, failure to listen to Manitobans in a genuine way, failure to respect Manitobans, failure to tell the truth to Manitobans, failure.

Will this Premier admit that he's even going to court to fight to tear away the right of Manitobans to vote on future tax hike proposals?

**Mr. Selinger:** Mr. Speaker, pretty obvious the Leader of the Opposition didn't see the budget that we presented to the people of Manitoba. City of Winnipeg appreciated the \$50-million-a-year, \$250-million investment in roads fixing up potholes in the city of Winnipeg. Thousands of good jobs will be created, expenditure that will improve the infrastructure of the city of Winnipeg, Leader of the Opposition voting against it.

Association of Manitoba Municipalities appreciates the investments that we're rolling out all across rural Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, on roads, on sewer, on water, priorities they said should be addressed in the budget. We are addressing them. They're voting against it.

We know who's on the side of Manitobans. We're on the side of building a better Manitoba, more good jobs, better infrastructure, a steadily growing economy and opportunities for all.

#### **Balanced Budget Projections Provincial Deficit Reduction**

**Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler):** Mr. Speaker, what they're addressing is their own self-interests while they ignore Manitobans.

This NDP budget fails Manitobans by breaking a fundamental promise to Manitobans to eliminate the deficit in 2014. Mr. Speaker, the Finance minister stood in this Chamber on April 17th, 2012, and said, and I quote: "... we reaffirm our commitment to return to balance by 2014." End quote. The promise was clear. It was unequivocal. Eliminate the deficit by 2014. The NDP is now breaking that promise. They're predicting a \$400-million deficit for the year.

Mr. Speaker, why would Manitobans believe any future NDP promises? Wouldn't the minister agree that when it comes to new NDP promises, they just can't be trusted?

**Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Finance):** You know, when the crash hit and the economy in Manitoba and across the world was experiencing difficulties—[interjection] Yes, there was a—I don't know if you remember it, '08-09 there was this crash on Wall Street.

See, the member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson) in that moment in time said what this government should do, unlike any other government in the

country, including the federal government, is balance the budget in one year, should cut half a billion dollars when the economy was faltering, should not invest in stimulus to protect jobs, should not invest to protect core services, should cut half a billion dollars in one year. That was their position.

Flash forward, they want to go to the electorate. They want to get elected. What do they say? We'll balance the budget in 2018. That was the promise they took to the people of Manitoba, Mr. Speaker.

So we are on a track responsibly to balance the budget, protecting services, not throwing more—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The minister's time has expired.

**Mr. Friesen:** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance says when the crash hit. Can I just remind her, at a time of record low interest rates, at a time of rising government revenues, at a time of stable fiscal transfers from the federal government, there is no crash except for the crash in her government.

Mr. Speaker, two years ago—two years ago—they said surplus in this fiscal year, and now they predict a \$400-million deficit, off the mark of their projection just 24 months ago.

They have broken their promise to not raise the PST. They have broken their promise to curb their spending addiction. The new budget now projects a surplus a few years from now.

Does this NDP government seriously think that any Manitobans will believe them?

**Ms. Howard:** Well, we may have the only people in North America, maybe the world, who didn't realize that in 2008-2009 the global economy underwent the greatest recession since the Great Depression, Mr. Speaker. In other news for them, the earth is also round.

There was a great recession. The recovery has taken longer than possible. And this government, like all governments in the country, including the federal government, made a decision to invest in stimulus projects to create jobs, to not see that recession negatively affect families, to not see that recession lead to decisions like they made in the '90s to drastically cut health care and education.

That was their counsel at the time, that we should not invest in those things, that we should balance the budget in one year. Then they went to the electorate and said it should take—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The honourable minister's time has expired.

### **Provincial Out-Migration Impact of Tax Increases**

**Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo):** Yesterday was boom Monday and it must be bust Tuesday today, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP budget fails Manitobans once again this year as we continue to see the exodus of our young people for job opportunities, better job opportunities, elsewhere.

Last week, Mr. Speaker, Sobeys announced the partial closure of their Lucerne plant here in Winnipeg, resulting in a loss of 50 jobs to the more tax-friendly and open-for-business province of Alberta. According to NDP math, that would be 250 jobs, I believe, but I digress.

Will the Minister for Jobs and the Economy just admit that the policies of her high-tax-and-spend NDP government are driving the workforce out of our province?

**Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Jobs and the Economy):** I would begin by saying that the tone from the member opposite is a titch pompous coming from a party that doesn't believe there was a global recession in '08-09.

But I can say to the member, certainly, that we know factually, Mr. Speaker, that following the Sobeys purchase of Safeway's operations last year, Sobeys is consolidating its operations nationally. Part of its restructuring will see Sobeys eliminating positions in Rouyn, Quebec; in Milton, Whitby, Ontario; in Winnipeg and Calgary. The affected positions are part of Lucerne's cheese and ice cream production operations.

Now, I will say for the record Lucerne's modern Winnipeg milk production operation will continue. I can also advise that Labour Adjustment Services are working—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The honourable minister's time has expired.

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Mr. Speaker, this NDP budget is nothing more than a document full of future broken promises as well as a rehashing of past broken 'promises.'

Manitoba has the highest net out-migration numbers in the country, meaning we are losing more

people to other provinces than we are attracting. In fact, we are dead last in Canada.

Will the Minister for Jobs and the Economy just admit that her NDP high-tax-and-spend policies are driving jobs out of our province? How can she honestly believe that this is what is the best interests of our growing our economy right here in Manitoba?

**Ms. Oswald:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to continue on the premise that the minister—or that the member cared about the question. I'm going to assume that she cared about the question that they asked—she asked earlier and go on to say that it's this kind of corporate restructuring that actually shows us how important it is to invest in ensuring that you do training and development of skilled workers in your province when these situations occur.

And I can let the member know that there are Labour Adjustment Services that are going to be working with those affected individuals to ensure that they have training opportunities, to ensure that they can get a job in a skilled type of employ.

Mr. Speaker, that happens by investing, not by hacking and slashing and—as members opposite would purport to do.

### **Location of Fortune Minerals Plant Private Sector Job Creation**

**Mr. Cliff Cullen (Spruce Woods):** Clearly, this budget fails Manitobans because it does not pay attention to private sector job creation.

Mr. Speaker, Fortune Minerals was looking to build a \$230-million mineral refinery. This refinery would employ 100 people—or 500 under NDP math—and generate \$9 million per year in employment income, and the facility was to be located either in Manitoba or Saskatchewan. Unfortunately for us, the plant is going to be built in Saskatchewan.

\* (13:50)

Mr. Speaker, why did the NDP government allow this opportunity to slip away to Saskatchewan?

**Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Mineral Resources):** Mr. Speaker, contrary to what the member said, that—the private sector in Manitoba has created 25,000 jobs.

You know, they figure if they just keep saying it and saying it and saying it, maybe somebody will believe it. But if anyone believes the job cutters, the nurse cutters, the firing-nurses and firing-doctors regime from the other side would help the economy,

they had years of experience during the lean years when people left this province.

They forget about immigration. They forget about the fact that Manitoba's population is the highest it has ever been in history, Mr. Speaker. Our workforce is the highest. More people are employed.

And we have a plan to employ and put in place \$5.5 billion to build this province, not cut and slash like members opposite want us to do in this budget.

**Mr. Cullen:** Mr. Speaker, this is just one example of missed opportunity and missed private sector jobs for Manitoba. This is a missed opportunity for Flin Flon and for Brandon and, certainly, for the province of Manitoba.

Fortune Minerals stated that the government of Saskatchewan was very proactive while Manitoba did not embrace the initiative at all. We have heard this story time and time again, jobs either moving from the province or companies choosing to establish elsewhere.

Mr. Speaker, who dropped the ball on this file? Was it the Minister of Mineral Resources? Was it the Minister of Jobs and the Economy (Ms. Oswald)? Or was it the Minister of Finance (Ms. Howard)? Or was it all three of them?

**Mr. Chomiak:** One of the problems with members opposite is they believe their own kind of—their own propaganda. You know, they hear a release from a CEO who makes up all kinds of stuff.

In fact, when Fortune was here, they did list a Winnipeg—a Manitoba place. They were looking at Brandon. They never looked at Flin Flon. They looked at Flin Flon, they looked at another location, and they still decided that they might go. When that place is up and running, when it's actually in formation, then maybe the member would have a point.

But I'd like to table for the member a recent submission on the index from a mining company that says come to Manitoba, it's got the Manitoba advantage, lowest hydro rates in the world. Hydro rates are 50 per cent of the cost of mining. Carlisle gold is saying come to Manitoba, and they've tabled this in Toronto as recognition of the kind of benefits of coming to Manitoba, and they're here to build a gold mine.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The honourable minister's time has expired.

**Mr. Cullen:** Even the NDP couldn't get the job done on this one. I mean, that's just dropping the ball.

This budget is failing Manitobans. It's ignoring private sector jobs. This government is focused on using taxpayers' money to fund jobs. They're completely ignoring private sector job creation and real economic growth in Manitoba. Fortune Minerals is just another example of NDP policies and taxes driving business out of the province.

Why has the NDP failed the business community and why have they failed to address private sector jobs here in Manitoba?

**Mr. Chomiak:** Mr. Speaker, 25,000 private sector jobs—25,000 private sector jobs.

When Canadian Tire set up a centre here in Manitoba, the Leader of the Opposition criticized it. He criticized it. MTS is opening a centre here. What are members opposite going to do? Criticize it.

The largest mining project in Manitoba history is under way at Lalor. What do members opposite do? Say, what's wrong with mining? What's wrong with mining is—thank God they aren't in control, Mr. Speaker. Because what would happen would happen like happened to the health-care industry where we lost doctors, where we lost nurses.

Mr. Speaker, 25,000 jobs in the private sector speaks volumes; \$5.5 billion in roads and infrastructure means jobs now, jobs in the future, hope for our children and the largest population in Manitoba history right now.

### **Manitoba Hydro Office Closures Consultation Concerns**

**Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside):** Mr. Speaker, this NDP government budget fails Manitobans.

This past weekend I had the pleasure of attending the IBEW annual membership conference held here in Winnipeg. The message I received was loud and clear: Why would this NDP government close down Hydro offices without consultation with the unions, the towns, the RMs or anyone, for that matter?

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Minister of Hydro why this NDP government is so full of themselves. They cannot be taking consultation out of the decision-making process. It's only self-serving.

**Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro):** Well, Mr. Speaker, on one occasion the members opposite get up and they

belittle the Public Utilities Board. The next minute they get up and they say the Public Utilities Board should be listened to.

Well, then, this case the Public Utilities Board told Manitoba Hydro that they need to look for ways to save money in their day-to-day operations. Hydro has followed through on that in a number of ways. This is one of them. The—what Hydro has guaranteed is that there would not be job losses, which there aren't, and they have guaranteed that they would not lose in terms of service to people who live in rural Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, I could only—one can only imagine the scenario if the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Pallister) got to be the premier of the province and decided that—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The honourable minister's time has expired.

**Mr. Eichler:** A tired, lazy government is what this government has become. Maybe if they had listened to hard-working Manitobans, they'd have heard what they had to say about closing down Hydro offices, the impact it would have on the unions, the towns and the RMs. They feel they don't need to consult with anyone. They seem to know best.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister: Will he stand in his place and apologize to all Manitobans for his dictatorship style of governance, and will he start listening and consulting with hard-working Manitobans?

**Mr. Struthers:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I had the same opportunity on Saturday afternoon to be at the same meeting that he and his leader were at, and I remember very distinctly the workers at Manitoba Hydro wanting to know why it is that—what this Leader of the Official Opposition—why he would privatize Manitoba Hydro. That's what they wanted to know. They wanted to know what impact that would have on Manitoba families. They wanted to know what impact that would have on their workforce. They wanted to know what impact that would have on hydro rates in this province.

Mr. Speaker, they didn't come away from that meeting assured by the Leader of the Official Opposition. As a matter of fact, they came away more convinced that Manitoba Hydro would be privatized under your regime.

**Mr. Speaker:** I'd like to caution the honourable Minister of Municipal Government, when you're

making your comments to the House, please, during answering questions, that you don't personalize the debate and you direct comments through the Chair. I'd appreciate that.

Now, next question.

### NDP Promises Government Record

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach):** Mr. Speaker, this Premier (Mr. Selinger) has a problem, and I kind of feel sorry for him, because he has a problem keeping his word.

And we first saw this problem when he stood up in this House and he said many years ago that Crocus was strong and he asked Manitobans to invest in Crocus. We saw this problem again when he went on the hustings and he told Manitobans, we're not going to increase taxes, and then the next year he expanded the PST to home insurance and he expanded it to haircuts. We saw it again when he promised Manitobans that he wouldn't raise the PST and he did exactly that.

But the real problem is that this Premier's problem in keeping his promise always costs Manitobans more money.

Why should Manitobans have to pay for his problem?

**Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Finance):** You know, very, very soon in this House we're going to get to see who is on the side of Manitobans. We're going to get to see—

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

**Ms. Howard:** Well, I look forward to every one of them standing up for the budget, then.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. I'm having difficulty hearing answers to the questions, and I'm asking for the co-operation of all honourable members. Please give me the opportunity to hear. I'm sure, if there was a breach of the rule, you'd want me to make a ruling on it, so I'm asking for your co-operation.

The honourable Minister of Finance, to conclude your answer.

**Ms. Howard:** We'll see who is on the side of giving young people the hope to get a good job and have a good life here in Manitoba. *[interjection]*

Well, I guess we're going to have a unanimous budget vote. I look forward to that.

**Mr. Goertzen:** I'm thrilled to hear the minister will be supporting our amendment at 4 o'clock.

I'm less happy to say that the Premier's problem has spread. It spread to the Attorney General (Mr. Swan) who a couple of years ago said that he would take care of the outstanding warrant problem of 20,000 warrants in Manitoba; we found out it didn't change. It spread to the Minister of Jobs and the Economy (Ms. Oswald) who many times promised that she'd fix the closed ER problem and then didn't do it. The problem that the Premier also has with breaking promises has spread to all of his caucus members who promised not to raise the PST, campaigned on it and then voted to raise the PST.

\* (14:00)

Now, the problem has gone to the Premier. It's gone to his Cabinet. It's gone to his caucus. The only way to deal with this problem of a government that won't keep its promise is to elect the government who will keep its promise, and that government is represented on this side of the House.

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, let us review the promises made by the Leader of the Opposition.

He wouldn't privatize the telephone system, he said, and then they privatized it, and 1,250 people lost their jobs in the telephone system. Said he wouldn't touch their benefits, and then they took away the pension program for the MTS workers, which they just recovered through a Supreme Court decision just weeks ago.

They said they would protect front-line services, and then they fired a thousand nurses and laid off 700 teachers, Mr. Speaker.

And the promise of the opposition was a stronger economy: 33,000 people left the province of Manitoba, the population shrunk, the number of doctors shrunk, the number of nurses shrunk, and the economy shrunk, and their commitment to Manitoba disappeared in the vapour, Mr. Speaker.

#### **Child Care and Early Childhood Education Budget Allocation Record**

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, I have brought up on many occasions the appalling fiscal mismanagement of this NDP government.

For example, Mr. Speaker, in 2012-2013 this NDP government increased the budget for child care and early childhood education by \$4.5 million and

then proceeded to claw this budget back by \$4.8 million for a net increase of minus \$300,000.

I ask the Premier: Why does he pretend to support families by making promises for child care and early childhood education in his budgets that he apparently has no intention of following through on and actually even clawing them back further?

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, the child care or the early childhood learning story in Manitoba: 12,000 spaces when we came into office in '99, 28,000 spaces [*inaudible*]

Mr. Speaker, when the Leader of the Opposition was in government, in a single year, cuts to child-care centres, \$3.7 million. Three years later, another \$4.3-million cut to child-care centres.

Under us, 12 to 28 thousand, better wages, the first ever pension plan for child-care workers in Manitoba and 150 more new daycare centres in the province of Manitoba, a record unequalled by any member on the other side of the House.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Twenty-odd thousand spaces when we really need about 40,000. We've got 10,000-plus on the waiting list.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier fails in not allocating enough for child care and early childhood education in his budgets to address the crisis. And even when he does allocate, he claws it back, sometimes even more than he pretends to put aside.

This dual, misleading approach is a major reason we have a crisis in access to child care in Manitoba and a wait-list of over 10,000 children. It's a major reason why people like Susan Prentice and many parents are so concerned about what this government is doing.

Why does the Premier deliberately underfund early childhood education with the result that so many families don't have access and many children aren't ready for school?

**Mr. Selinger:** Mr. Speaker, when the member for River Heights was a member of the federal Cabinet, they actually reneged on their commitment to bring in universal child care. And then after he left that federal Cabinet, in the last breath of the former Prime Minister Martin, they brought in the universal child-care program.

The election occurred. The Conservative government came in. The first thing they did, cancel the universal child-care program all across this

country. The money was taken away from families, Mr. Speaker. Child-care spots were defunded; they were not allowed to proceed.

He didn't deliver on it when he was a member of the federal Cabinet. He voted against every single budget where we expanded child care in Manitoba. He voted against the budget when we brought in the first pension plan for child-care workers.

We've gone from 12 to 28 thousand spots. We've increased the number of daycare centres by 150. And in this budget, again, we are expanding daycare and child-care opportunities by over \$5 million.

The test will be today. Will he vote for that budget? We will see if he votes for child care in the budget vote today in this Legislature.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Mr. Speaker, maintaining the status quo when it so drastically misses the mark on actual need is not something this NDP government should be proud to announce every year.

The documents I table show that in the last seven years the NDP have made empty promises to increase support and then clawed back a total of \$44 million for child care and early childhood education.

Contrary to the Premier's misleading claim, I once voted for the budget in 2003, but there's no reason to vote again for a budget which he will never deliver on.

With such a careless and chaotic budget, I ask the Premier: Why would even he vote for it?

**Mr. Selinger:** I think it's a major accomplishment to go from 12 to 28 thousand child-care spaces in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker. I think 150 new daycares in Manitoba is a major accomplishment. I think—and we have a record investment in building new schools. Every new school built in Manitoba has a daycare as part of that new school.

And we're doing this without any federal partner on universal daycare in this country, without one that came forward when he was in Cabinet, without one that came forward with the federal government. We are continuing to expand child care and early childhood learning opportunities in Manitoba.

We want families to be able to participate in the economy. They tell us they want good jobs. We're providing good jobs. And in order to do those good jobs, they need good early childhood learning, and we're providing it.

I look forward to the member voting for the budget today.

### **Red River Floodway Expansion Completion of Project**

**Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia):** Protecting families is a paramount role of government. In Manitoba, that means flood protection. We know Manitobans want to see investment in core infrastructure like flood protection that protects Manitoba families.

The Leader of the Opposition had the opportunity to stand with Manitoba families and instead fought the—to halt the construction of the Red River Floodway expansion. And that's not our approach.

Can the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation update the House about our historic investment in flood protection for the city of Winnipeg, the city of Brandon and all across Manitoba?

**Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation):** Mr. Speaker, nothing typifies the difference between this side of the House and that side of the House than the Red River Floodway. We built it. We built it on time. We built it under budget. And today, in fact, we joined with the federal government to announce \$38 million worth of more flood protection for Manitobans, including in the city of Brandon, as a result.

And, indeed, the Leader of the Opposition when he was a Member of Parliament, because he didn't agree with the project management agreement, wanted to stop the construction of the floodway, Mr. Speaker, which leads us to two conclusions. Number 1 is you want to keep the Leader of the Opposition out of the driver's seat because he has this thing about jamming the brakes on. And you want to get results like flood protection for Manitobans on time, on budget.

Investment in core infrastructure, it's the NDP that delivers.

### **School Division Funding Elimination of Positions**

**Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet):** Mr. Speaker, in light of this present budget, which fails Manitobans, and the lowest increase in five years to school divisions, this year 18 out of 37 school divisions received no funding increase from this government after this government levelled the biggest tax increase in a quarter of a century.

The new Minister for Education, along with his Cabinet colleagues, fired 11 teachers with the potential for more to come.

Why has this new Minister of Education fired 11 teachers, Mr. Speaker?

**Hon. James Allum (Minister of Education and Advanced Learning):** And I thank the member for the question. He's living in a fantasy world of his own creation.

The—let me give him just a little bit of a history lesson. In the 1990s, when the Leader of the Opposition was at the Cabinet table, they cut funding by \$50 million to the budget and laid off 700 teachers. By contrast, since we've in—been in government, we've hired countless teachers, 213 alone in the small class size initiative.

Mr. Speaker, if my friend wants to invest in public education, if he wants to stand with teachers, if he wants to build new schools, if he wants to build safe and secure spaces for students, then he has no other alternative but to vote for the budget today.

**Mr. Ewasko:** Mr. Speaker, teachers care about today, tomorrow and the future, not about this rhetoric history lesson that this minister—new Minister of Education wants to stand up and put on the record today.

Mr. Speaker, Manitoban—Manitoba ranks near the bottom of the PISA scores already, and the minister's solution? Fire teachers.

\*(14:10)

This government levelled the biggest tax increase in a generation on Manitoba families and then fired 11 teachers to round it out. Manitoba families are already being taxed more and more for an education system that this government has run to the bottom of the barrel.

Mr. Speaker, why has this new Minister of Education and his Cabinet colleagues fired 11 teachers, and who are they going to fire next?

**Mr. Allum:** Mr. Speaker, the reality is that we hire teachers as a result of our investment in public education, and the only group of people that cuts the education budget is across the floor. The only people that fire teachers—700, in fact, during the 1990s—is across the floor.

And I have to say, when we had a chance to go to St. George, the honourable member and I, a new MP, Conservative MP—and we went and opened up a

new gym in the school in St. George—he stood there and basked in the glow of that investment of that school. But what he should've done is gone to the microphone and told those folks, told those students that he opposed that investment in that community.

But we don't do that, Mr. Speaker. We invest in schools. We're the—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The minister's time has expired.

### **Farmland School Tax Rebate Cap Impact on Families**

**Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Midland):** This NDP budget fails Manitoba farm families once again.

This government promised to bring the farmland education tax rebate to 100 per cent by 2014. Instead, in last year's budget, this government reduced the farmland education tax by placing a cap on the amount to be claimed. Another tax grab by a government with a spending addiction.

Mr. Speaker, why is this government so good at making promises and then so consistent at breaking them?

**Hon. Ron Kostyshyn (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development):** I'd like to thank the member opposite for bringing the question forward.

If he has allowed time for me to first acknowledge ag awareness, and I want to acknowledge all the members that attended the function today, and I really want to acknowledge the importance of agriculture in the province of Manitoba when we are seriously—we were creating employment of 62,000 jobs directly and indirectly in agriculture. It is a \$10.1-billion industry in the province of Manitoba, and we are working towards improving the economy spinoff dealing with the grain movement in the province of Manitoba, and we need to move dollars into more priorities.

We know the education is important, but my question will be answered shortly when I talk about what was their record in the '90s when they had to deal with the education tax system in the province of Manitoba.

**Mr. Pedersen:** Mr. Speaker, yet another broken promise, yet another government lie.

Manitoba farm families work hard to supply food to the kitchen tables around the world, but this government believes the money farm families earn is better spent at their Cabinet table. So instead of

honouring their promise to bring the farmland tax credit to a hundred per cent, this government placed a cap on the amount to be claimed, just another tax grab.

When will this minister stand up for farm families rather than the spending addiction of this government?

**Mr. Kostyshyn:** The Farmland School Tax Rebate was introduced in 2004 by this government. We—I'm sure the member opposite is well aware of their record in the '90s when they did not even consider the school tax rebate when they were in power for the years in the '90s.

I ask the member opposite, why are we being blamed for something—they credit themselves of being the rural people. This government chose to bring in school tax rebate in 2004, and we continue to work in an investment for the betterment of the rural communities in the province of Manitoba.

#### **EIA Housing Allowance Budget 2014**

**Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie):** Mr. Speaker, after 14 years of inaction on raising the EIA housing allowance and after extensive lobbying from End Poverty Now and after the Progressive Conservative Party endorsed the change to the EIA housing allowance, the NDP Budget 2014 finally moved on EIA housing allowance. At least it made a promise.

Sometime over the next four years, we will move toward 75 per cent of market median rent.

Mr. Speaker, what are those on limited and fixed incomes supposed to do in the meantime, continue to suffer?

**Hon. Kerri Irvin-Ross (Minister of Family Services):** Mr. Speaker, I can tell you, since 1999 this government has been fighting poverty. We are not like the members opposite, drive-by poverty activists.

Make Poverty History has made a significant investment in our community by bringing many community groups together, people that would have never sat across the table, talk about business owners, people that are interested in ensuring that all Manitobans have support.

With the new program called Rent Assist, we are going to see that happen. We are going to make sure that we increase the EIA shelter benefit and that we mean—match the 75 per cent market medium rent in

four years. That's going to make a difference. That program will equalize as law—as well as more jobs, better education and more training.

I ask the member, will he be voting for this budget?

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.

The time for oral questions has expired.

#### **MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**

**Mr. Speaker:** It's time for members' statements.

#### **Sochi 2014 Figure Skating Team**

**Mr. Doyle Pivniuk (Arthur-Virden):** Mr. Speaker, our Olympians made us proud in Sochi. Through their sportsmanship, dedication and commitment, they were the best representative of our country, province and our communities.

The figure skating team of Paige Lawrence and Rudi Swiegers, with their coach, Virden's own Patty Hole, made our—the people of Virden proud of—with the some of the deep connections they have in our community. They have made us—the use of the facilities in Virden like the Tundra centre and gas place and as mentioned they were coached by Patty Hole from Virden.

The team has spoken how their roots in the Prairies have helped contribute to their success. The team has spoken of how welcomed they were out in our community and we were happy to have them here. Indeed, the mayor of Virden, Jeff McConnell, was supportive not only by the skill of the team, but of—by their character as well. Of course, the great Virden coach, Patty Hole, they were in great hands.

Mr. Speaker, the team of Paige Lawrence and Rudi Swiegers and Patty Hole represents the best of our province and our community have to offer. And I'm grateful to have the opportunity to honour them today.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

#### **Soldiers Return Home to CFB Shilo**

**Mr. Drew Caldwell (Brandon East):** Mr. Speaker, March 12th marked the final day of Canada's mission in Afghanistan and today the last group of soldiers from CFB Shilo are returning home. Over the course of 12 years, over 40,000 Canadian soldiers were deployed in Afghanistan, 2,200 of which were Manitobans.

This group of 12 soldiers returning home today spent the last nine months of their tour working in Operation ATTENTION, a mission committed to training and mentoring Afghan National Security Forces.

As Canadians, we are incredibly fortunate to live in a stable and secure country without having to fear the violence, oppression and chaos that war brings. We live in hope that those who call Afghanistan home will be able to enjoy the same freedoms many of us take for granted.

Around CFB Shilo, we will be celebrating the return of our troops. As we welcome home these last 12 soldiers, we cannot forget those 20 deployed from CFB Shilo who lost their lives during the mission. For those families who are still coping with the loss of their loved ones, know that our memory of them will not fade from Canadians' minds. Their sacrifices stand to remind of us the fragility and value of peace.

Mr. Speaker, soldiers are men and women, fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters. They have chosen to dedicate themselves to serving their country. For so many, the mission in Afghanistan helped people build better lives in the country where violence and oppression still clash with freedom, equality and human rights.

Thank you for your sacrifice and service. Welcome home.

#### **Argyle Elementary Students' Space Experiment**

**Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside):** Mr. Speaker, 2013 was a year that students from Argyle elementary school in Lakeside went where no elementary students have gone before.

Ethan Enns, Ryan Petricig and Avery Good saw their research project blast into space. Their research project studied the effects of antioxidants on yeast cells that had been exposed to cosmic radiation. Their project went to the International Space Station where the research was conducted by an astronaut beside 16 other experiments. Their project was stolen—chosen from 1,254 proposals and became the first international elementary experiment to go to space.

\*(14:20)

Yesterday saw the return of their project from International Space Station and the three researchers were analyzing the results of their experiment at Magellan Aerospace centre, along with officials from CancerCare Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, the data from this experiment can have practical implications, as the experiment looked at the effect of antioxidants contained in green tea on cancer cells. If the experiment indicates that antioxidants help to fight cancer, it will be a step in the right direction to help find a cure for cancer and to help prevent it before it ever starts.

Mr. Speaker, experiments like these should be encouraged, and bright young minds should be nurtured and encouraged. It is likely the cure for cancer will not be discovered by one solitary individual. It is more likely it will be achieved through hard work and determination from a team of individuals like Ethan, Ryan and Avery.

Mr. Speaker, I invite all members to join me in congratulating these fine young Manitobans and wish them well on their future scientific endeavours.

#### **Agriculture Awareness Day**

**Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff (Interlake):** Mr. Speaker, today marks—today Manitobans mark the 10th annual Agriculture Awareness Day. It is a time to celebrate our province's rich agricultural heritage and create greater awareness of the contributions agriculture makes to Manitoba's economy.

Agriculture is one of the biggest industries in Manitoba, making up 9 per cent of our GDP and providing 30,000 good jobs for Manitobans. It is not just the producers who benefit, but all Manitobans, in the grocery stores and around our kitchen tables.

While today is about celebrating agricultural success, it is also about recognizing important issues facing the community. Agriculture is a way of life for many in our province, and over the past month we have seen the livelihood of hard-working Manitobans threatened by a grain transportation backlog. Manitoba families rely on our country's transportation network to bring their products to market so that farmers can get paid.

Recently, the Premier (Mr. Selinger) launched a provincial task force that is currently working with the stakeholders, including Keystone Agricultural Producers, the Association of Manitoba Municipalities and the Western Grain Elevator Association, to address the backlog issues with the national rail companies and the federal government.

The task force is immediately focused on ensuring farmers in this province get fair access to rail cars, moving at-risk grain out of flood-prone areas, establishing a grain bin listing service that will

assist producers in obtaining alternate storage and ensuring flexibility on road restrictions to help move grain through the spring.

Mr. Speaker, while today is about raising awareness in what has been declared by the United Nations as the year of the family farm, actions speak louder than words, and our government is committed to ensuring that farmers get the support they need. We thank them for everything they do for our province and stand with them through this time of need.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### **Myron and Jill Krahn**

**Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Midland):** On Ag Awareness Day, it is my pleasure to recognize Carman-area couple Myron and Jill Krahn, who have been named this year's Manitoba Outstanding Young Farmers.

The competition is open to farmers under the age of 40 who earn at least two thirds of their gross revenue from farming. Myron and Jill both grew up in agriculture and now run Myron's family farm which was founded in 1968. They grow corn, soy beans, wheat, oats, canola, and have diversified by also running a seed retailing business.

The application process for the Outstanding Young Farmers award is extensive. First, the family has to be nominated, and then comes the paperwork. You basically have to fill out everything about your farm, past, present and where you want to be in the future, Myron said.

The couple's daughters, Cadence and Keira, were involved in the process, too, picking out photos for the required PowerPoint presentation of their farm life. The Krahns will go on to compete for the national title in November, where Myron said he's looking forward to meeting a very innovative group of other regional winners.

And, aside from the plaque and all-expense-paid trip to Quebec for the national competition, the competition's real prize is peer recognition for the family's accomplishments. Myron is also chair of the Manitoba Corn Growers Association and is a director on the Pembina Consumers Co-op board for the Homewood area.

After high school the couple attended the University of Manitoba, where they obtained a

bachelor of science degree in agriculture, majoring in agronomy. Following university, Myron and Jill worked for various agricultural companies, including Proven Seed, Homewood Co-op and Advanta Seeds.

Myron has worked full-time on the farm since 2003, with Jill joining full-time in 2007 after the birth of their second child. They continue the family farm tradition and raise their children with a close sense of family community, strong work ethic and appreciation for the land.

Congratulations to Myron, Jill, Cadence and Keira on being named Manitoba's Outstanding Young Farmers.

## **ORDERS OF THE DAY**

### **GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

#### **House Business**

**Hon. Andrew Swan (Government House Leader):** On House business, I'm pleased to table, as agreed upon by myself and the Opposition House Leader, the Estimates order.

On further House business, Mr. Speaker, pursuant to rule 31(8), I'm announcing the private member's resolution to be considered next Tuesday will be one put forward by the honourable member for Wolseley (Mr. Altemeyer). The title of the resolution is Juno Awards.

**Mr. Speaker:** It has been announced that pursuant to rule 31(8), that the private member's resolution to be considered next Tuesday will be the one brought forward by the honourable member for Wolseley, and the title of the resolution is Juno Awards.

The honourable Official Opposition House Leader, on House business.

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, I'm seeking leave of the House that during the time that Estimates are held here in the Chamber that the members of the official opposition are able to have their staff in the Chamber on the floor as part of the Estimates process.

**Mr. Speaker:** Is there a leave of the House so that when we move into the Estimates process, if the members of the official opposition will be entitled to have a member—a staff member present in the Chamber with them during that process? *[Agreed]*

Any further House business?

**BUDGET DEBATE**  
**(Eighth Day of Debate)**

**Mr. Speaker:** Seeing none, under orders of the day, government business, we'll resume the adjourned debate on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Finance (Ms. Howard) that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government and the proposed motion in amendment thereto, standing in the name of the honourable member for Steinbach who has 21 minutes remaining.

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach):** Yesterday I was commenting on the fact how this government is hoping that this budget will make Manitobans forget, forget all of the things that the government has done to them in terms of high taxation, in terms of a high debt load and the impact that that has on Manitoba families, Mr. Speaker, and I think we'll have an opportunity this afternoon to see, to see where exactly the priorities of this government lies.

We have an amendment, of course, that's before the floor of the House that the government will have an opportunity to look at an amendment, Mr. Speaker, that talks about financial responsibility, that talks about ensuring that everyone has an opportunity, regardless of where they are in lot—their lot in life right now, that talks about issues about ensuring that we can get the rental allowance up to 75 per cent of the median market rates quicker because we know that this government has broken promises, many promises, in the past. And we'll see where the members of the government ultimately vote, whether they vote for that amendment, which stands up for all Manitoba families, which stands up for all Manitobans, or whether or not they vote against that amendment.

But what I'm confident of, Mr. Speaker, is that Manitobans won't forget. They won't forget the track record of this government, which is laden with broken promises. And, ultimately, I think that Manitobans, they're a forgiving lot. They're a lot that, while they expect a lot of their government, they understand that things happen, but ultimately they want a government that they can trust. It does come down to trust, and this government has lost the trust of Manitobans. I think that members opposite, members of the government know that. They hear that when they're speaking to their own constituents. They hear that when they're going to events. They hear that whether it's in Winnipeg, Brandon or our

rural Manitoba. They hear that Manitobans no longer trust this government.

Now it's not just about the PST, although that was certainly an issue that resonated strongly with Manitobans, but it's a litany of things, Mr. Speaker, that we've heard from the government, the general promise not to raise taxes. That is something that many Manitobans I know of speaking to me, and they're speaking to the government members and they say we don't trust you anymore; you said in 2011 that you wouldn't be raising taxes and then we saw two consecutive years of the largest tax increases in the history of Manitobans.

That was a breach of trust. I know I hear that in my constituency. I hear it in Dawson Trail, and the member for Dawson Trail (Mr. Lemieux), I know that he hears it. He might not admit it, but I know that he hears it from his constituents. They often talk to me about that, Mr. Speaker. I know all members hear those concerns.

It was exasperated, of course, when the PST was increased because that was both very specific and a very symbolic promise that the government made in 2011—they wouldn't be increasing the PST. So Manitobans were further outraged and it takes a lot to get Manitobans outraged, Mr. Speaker, because I think again they are very much a forgiving lot when it comes to different things that happen within government. But they saw that as a betrayal of trust, and when they came to the Legislature, whether that was at committee or at rallies.

\* (14:30)

Now that is an issue that's ongoing. Not only do we continue to hear that from Manitobans in their comments when we speak to them on that or other issues, but we have an issue before the courts right now. And this government I know is before the courts on a lot of different issues and had to be more specific. There—they've been in court with the Jockey Club. They've been in court with AMM. They're in court over the issue of the PST. The only ones that are benefiting under the government in terms of job creation are lawyers, and I wish the lawyers well. But I certainly also don't think that that's the method for job creation that the government should be looking at. But they're in court on all these different issues and the issue of the PST is something that's important, because we know that if you can simply not only raise taxes but break the law in doing it, Mr. Speaker, that that is a precedent that is very bad for

Manitoba and for governments across the land, I would say.

So our expectation and our hope, certainly, is that the government will be brought into order in terms of how it raised the PST. Now, ultimately, we'll see what the court decides. Courts make decisions for a lot of different reasons and we'll leave it up to the court to make that decision. But we'll also, of course, leave it up to Manitobans to make the decision in the next election.

We made a commitment to them when the government decided to raise the PST, breaking their election promise, that we would do everything we could from a legislative perspective to try to get the government to change their mind and that we would do everything that we could from a legal perspective. Now we are fulfilling that promise, Mr. Speaker, because we believe, actually, and this will come as a surprise to members opposite, that politicians and governments who make promises should actually keep those promises. So last year we sat through the summer and into the fall, keeping our promise to Manitobans that we would give this government every opportunity to change their mind, that we would give this government every opportunity to do the right thing and keep their promise and that we would give Manitobans every opportunity to come to the Legislature and be engaged with their MLAs to try to get them to change their mind.

Now, that was unsuccessful. We maybe underestimated the stubbornness of the NDP government and the stubbornness of this Premier (Mr. Selinger) to want to take tax money and spend it on behalf of Manitobans. But we fulfilled our promise by saying, well, we're going to take it to the next step. We're going to bring a legal action. We'll bring it to court. And Robert Tapper, the lawyer representing us on this issue, is bringing it forward, and I would say, Mr. Speaker, why I have the floor on that particular issue, that I was very disappointed to hear that this government in a very vindictive way took action against Mr. Tapper by removing him from a board that he was on for a long time in terms of the—sports regulation for boxing and other similar types of sports. A very vindictive sort of thing to do, and Mr. Tapper, in his comments to the media, as he said and I think he said eloquently, he's represented all political parties in this province. Lawyers represent those who hire them; that's how the profession works. And he was hired by us and he's been hired by the government and he's been hired, I think, by

the Liberals in the past to make representations on behalf of their party, and he's fulfilled that, I think, in an honourable way and he has an honourable reputation both in the bar and throughout Manitoba and also in the boxing community, the board that he was removed from. But this government decided to take vindictive action.

Now, he said something in the media, and I wouldn't, of course, repeat anything he said in private, but he said something in the media that was very interesting. He said that this Premier is no Gary Doer because Gary Doer wouldn't have done that, because Gary Doer understood that there are processes and there are things that people do, Mr. Speaker, in their professional life and they can be separated from their personal life.

And I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that I was particularly disappointed that the government would take that kind of vindictive action and that they don't realize that there are consequences for those actions. We hear those sort of things—that whether it's not just in the legal community, but the many people who have come in contact with Mr. Tapper and the variety of different things that he's represented people on in the past, wonder why a government would act so vindictively against somebody in the private sector simply doing their job.

Now, we've seen that in many other ways, Mr. Speaker. We've seen that here in the Legislature. We've seen that with other private citizens. But that was a very public thing, a very public thing, and I want to express the disappoint that the government would take that kind of action, but it's symbolic of a government that's arrogant. It's symbolic of a government that feels that they are entitled to government and have been there a very, very long time. And I think that that entitlement doesn't exist and I think that Manitobans are seeing that, and we see that demonstrated in many different ways.

So I go back to the point, Mr. Speaker, that the government is hoping, the NDP are hoping that Manitobans will forget, that Manitobans won't remember what's been done to them. Now, that is not simply going to happen and won't be allowed to happen whether it's because of the court case or other reasons, but Manitobans understand that every time they're shopping, every time they're purchasing something for their family, that they have less money as a result of the increase of the PST. Now, that might result in them not being able to go on a vacation, might not be able to go have their kids in a

sports program, may not be able to buy sports—or buy winter tires, something that this government has talked about in the budget.

And I find it ironic that all of a sudden, sitting around the Cabinet table, the members of the Cabinet came to some sort of a conclusion that Manitobans might not be able to afford snow tires. And I think it's good to promote snow tires—anything that can promote safety for those who are on our dangerous winter roads, and we've particularly seen that this winter, Mr. Speaker—but to take money out of people's pockets through the PST increase and the previous year tax increases that's equivalent to \$1,600 per family, and then to say, well, we want to help people, because they probably can't afford a thousand-dollar set of snow tires, is ridiculous. But it's symbolic of how this government believes that government should be managed.

So they take the money from the people to begin with, more than \$1,600, and then they turn around and they say, well, we know you don't have money for something that costs a thousand dollars, so let's loan you the money, instead of actually letting them keep the money to begin with. But that's what a Big Brother, big NDP government wants to do, and it's why they are the last remaining NDP government in Canada, Mr. Speaker. They're clinging on as the last relic of a form of government that Manitobans and Canadians understand isn't for their benefit, understand that ultimately costs them money, understand that ultimately costs them freedom in terms of how they're going to spend their own resources, and that's why they're the last of that breed.

So I don't think Manitobans are going to forget, and we'll certainly do our part to ensure Manitobans don't forget, and there's an electoral process to that, Mr. Speaker, whether that's here in the House or outside of the House, but we'll continue to remind Manitobans that this is a Premier and this is a Cabinet and this is a caucus, because I don't want to isolate this just to the Premier (Mr. Selinger). Now, the Premier is the leader of the government, and so he has special responsibility and accountability when it comes to these sort of things, when it comes to the decisions to raise the PST or other things that happen in a budget, but it's not limited to him.

Now, I understand that there are probably members—I know, in fact, there are members of the NDP caucus who would just be just as happy if the Premier wasn't there anymore, Mr. Speaker. Now, we see one of the members who's been

removed from their caucus, the member for Riel (Ms. Melnick), who now—we've had a lot of people who've come forward and said that the government and the Premier doesn't tell the truth, but it was somewhat unusual to have a member of their caucus come forward and do that. We've heard some of that in private sometimes; never heard it so publically. But I know that there are others. I know that there are others in the NDP caucus who would like to isolate this simply to the Premier, who would like to point the blame at him with the expectation and hope that perhaps he won't be there someday soon. Now, I have no idea what the ultimate result of that's going to be, and I'm not going to play a role in it, because I simply could care less what happens within the NDP caucus. However, the members of the NDP shouldn't fool themselves in thinking that they can isolate this to their leader, that it doesn't impact them individually or whoever their future leader might be, because it does.

Each of them have played a role in ensuring and supporting a government that hasn't been honest with Manitobans, Mr. Speaker, whether that's the PST, whether that's the general increase of taxes or whether that or other issues—and we've raised some of them today in question period, including Crocus, and I don't want people to forget that this is a premier and a Finance minister and a government who stood up and said, put your money into Crocus; it's strong. Shortly later, it collapsed and people lost money. That was an early symbolic sort of thing that we saw.

But I don't think that NDP members should take any solace in the fact that this is somehow sticking simply to the Premier, because it doesn't. Each of us are elected individually to represent the views of our constituents. Each of us have responsibility to ensure that what we are doing as elected representatives, both inside of this House and outside of the House, is representative of the people who sent us here to speak on their behalf, Mr. Speaker. So it's not limited to the Premier. And those members who are behind closed doors, inside the NDP caucus, outside of the NDP caucus, trying to take some comfort from that fact that they may be able to stick this to the—to simply—to the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Selinger), and then if there's a leadership change, they can try to avoid that, it's simply not going to work. Every member of that caucus is responsible. Every minister of that Cabinet has a responsibility. Each one of them decided that they were going to support the PST increase and break their promise in the last election. Each one of them did, and each one

of them is responsible for that to their own constituents. Each one of them has to go out there and defend that.

\*(14:40)

Now, I know that the member for Riel (Ms. Melnick) has left the caucus under whatever circumstances that is. I appreciate the fact she's been given a large office with many rooms. Perhaps that was forward thinking that there might be other members who leave the NDP caucus, so there's already room established for them if they decide to go into another room, Mr. Speaker.

But, regardless of what happens within the context of the NDP caucus, Mr. Speaker, and all the infighting that happens there, each one of them is responsible. Each one of them is responsible for their actions and for their votes here in the Legislature, and that's something that they're going to have to answer to when it comes to the next election. Our responsibility is not just to remind Manitobans about the fact that these NDP members lied to their constituents, our responsibility is to also assure Manitobans that there'll be a different path.

Now, we've already talked about, within the first term, rolling back the PST to give people back their money, to give them the ability, Mr. Speaker, to actually decide where they're going to spend their own money, and I think that that's important. I think that that is something that is valuable. And no amount of Cabinet shuffles that happen on the other side—and I have a hard time remembering who's who anymore. They change positions. They change titles—*[interjection]*—and I think that Mount Minto just exploded again—but I have a hard time remembering every role that the NDP caucus has, and I think that that's part of a plan. Keep shuffling around and then, ultimately, nobody is responsible for anything over there and people will forget.

But they won't forget, and I know that members opposite—and I—you know, they won't say it publicly and they might say it privately, but they wouldn't say it publicly. They're hearing it too. They're hearing it from Manitobans that they don't trust the government. They're hearing it from Manitobans that they want a change. They're hearing it from Manitobans that they feel that they've been betrayed by the government.

Each individual—now I see the member for Seine River (Ms. Oswald). She's not hearing that from her constituents and she says that she's not hearing that at

all. Apparently, she believes her constituents were happy with the PST increase, were happy to see the increase in taxes on home insurance, on haircuts, on PST, and I would encourage her to campaign on that in the next election. Mr. Speaker, I would encourage her to put those brochures out how she did that because people were asking her to increase the taxes. That should be something that she should be upfront about not just in this House, but also when she campaigns in the good constituency of Seine River. But I don't think that that's what Manitobans are feeling and thinking, and we're certainly not hearing that and, ultimately, the government is going to have to be accountable for that.

So this budget is about trying to make people forget, about trying to get people to forget what happened in terms of the tax increases, what happened in terms of the broken promises, whether that's just on taxes or also on the fact that they haven't balanced the budget when they said they were going to.

Mr. Speaker, but Manitobans won't forget. We won't let them forget. We'll encourage them to remember the fact that they're not able to do what they would like to on family vacations or other sort of things because they don't have the money in their pocket that they had when the NDP government came into power. We will remind them that this is a government that believes that they are better suited to spend their money than individual Manitobans are. We will remind them that if you want to a government you can trust, a government that keeps the promises that it makes, that you can't vote NDP again, and I think that Manitobans are understanding that. I think they're getting that, and I simply can't support a budget that doesn't adhere to the principles and the values of Manitobans or my constituents.

Thank you very much.

**Hon. Erin Selby (Minister of Health):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support our government's budget as presented by our Minister of Finance (Ms. Howard), presented so eloquently, I might add. This budget is about steady growth. This budget is about good jobs for Manitoba families. This budget is about making sure that our children can build successful and fulfilling lives in this province, just as all of us in this Chamber had the opportunity to do.

I live with three teenagers. I will maybe give the House a moment to digest that I have three 13-year old girls in my home. But we take this very seriously at my house—and I appreciate your sympathy,

Mr. Speaker, for that. We take this very seriously. We have a lot of discussion at my house about future and jobs and planning and getting ready over the next few years of high school to prepare themselves for the next big step to come, and I was quite proud to see how serious they took it when this year they were able to actually choose courses for grade 9 next year, a very serious business.

Also serious business, as Manitoba's Health Minister I'm proud to say that Budget 2014 is also about protecting those front-line services that families count on. Budget 2014 provides a \$110-million increase for funding to care for Manitobans to ensure that Manitoba families continue to have access to existing health services, as well as continued progress on our commitments and, of course, always to innovate and provide even better care.

As part of the funding in this budget, I was pleased to announce the location of the province's fifth QuickCare clinic that will open later this year in St. Vital. This is one of four more QuickCare clinics in development for Winnipeg, on top of two that are already in place and, of course, others that are in Steinbach and Selkirk and we know there are others committed, including in my constituency of Southdale. QuickCare clinics have already had over 64,000 visits and helped take a significant pressure off of our emergency rooms.

They're just one piece of what is our broad plan to ensure that people have access to a family doctor, everyone in Manitoba by 2015, an initiative that's not just about connecting people with a doctor to have regular health care but also to enhance the care for those who do have a provider already. Since 1999, we know that more and more people have been able to connect to a family doctor, as well as other specialists, because we've had a net gain of over 560 practising physicians in this province. And we are well over halfway to our 2011 commitment of hiring more than 200 doctors.

Doctors, of course, are a key part of our family doctor commitment but this is also a plan about a broader vision for sustainability and accessibility in health care for Manitobans, a plan that keeps people healthier and helps takes pressure off of our busy hospitals. This includes maximizing the role of nurse practitioners, physician assistants and, of course, all health-care professionals, as we bring together teams of caregivers to ensure that people get the right care from the right provider at the right time.

*Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair*

It's why our recent announcement included new initiatives that will help thousands of Manitobans find a doctor, thousands who currently don't have one. Those initiatives include 14 my health care teams, which are networks of primary-care providers that will be tailored to the needs of communities and rolled out across the province. The first one's starting in Steinbach and I know the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) wouldn't vote against such an important health care initiative. He cares too much about health to do that.

It also includes 50 new health professionals to work in private doctors' offices to support that interprofessional collaboration and help take doctors take on a thousand more patients each. They do this by knowing what their community needs, should it be a dietitian, should that be a social worker, to allow people to have that ongoing support from the health-care worker that can provide them the support that they need and allow the doctor to practise their full scope of practice.

Our commitment to access a family doctor for all is not only about hiring and training more health-care professionals and innovating through new health-care teams, it's also about building a variety of clinics across this province. As part of our family doctor plan, we're committing to building 23 new clinics including QuickCare clinics, access centres, mobile clinics and rural primary-care centres. Eight of those clinics are already opened, including QuickCare clinics in Selkirk, Steinbach, St. Boniface, Winnipeg's North End, Access NorWest, NorWest clinic, St. Claude primary-care wellness centre and Prairie Mountain mobile clinic.

In the coming year we'll be opening access Winnipeg west at the Grace Hospital, and new QuickCare clinics in Winnipeg, as well as a second mobile clinic to serve rural communities. We will continue to process-to progress in other clinics in development, including a new primary-care clinic in Swan River. I was so happy to see that the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (Mr. Kostyshyn) was joined by his community to announce further details on that clinic. He has been a strong advocate for health care in his community, as well.

We know that you cannot stop building at times of economic slowdown. While the members of opposition put out a press release in the '90s indicating that they had no choice but to freeze

'hospital'—cap—health capital spending, we know that that is short-sighted, we know that that is a harmful approach, particularly in rural communities, where new facilities and new technologies are a key part of doctor recruitment and doctor retention.

In addition to the many new clinics in development, we're moving ahead this year with construction on the new ER and MRI at the Dauphin regional health care centre, a new ambulance station at the Ile des Chênes and many, many other projects that will benefit rural families in years to come.

We're also supporting seniors in enhancing opportunities for them to age close to home through construction of new personal care homes in Winnipeg, Morden and Lac du Bonnet. And I know, of course, members will support those, as well, in their own communities.

\*(14:50)

We're also celebrating the 40th anniversary of home care in Manitoba.

In addition to capital projects in rural Manitoba, we're also moving ahead with our election commitment to expand rural chemotherapy programs and to full CancerCare hubs. I've had a chance to visit a couple of these CancerCare hubs. Hubs have already begin to operate across southern Manitoba, including Gimli, Selkirk, Morden-Winkler, Brandon, Dauphin and Swan River.

And I've had the opportunity first-hand to see people getting cancer care treatment closer to home. And although it is not an easy journey, the journey that a cancer patient goes on, when we can bring support closer to home we know that is a little bit easier for families and people on this very difficult journey.

Budget 2014 includes further support to expand the integrated support provided for families facing cancer, with the launch of cancer hubs in northern Manitoba communities as well.

And I'm very proud to say this budget also continues full coverage of cancer and support drugs at home or in hospital, significantly reducing the financial hardship that cancer can have on a family. Of course, our party supported this and all the recommendations of the Canadian Cancer Society in the 20 election—2011 election, something members opposite failed to do.

CancerCare hubs, of course, are part of a broader commitment to reducing the cancer patient journey

to 60 days or less, from suspicion to treatment; an aggressive initiative to make better care for Manitoba families, which is only made possible thanks to our government's refusal to listen to the calls from members here—from members opposite, who want us to slash health-care spending, who ask us to balance the budget on the backs of patients. We will not do that.

We are continuing to focus on cutting administration costs in the health system so that we can maximize our spending on the front-line care. While members opposite created 13 RHAs, including two separate RHAs in Winnipeg, in 2012 we reduced the number of RHAs to five, cutting over a hundred board and executive management positions. This saved over \$10 million that was invested and reinvested in supporting front-line care.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in 2011, we passed legislation capping Winnipeg's corporate costs at 2.99, which was lower than the proposal from the former leader of the opposition. The WRHA's last annual report showed corporate costs were down to 2.54 in 2013.

As announced in Budget 2014, this year we will be extending the corporate cap to all RHAs and putting in place further financial transparency and accountability mechanisms for RHAs, including restrictions on rehiring and public expense reporting requirements.

While other provinces are freezing or cutting health-care spending, in recent years we've made significant progress in bending the cost curve in health-care spending while protecting front-line services and maintaining the balance of departments and RHAs. We have not, and we will not, do this on the backs of patients or nurses like the Leader of the Opposition did in the 1990s.

I can tell you we will not fire a thousand nurses at the same time—we will not fire a thousand nurses and at the same time let health bureaucracy expand with too many RHAs and too many managers, like they did. We will not freeze health capital projects and let fruit flies buzz around the operating room at the Health Sciences Centre. We will not cut funding to dozens and dozens of rural hospitals, and we will not introduce home-care user fees, cut services or experiment with privatization. And I can tell you we will not cut the number of medical school spaces and drive doctors away in record number. They trained less doctors, they fired nurses; we train more doctors,

we train more nurses, we hire more nurses, we hire more doctors.

What we're doing is putting forth a balanced budget to create more good jobs and more opportunities for young people to build their futures in Manitoba while keeping life affordable and protecting those front-line services that Manitobans depend on.

I hear from families all the time how important good quality roads are to them in their daily commute to either inside or outside of the city, and our budget includes a record \$5.5 billion in core infrastructure to improve the province's roads, bridges, flood protection, municipal infrastructure, and, of course, create tens of thousands of jobs. My constituents in Southdale will benefit from the largest ever provincial investment of \$250 million to renew and upgrade Winnipeg streets.

And, of course, Winnipeg families and families across Manitoba and in my area of Southdale are also concerned about making sure that their kids get a good start in school and have the opportunity they need to build a good life here in Manitoba, which is why I'm proud to be part of a government that's making new investment in smaller class sizes to ensure that students have that critical one-on-one attention in their early years.

Our government's recognition of the critical importance of early childhood development is reflected in the new funding of \$5.5 million in this budget to build more child-care spaces for families and support better wages for workers.

I'm also proud of the support we're offering to students in beginning their skills training in high school by offering credits towards post-secondary and first-year apprenticeships and given the head start of their chosen career, and I know that my daughters will be paying close attention to that as well.

Affordability, of course, is another important issue for families that I speak with, and we are building on our legislated guarantee of the lowest income bundle in the country with new legislation to protect families when they contract home repairs, or buy or sell a new home. We're also putting in place new rules to protect families from misleading cable, Internet, or—a big one in my home—cellphone promotions and creating a new senior school tax rebate of up to \$235 on top of the already existing \$1,100 existing tax credit, entirely eliminating school property taxes for more than 7,200 seniors.

Families expect and deserve a government that's focused on their priorities. We have clearly heard from families that they want health, education and the other services that they count on to be protected and enhanced, and to continually to enhance and innovate. They also want investments in infrastructure and good jobs for their children and for their grandchildren. Budget 2014 lays out our balanced plan to keep the province growing and I am very proud to support it.

Thank you.

**Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Riding Mountain):** It's a privilege to put some words on the record with regard to Budget 2014 on behalf of the constituents of Riding Mountain. A lot of comment has been received by my office with regard to the budget and a lot of it has been focused on the tax burden, expense of Hydro—a gamble on the backs of taxpayers as well as employees—and how this government is stifling economic growth

This budget confirms that the NDP has no integrity and it has no respect for Manitobans. If they were actually listening to Manitobans, there were a number of things that they would have done differently with regard to how they've managed the tax dollars of hard-working Manitobans.

The budget failed to reverse the illegal PST increase, and constituents of mine along the Saskatchewan border are very, very concerned about their businesses. They are seeing more and more business being done in Saskatchewan. They're seeing less and less opportunity for their businesses and they're seeing residents spend less money on groceries, on products of everyday life and seem to be just purchasing at random things that they need in the community, and that does not bode well for the bottom line for so many businesses.

When I asked—when I sent out my prebudget survey to my communities the responses were overwhelming that this government has taken the Manitoba taxpayers in the wrong direction. They've taken away the tax reductions that they were looking for. They've taken away their interest in having the debt reduced, and I believe that this government, again, has done nothing to reduce the red tape for businesses. And, again, that's a lot of time spent by businesses to try to get the paperwork in for this government or to address needs of the government over the businesses that I represent. Mr. Deputy Speaker, so really, I found very little positive

comments back from my communities and a lot of questions and concerns were raised.

\* (15:00)

As was stated by one of my colleagues earlier in the budget debate, the theme was Long Gone to Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It appears that basic personal—basic personal exemptions, the amount of money that an individual needs or can earn before the Province says it's time to start paying back—ponying up as the member for—

**An Honourable Member:** Morris.

**Mrs. Rowat:** —Morris (Mr. Martin) had indicated—thank you for that—before the Province says it's time to pony up.

The lowest basic personal exemption in all of western Canada is Manitoba. And we are in fact looking way behind Saskatchewan, next door. Their basic personal exemption is \$15,378, 70 per cent higher than Manitoba. Saskatchewan increased their personal exemption in one fell swoop by \$4,000, and with that \$4,000, they took 80,000 low-income earners off of the tax roll—80,000 low-income earners off the tax roll. Now, that's helping individuals who are living dollar to dollar, paycheque to paycheque. That is action. That is actually taking care of Manitobans, listening to what their needs are and actually responding to them.

In Manitoba, we raise it one or two hundred dollars, and the government seems to be surprised about its lack of impact. They don't understand that what they're doing is looking for their political spin and their press releases, et cetera, letting people think that they're actually doing favours, when in a sense, they are actually causing more harm.

Red tape reduction streamlines and simplifies processes to make it easier. Red tape reduction is so important for families that run businesses. Reducing the red tape benefits everyone. For citizens, it means fast, easy access to services, saving you time, which can be spent with friends and family. And that is so important. If you believe in the importance of the Manitoba family, then you would understand and appreciate that red tape takes families away from their children, away from opportunities to be together and actually increases stress within that family. For businesses, it means simplified processes, saving you time and money. And that can be reinvested in the growth of their business. So, again, taking away the stress and then giving them the opportunity to decide where they would like to

invest to and expand their businesses and giving them time to do so is something that this government has failed to do, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

In my area of Children and Youth, an area that I believe this government has failed is with regard to families and children who are dealing with mental illness. I believe that this government had an opportunity, they've been in government for 14 years—I've raised this issue over and over again with this government on several times in different critic roles—and this government continues to fail these young people who are our future.

Even Manitoba schools have put out a heads-up to this government, indicating that students are seeing this government fail students with mental health issues. They're saying that there's a need in the health-care sector, that a lot of services aren't there for them and they're being offloaded onto the schools, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We're seeing school-age children who are having to go without because this government cannot respond to its propaganda and its announcements with regard to mental health.

Rising to the Challenge was a document they put out in 2011 just prior to the last election, and we see how this government has failed to even address the basic—basic—promises in that. We see that there still continues to be a significant number of shortages with regard to psychiatrists. In January 2005—or of 2014, we see five adult psychiatrist vacancies and one child vacancy—one child psychiatrist vacancy. In 2011, there were six. So we're seeing this government, in one year, hire one new psychiatrist in covering those vacancies. We still have five that are outstanding.

And what we've heard from individuals who work in the field is that what we're seeing is, because there is a shortage of psychiatrists who can address the needs for adults and children, that GPs are taking on more and more responsibility and more and more of the caseload that would best be served by a psychiatrist. So that's taking away GPs' time from the general population, from individuals who are wanting to see a doctor for needs that are of a different sort. We're seeing GPs spending more time dealing with mental health issues, and that is very concerning.

We know through statistics that 70 per cent of mental-health problems have their onset during childhood or adolescence and young people between the ages of 15 and 24 are more likely to experience

mental illness than any other age group. So we need to see a government that's actually taking action with regard to this very serious issue, and we've raised this for many years.

I remember once raising the issue of a young woman who presented at Minnedosa hospital and there was nobody that they could refer this young child to in Brandon or otherwise. So this doctor had to stay with this patient, was not able to provide care on a busy evening for—to other patients. He had to stay with this young woman who needed care and he responded to that. But he was very concerned that there weren't the supports in place to help this young Woman, and I don't believe things have changed in the last four to five years.

With regard to Manitoba Hydro, it was really interesting that the Minister responsible for Hydro today indicated that there would be no reduction in services and that was a guarantee. There'd be no reduction in services. I find that rather interesting because I am married to a Hydro employee, and when rhetoric is shared like that it just really bothers me and I'm sure it bothers many of the Hydro employees who have seen a significant amount of challenges placed before them because of this government's mismanagement. They pay close attention to how this government is actually gambling away Manitoba Hydro's future, and we know and we've seen 24 office closures, Manitoba office closures in rural communities.

And, when I raised this issue in 2008 it was rather interesting. I raised this issue in 2008 and I got a letter back from the president of Manitoba Hydro, at the time Mr. Bob Brennan, and he had indicated to me that their—all rural district offices would not be affected, that the centres will incorporate and enhance work-planning co-ordination concepts, so will improve customer service through streamline processes for scheduling work and resources in the CSC service areas. Now, that's the customer service centres that were supposed to be established or are being established.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'll give you an example. My husband was on call this weekend and the area that he covers is from Dauphin all the way to Miniota, and Friday night he got a call which was in the local area and that's fine. Saturday morning at 10 a.m. he gets a call to go to Dauphin and it's a water break, water line break. So he had to go and provide a line locate. So, anyways, he gets down there, and he's on his way and he gets another call from

Gilbert Plains that there's a no-heat call. So he then—he was in Roblin so he had to turn around, get back to Gilbert Plains and address that call. So he got home probably about two o'clock in the afternoon, one, two in the afternoon because from where we live, which is Angusville very close to Russell, it is a significant drive to get to Dauphin around the park. So, anyways, we—he gets home. We prepare for supper and he gets another call for an issue with regard to a fireplace. So he again is on call, out he goes to Dauphin, comes back I think probably about midnight. He got back about midnight because there were issues with the fireplace. He gets back at midnight and then he has to go out again. At 4 o'clock in the morning he gets another call back to Dauphin.

\*(15:10)

So I guess what I'm saying is, how is that healthy? How is that healthy for an employee to be driving that amount of distance with so many issues with regard to road and weather conditions? I believe on Sunday morning he left at four. He didn't get to Dauphin until 6:30 and, actually, it was a gas-smell issue. So there was a—so that is, to many families, a very serious issue. This woman actually phoned Brad on the highway and says, you know, can I go back to sleep for a while? What do I need to do to ensure that I'm safe while you get here? You know, two and a half hours, and who knows how long she waited prior to that to make the call. So, if that's a very serious issue, a gas-smell leak, then that is—and two and a half hours to get out to that call is just unbelievable. So, when you talk about improved service and people not seeing a reduced service in the area, I believe that that is something that many employees within Manitoba Hydro find a little less than truthful.

With regard to the office closures, the 24 office closures, I think that what the minister knows is that a lot of the staff that will be losing their jobs, because they're not going to be able to drive the 30 miles, and some have to drive from Shoal Lake, so that would be, like, 45 minutes to Russell. They're not going to be able to do that if they have small children or their children are in school, so the people that are going to be giving up those jobs and, in a sense, losing their jobs, will be women in the community who have used those jobs to help supplement their farmers—or their farm's income. Many are going to be seeing some very serious issues with regard to employment possibilities for themselves. In rural Manitoba, there aren't jobs like

they are in other communities like Winnipeg and Brandon where you can find alternative work. It's not that simple.

So I think that when the government said in 2008 that they were not going to reduce staff, that they weren't going to reduce services, is not accurate, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And IBEW has said on the record that they were told by Mr. Thomson almost six months prior to the decision to close those offices that no offices were going to close. So, when IBEW would go back to their membership and say, well, you know what? We talked to Manitoba Hydro, we talked to Mr. Thomson, we talked to the president, and he said, no, that they were not going to be closing these offices. So, when an opportunity would come for somebody to move into a closer community to where they might be able to work with their family, as one woman from Shoal Lake who had an opportunity to move to another community to work, and it would've worked well for her family—she was willing to move the family—but it would've worked in a better situation, because Virden has a regional centre—is one of those CSC centres. She was told by people that would know, that said, you know, the president said, no, this is not happening. Well, six months later this happens, and this woman doesn't take this job and now she's in Shoal Lake. She has to travel to Russell—she has to now travel to the closest centre, which is now in Russell.

So the—you know, this government is full of rhetoric. I'm giving examples specifically how this decision making has affected families in rural Manitoba, and I can say that I'm very disappointed—2008, they said no. As early as six months prior to the closures of those offices—no. And then we see so many communities struggling to figure out a way to make things work. And the regions have gotten bigger and larger, and there's more risk of things happening to these employees because they're on the roads longer. They're having to go into communities in the middle of the night and then travel two hours home after spending a full day at work. And I just believe that there's just not enough thought put into what has exactly been decided by the people in Winnipeg here.

With regard to health care, I believe that this government's commitment to ensure every Manitoba has a family doctor by 2015 is not going to turn out as well as they have led Manitobans to believe. It is a lofty promise considering that in the Prairie Mountain Health region right now we've got, I don't know, 18, 19 communities that have partial or full

closures on their ERs and challenges with acute care, so I don't believe that this government is going to be able to address this. We see more and more doctors leaving communities, and you know what? It's becoming more and more of an issue. I know one doctor has told me that he didn't sign up to be a geriatric physician. He wants to work with all generations, with all Manitobans who have—present with illness, but he's finding that when you have so many people in acute care waiting for placement in—for personal care, that you become like a geriatric physician, and that's is unfortunate, because what does that do? It takes away from the physician, a physician's, you know, desire, to remain in that community. When you have communities that are still using paper for reporting instead of electronic record keeping, then, yes, that is another deterrent.

So, when this government talks about ensuring that they—you know, ensuring front-line services are protected, we're seeing more and more of these nurses indicating that that's not happening. They're not—the government's not listening. The message isn't getting through, and one nurse who indicated that they have ideas, they have shared their ideas with this government, they've shared them with their union, and they don't feel that things are working their way up into the system.

One nurse indicated that ER wait times could be addressed more effectively by looking at the staffing model of—that the hospital employs. For example, when the—when somebody—when a community hosts a major event, she said staffing levels aren't fact into—'facted' to the manager's decisions. And we've seen that. When there's been a hockey tournament, the Tournament of Champions, for example, that's a lot of kids playing hockey who are, you know, at times, going to have an injury. And we've seen that, at times, the hospital ERs are actually closed in the communities where the Tournament of Champions are taking place. That happened in Souris, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So, you have an injury and you have an individual who has to present to a hospital outside the community where they were injured, and that, to me, doesn't make any sense.

And it is interesting that this minister has talked about this—our side of the House looking at privatization of health care. It was interesting because one nurse that I talked to a couple of weeks ago, she says, my goodness, she says, the government's talking about that, she says, because this government is actually the ones that are causing privatization of health care. More and more families

are getting health care outside of this province or this country. So this government is the one that's causing families to look outside of this province for support.

I know one young man who had knee surgery. He checked with—he plays hockey in the States and he actually had called the Pan Am Clinic to see how long it would take to get an appointment to discuss his injury. And, actually, they told him, you know what? Get it in the States. The Pan Am Clinic: get it in the States. It's going to be two years—a year-and-a-half to two-year wait for you to get that procedure done—19 years old. So, anyways, this young kid decided that's where he was going to get the surgery done.

So how unfortunate is that? How unfortunate is that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when you have a clinic, Pan Am Clinic, who provides those supports? And this young guy decides, at 19 years of age, forget it; I'm not getting that surgery; I'm not going to wait two years. My goodness.

He had the surgery and was back on the ice within two months. Within two months, Mr. Deputy Speaker, he was back on the ice, playing hockey.

Now that is unfortunate, because this government is not seeing that wait times are actually causing so many heartaches and so many issues with people that are waiting for care, and I believe that if this government really was concerned about the welfare of Manitobans, they would look at this and they would be looking at ways to improve this, instead of fear-mongering families and Manitobans about health care. They should be actually acting.

\* (15:20)

I'd like to mention an issue that is fairly current in the Russell area. It's called the Shellmouth Dam act and the producers along—the families along the Shellmouth have been waiting for a long time for this government to act on their—the government's promise on providing compensation for these families. Mr. Deputy Speaker, 2011, 2012 compensation has not been provided for these individuals. The intent to claim was put out, but this government has failed to move on that and we really need this government to actually follow through on its promises to assist families. The Shellmouth Dam act was proclaimed—or was announced and then proclaimed several years ago and we see a government that is continually failing to respond to these families, and I would encourage this government and this minister to actually move on this application.

What I have heard from families in the community is that they were shocked and very concerned that when this program was announced they went online and, actually, the program's deadline was six to eight months prior. So the phone calls were coming in to the municipalities and in to my office saying, you know, what's going on? The program has just been announced and the deadline was eight months ago. You know, what it speaks to is this government's lack of concern with regard to the well-being of these individuals, these families in rural Manitoba who have year after year been put through the ringer by this government who has made promises and have failed to respond. And then, to put salt in the wound, they put a deadline eight months—or six months to eight months past for applications to be received.

We saw in Family Services an increase of \$30 million in their budget to community supports for persons with disabilities, and those communities were very interested and very excited about seeing that dollars—those dollars there, but they were really concerned about where they were going to go. They were trying to get some insight into that, and I couldn't get an answer from the government during Estimates process. And what I found rather disheartening and very, very sad was when their annual reports came out that there was actually a reduction of \$30 million in Family Services.

When we see community resource centres begging this government—community options, Southwest Community Options, the Parkland community options—all of these organizations who are looking for assistance, many of them are having to consider closing and so they're going to be putting families in a very tough decision on trying to determine where to get help for their families, their family members who have a special need. These are individuals who have lived in communities, some for over 20 years; they have been contributors to their community. They have, you know, deliver the papers. They do the recycling programs. They provide supports to the municipalities. They feel like they are part of the community and they are part of the community. And when we see a government put \$30 million into a category that could help these individuals and then take that \$30 million out of that category and put it we don't know where, but not into the needs for children or adults with special needs.

Autism, another area that this government has made promises in, but failed through their Thrive! document in 2011—again just before an election put

out a document saying that they care and they will address this, and then pull that document and then create a committee and say, you know what, get together but don't bring anything forward that's going to cost us money because we cannot spend any money. You know, it just—it's—it rings hollow to so many families, and I believe that this government has done so many things that have challenged Manitoba families who are looking for some leadership and they have failed just miserably in providing that.

So, when they talk about cuts and they talk about, you know, managing Manitoba's finances or managing the tax dollars safely and carefully, I think I've laid out where this government has failed to do that. This government's priorities have been anywhere but on the issues that are important to vulnerable Manitobans.

And, with regard to daycare, we know that they can brag about these spaces, but you know what? If you don't have staff to manage them or staff to work in them, then what's the point? Because if you can't have quality staff working within these centres, then you're not going to be able to continue to maintain these facilities. And we see school divisions taking ECE trained staff and putting them into the school systems.

There's so many things that this government has to look at in an umbrella sense that—with regard to health care, not talk about spaces on a regular basis without providing the means to support that. And I—you know, I'm just extremely frustrated by a government that is more interested in photo ops and press releases than they are in fulfilling the promises that they've made to Manitobans.

So, on that point, I would support the resolution put forward by our leader because I think that his amendments are very, very solid, but I cannot support this government's budget because, again, there were so many things that they've promised in budgets past that they haven't fulfilled.

And as one individual said, on budget day, that I talked to in the hall, they indicated that this is a fallback budget, meaning that this government is falling further and further behind. They used to brag about how they were better than Saskatchewan or better than Alberta or better than Ontario in some ways. Nowhere in the budget did they do a comparative, Mr. Deputy Speaker—nowhere, because this government is falling further and further behind other jurisdictions, and that is a very, very sad state. Thank you.

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier):** This was a steady-growth, good-jobs budget.

The global economic recovery has been slow and fragile. Manitoba is doing well thanks to businesses, workers and government working together.

The last time the Leader of the Opposition sat around the Cabinet table, he made cuts to hurt Manitoba families and our economy. He hasn't changed. He wants a half a billion dollars in cuts to our hospitals, schools and roads.

Our plan and this budget continue us down the path of creating opportunities for young people, investing in infrastructure to build a stronger economy, making life better for Manitoba families and taking a balanced approach to the benefit of everybody who lives in this province. *[interjection]* Thank you.

This budget will create more opportunities for our kids and children to train, work and stay in Manitoba. We've set a goal of increasing our workforce by 75,000 by the year 2020.

Budget 2014 will promote apprenticeship and career development, starting with an enhanced \$5,000 apprenticeship tax credit as well as a new bonus credit for employers who take on an apprentice for the first time, and a \$1,000 bursary for apprentices finishing their final year.

No matter what someone wants to be when they grow up, it all starts with good schools. Budget 2014 invests a record \$1.2 billion in the classrooms of Manitoba. It dedicates new funding to upgrade equipment in schools, such as science labs and vocational labs. It puts a renewed emphasis on career development in our high schools.

And, even before people get to high schools or elementary schools, we have early childhood development investment in this province. And now we're partnering with the McConnell Foundation, private contributors from inside of Manitoba, and our own contribution, to have a special innovation fund to continue to be the best place in Canada for investments in early childhood development in young families.

\* (15:30)

And, when they leave the early childhood development programs, they will be able, when their parents are working, to enter into daycare programs, whereas I said earlier today, we've gone from

12,000 places to 28,000 places in the province of Manitoba. And those daycare centres, they're early childhood learning centres. They prepare young people for success at school. They prepare them for the ability to do well when they get to school, and what happens when they get to school? We made a commitment and we followed through on it every year to ensure that we have smaller class sizes for everybody in kindergarten to grade 3, and we have done that. We've hired over 253 more teachers in the K-to-3 sector in Manitoba. That's more teachers, smaller class sizes, more attention to children, more ability for them to get off to a good, healthy start in school and it's all happening here in Manitoba. And it compares very strongly with what the Conservatives did when they were in office, where they cut funding for schools and laid off 700 teachers.

*Mr. Speaker in the Chair*

Just last week we announced \$12.4 million to renovate or rebuild 21 classrooms in eight schools across the province to further reduce class sizes, and we also announced 2 and a half per cent funding increase for our universities and a 2 per cent increase for our colleges at a time when other provinces are making drastic cuts in the colleges and universities in their own territories.

In the year ahead we will work with universities and the business community on a new innovation strategy creating Research Manitoba, enhancing the Small Business Venture Capital Tax Credit, enhancing the community economic development tax credit, and we will have an organization that better co-ordinates the commercialization of intellectual property in Manitoba. We have some first-class, world-class scientists in Manitoba. They come up with new ideas. They come up with new inventions, and we will work with them to take those inventions and that intellectual property and take it through the stages of development to create new commercial products, new jobs in Manitoba, and new treatments for people around the world and new applications that will help people all around the world have a higher quality of life.

To grow our workforce, we have brought in very significant reforms to the social assistance to help people and encourage people to go into the labour markets for the good jobs that are available there, and we've done that with a program we called rent assistance. This is the largest increase to social assistance rates since the Conservatives clawed back

the National Child Benefit, and we came into office and restored it to the tune of \$48 million for families. They took money out of the pockets of families. We're putting money back into the pockets of families, and when families get jobs and opportunities in the labour market we will allow them to retain these benefits until they become self-sufficient.

We will build more affordable and social housing in the province, a thousand more units, while expanding child care for parents, another \$5 million in the daycare sector. We will partner with Red River College and employers to establish a first-in-Manitoba, post-secondary program to train people to work with people with intellectual disabilities, and we will train people with intellectual disabilities to enter the labour market because those folks have something to offer back to their communities. They will be supported to be able to enter the labour market and make a contribution to the community, to become more self-sufficient with the support of their families. This is something Manitoba families asked us to do and we will follow through on that with Red River College.

So we will listen to all those ways we can lift up people through assistance on their rates for social assistance, for assistance on their rates to have decent housing, through assistance for them to be successful in school and, when they're working, through more help for child care and early childhood learning in Manitoba.

And our education system will continue to be funded at the rate of economic growth. That's something this budget delivers on. That's a promise this budget has kept to Manitobans and, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite will vote against it, once again.

But not only does this budget invest in people, it also invests in infrastructure, a 5-and-a-half-billion-dollar infrastructure that will create 58,900 jobs in Manitoba—jobs—jobs that the members opposite are in denial about, and that will help us build highways. That will help us increase flood protection. That will help us build municipal infrastructure, and that will help us create the kinds of conditions where we can have economic growth—steady economic growth in Manitoba.

The Conference Board of Canada said that will lift the economy by \$6.3 billion over the next five years, Mr. Speaker, and those pillars of that economic infrastructure program are highway

renewal, with record investments, which will strengthen our trade routes and create the opportunity for CentrePort Canada to be able to attract businesses to this province, to allow businesses that are already here to expand, many of which have already taken advantage of that and then be able to move their goods and services to market through better roads, through CentrePort way, through investments in the Perimeter of Manitoba, through investments in interchanges which will connect the Perimeter to Highway 75.

We will upgrade all of those facilities and roads in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, while the members opposite will vote against it, but when the ribbon cutting comes to open it up, they will show up and pretend they supported it, just like they always do. But we know the Leader of the Opposition would cancel those projects. He would throw people out of work and put our economic recovery at risk.

Mr. Speaker, we're also moving forward on hydro development in Manitoba, and we've recently announced a major, new power sale to Wisconsin power service in the great state of Wisconsin. Members opposite have said that we're selling our power cheaper than we provide it in Manitoba. The people of Wisconsin pay double the rates that we do in Manitoba. The people pay double the rates in Minnesota that people in Manitoba do, and those exports keep our rates low so that Manitobans can have an affordable cost of living.

Export sales are estimated to be \$29 billion over the next 30 years, and yesterday, after they opposed it in the 1980s, the members opposite tried to take credit for Limestone. They said it would increase rates in Manitoba for future generations. In fact, Limestone was built for \$1.6 billion and it has generated \$6 billion in profits for the people of Manitoba.

And you know what, Mr. Speaker, members opposite, the entire history of the Conservative Party of Manitoba has been to oppose hydro development in Manitoba until it was built and then to take credit for it. That's what they will do.

Mr. Speaker, former Premier Filmon said borrowing 2 or 3 billion dollars and building a power dam two or more years before we need it will create some jobs for a while. It will also increase our power rates dramatically and we will all pay that price. The jobs will last for five years; the debts will last forever. Limestone was paid off in 10 years and the profits continue to flow to Manitoba and keep

Manitoba hydro rates the lowest in North America—the lowest in North America.

Mr. Speaker, this budget will also make life better for Manitoba families. Budget 2014 invests in front-line services that Manitoba families count on. Last week, we announced new health teams and clinics to help ensure access to a family doctor for all Manitobans. When the Leader of the Opposition last sat at the Cabinet table, medical school spaces were slashed and were cut, and the government of the day froze health-care capital spending. They entirely cancelled health-care capital spending after the 1995 election. They said they would do it in '95 and then they reneged on that and cancelled all health-care spending immediately after that.

This year, we will make Manitoba even more affordable. This is the first year of our plan to eliminate school taxes for seniors. The move will take another 7,200 seniors off of the tax rolls. The average Manitoba family will save \$3,800 this year as a result of tax reductions made by the government since 1999.

And, Mr. Speaker, the biggest 'thrat'—threat to affordability of Manitoba families is the Leader of the Opposition's desire to bring back—to bring to Manitoba two-tier health care. He has said that's a system we need in Manitoba. We say the thickness of your wallet should not determine your priority to get health-care services in Manitoba.

\* (15:40)

And what about taxes for business, Mr. Speaker? What about taxes for businesses? When we came into office, Manitoba businesses paid the highest business taxes in the country; nine per cent was the taxation rate for small business. And what is it today? Wonder what it is today—zero—zero small business taxes in Manitoba. And when we came into office, the corporate tax rate was 17 per cent on major corporations in Manitoba. What is it today? Twelve per cent—12 per cent—30 per cent less when the Tories were in power. And when we were in—when the Tories were in office, they had a capital tax. Do we have a capital tax in Manitoba today? No, we don't. Capital tax in Manitoba is zero on businesses, when they paid over \$80 million a year in capital taxes when the Tories were in power.

And, Mr. Speaker, when farmers paid education taxes in Manitoba under the Tories, they paid the full freight. Today, they have an 80 per cent reduction in farmland school taxation. And, oh, by the way, when

families were paying their education taxes in Manitoba, they paid the education support levy. That was about \$175 million in today's taxes. Do they pay the education support levy in Manitoba now? No, that has been eliminated.

This government has brought in the largest tax reductions in the history of the province of Manitoba, for the citizens of Manitoba. And every single time we reduced taxes, the members of the Progressive Conservative Party voted against it. Every single time, they voted against it, Mr. Speaker. But we're taking a balanced approach. We're taking a balanced approach which will bring us back into balance by the year 2016-17, one year less than the members of the opposition promised they would do if they were re-elected. They said they wouldn't balance the budget 'til 2018.

Decades—debt-servicing costs, Mr. Speaker, are lower than they were a decade ago. A decade ago, Manitobans, in every budget, paid about 13.3 cents on the dollar for debt servicing. What do they pay in this year's budget? Less than 6 cents on the dollar. Less than half—less than half—of what they paid under the Conservatives.

And, Mr. Speaker, we will continue to manage government prudently; nine departments have seen their budgets frozen this year. Core government spending has been limited to 2 per cent, and a new Lean Council has been in place with participation from members of the private sector to help us streamline services even further.

We've reduced the number of RHAs. What did the Conservatives do when they were running the health-care system? They increased the amount of bureaucracy by creating 13 RHAs, and they laid off a thousand and fired a thousand nurses, Mr. Speaker. What have we done since we've been in office? We've reduced the number of RHAs from 13 to five, and we've hired over 3,500 more nurses in the province. What did they do? They created more senior bureaucrats and they drove doctors out of Manitoba and they reduced the medical enrolment in the medical school. We've increased the medical enrolment from 70 to 110, and we have over 560 more 'doctorses' practising in Manitoba.

And what about nurse practitioners? Could anybody find a nurse practitioner in Manitoba when they were in office? No, they didn't exist. We have over a hundred nurse practitioners in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, now, and they are serving people very effectively, including in QuickCare clinics, which

didn't exist when the members out of office were in office. There were no QuickCare clinics, there were no access centres, emergency rooms were jammed up because they didn't have enough nurses and doctors. We've turned that around. And a health care has resulted in better health-care outcomes for Manitobans.

Recently, the centre for health-care policy did an analysis of the health-care status of Manitobans. And what did they find? That the health-care status of Manitobans had improved in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker—had improved for everybody. There's still more work to do. There's still more work to do to lift the health-care status of all Manitobans, but it won't be lifted by the two-tier health care that the members opposite are promising. It won't be lifted by the user fees that they're promising. It won't be lifted by a return to privatizing home care, which they've talked about. That won't be done.

So, Mr. Speaker, when we look at the Leader of the Opposition and the opposition's commitment to Manitoba, they want to cut \$550 million out of the budget. They want to go back to the big chill. Well, I can tell you, everywhere around Manitoba people are tired of the big chill. They're tired of tough love. They're tired of that. What they want is a government that has steady economic growth, good health care, good education for young people and jobs—jobs—58,900 more jobs.

Faced with economic uncertainty, we could've chosen the path of the Progressive Conservatives. We could've chosen the path of austerity, a path that drove 33,000 people out of the province when they were in office, Mr. Speaker. They actually had a net reduction in people living in Manitoba. What've we got? We've got over a hundred thousand people more living in Manitoba. We have enough people to create another two Brandons in Manitoba, and they've opposed that.

And when it came to stand up for the immigration settlement services program, what did they do, Mr. Speaker? They were invisible. The only people to stand up for Manitobans and immigrant settlement services was this side of the House.

Mr. Speaker, this budget is a budget for all Manitobans. This budget is a budget for prosperity. This budget is a budget for steady economic growth. This budget is a budget for jobs and opportunities to make their—for young people to make a life in Manitoba, and this budget will serve Manitobans well over the next five years. I look forward to the

opposition supporting it. I look forward them to putting aside their blinders and recognize that this is a budget that will be good for the people of Manitoba. I hope they will support it.

**Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler):** It is my pleasure to stand this afternoon and to speak on the budget amendment as introduced by the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Speaker, first off, I do want to welcome my new colleagues in the Legislature, the member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Piwniuk) and the member for Morris (Mr. Martin), who have quickly asserted themselves in this place, and they've learned the ropes quickly and we're so pleased to have them here. I think the underlying message to the NDP and to this government is that try as they might, they cannot stop democracy, that even though these MLAs had to campaign in very imperfect conditions, it was inevitable, and so the Premier (Mr. Selinger) and the NDP party should take that into consideration. You cannot stop Manitobans from having their say. You can try to stop them from having their say, but the message of those by-elections is that Manitobans will have their say in the end, and it's a good message, one that buoys us up here on this side of the House, and I know that it's one that does create the kind of chill in the hearts and minds of those individuals on that side of the House.

Mr. Speaker, I think it was Mark Twain who said that history doesn't repeat itself, but it rhymes. And as we sit here this afternoon, I wonder about how many times—I wonder if the irony is lost on the Premier, on those members, how many times they have stood in this same place in similar circumstances and delivered the same message full of sound and fury signifying nothing, and had the adulation and applause of 36 others on that side, but really was nothing more than empty sound to the rest of Manitoba because Manitobans had heard it all before. Indeed, even as this afternoon they have heard this all before. Substitute the dates, change the dates, change the names, change the places and the message has not changed from this tired, self-serving, blame-laying, excuse-making NDP government.

\* (15:50)

And, Mr. Speaker, I want to say that I'm very pleased to be able to have this opportunity to speak on the amendment. I'm very pleased to be able to represent the constituency of Morden-Winkler. I know I got into tremendous trouble the first time I

stood in this Chamber two years ago, and I made a mistake of saying that Morden-Winkler was the best constituency in the entire province and it was at that point where I felt I really lost the support of my colleagues because all the sudden the heckling was coming from this side of the House and not from the other side. *[interjection]* Member from Steinbach suggests it might have been before that that I began to lose the support of colleagues.

In any case, Mr. Speaker, what I want to convey to you, and I know that I've told you before, is that the constituents that I represent and the constituents that we represent here are hard-working people, they are honest people, they are family-oriented people, they are community-oriented people, they are people who see a challenge and rise to meet it, they see obstacles and they rise to overcome them. And this budget, full of false promises, full of broken promises, this recycled document that is not worth the paper it's written on, does not resonate with those kind of folk.

Mr. Speaker, I just consider the deficit in the days that have passed and as we have spoken on the amendment as introduced by the leader—this is an important time for Manitoba. This was supposed to be a galvanizing moment for the province of Manitoba. This was supposed to be the day, the time in which Manitoba would turn the page on the legacy of debt and deficit. And this same NDP government said, we have seen the light, give us another chance; in 2014 you can take it to the bank, the deficit days will be in the dark. And here we are, only a short 24–23 months after the pledge was made, and I remind the House it was the Minister of Finance (Ms. Howard) who said at that time that we confirm our plan to balance the budget in 2014. As a matter of fact, the same day, as the member for Morris (Mr. Martin) reminded us the other day, he said, do not underestimate our desire to balance the budget in 2014.

What does this teach us? That hard work takes more than desire. It takes will, it takes a plan and it takes incremental steps forward in a direction that will send a message to the electorate and send a message to Manitobans that you are indeed moving in the right direction. It is not enough to surround yourself with sycophants that will applaud every time you say you've created jobs and you've slayed the deficit and you've paid down \$500 million in debt at the same time that Manitobans understand that jobs are leaving our province, that Manitobans understand that in the final analysis we have added—

no, we have not added, this government has added \$10 billion to the Province's debt in a short five years. That is the reality. It is the facts from which this government cannot divorce themselves.

Monsieur le Président, rien ne change pas. Rien ne change jamais avec ce gouvernement. On a vraiment un problème—c'est ça—mais pas avec les recettes, plutôt c'est un problème qui concerne les dépenses. Et année—chaque année, année après année, on continue à dire des mensonges aux Manitobains. Et après 15 années comme gouvernement, et après beaucoup de promesses non tenues, ce parti nouveau démocratique continue à dire quelque chose et à faire quelque chose complètement d'autre. Et il arrive enfin que les Manitobains remarquent cela. On voit les mensonges, et ils ne sont pas heureux. On croit—on croit plus—que nous pouvons viser plus haut.

### **Translation**

*Mr. Speaker, nothing changes. Nothing ever changes with this government. We really do have a problem, that's true, but not with the revenues, the problem is rather with the expenditures. And year—every year, year after year, Manitobans continue to be told lies. And after fifteen years as a government, and after many promises that have not been kept, this New Democratic Party continues to say one thing and do something completely different. And Manitobans are finally realizing this. They see the lies and they are not happy. We believe—we believe more—that we can aim higher.*

### **English**

They believe, Mr. Speaker, that we can aim higher, and indeed we should.

Mr. Speaker, the third-quarter results show that core government spending this year is projected to be \$31 million over budget. This, despite the fact that in the Minister of Finance's (Ms. Howard) third-quarter result—she comes out of that meeting, she goes to the media and she tries to convey a message that somehow the third-quarter result is evidence that the government is moving in the right direction. What the Finance Minister—and I understand that she's new in her role—what she fails to convey to Manitobans is the fact that core government spending is \$31 million over their own budget. From budget to projection, \$31 million over, proving that the more things change, the more things indeed stay the same. Nothing has changed.

As a matter of fact, I believe that was the reason that the Free Press editorial said the next day that taxpayers could quickly dismiss this as a piece of political fraud that taxpayers could put in the garbage can—not my words, but the words of the Free Press. And, Mr. Speaker, I think that they were on firm footing to make that pronouncement because, indeed, it was not an honest disclosure of the performance of government. It was an attempt, instead, to not disclose, to cover over the sad record of a government that, year after year, spends more than it takes in.

So, in fact, over five years, this government has racked up summary deficits of \$2.5 billion despite soaring revenues. It is, indeed, the case. It is not a question of revenue; it is a question of expenditure. Is it a— it is a question of management. It is a question of financial mismanagement.

What the Finance Minister's third-quarter result also didn't indicate is that she was saved by the bell, that because of record high water levels above the dams and because of a record cold winter, that I know we would all wish would end soon, govern—or I should say, Manitoba Hydro profits were far in excess of what had been budgeted, and that was the saving grace.

The issue, though, is that, even while members opposite say, hear, hear, I guess what they're hoping is that lightning will strike each and every year. And they will keep lining up at the kiosk to buy their lottery ticket and crossing their fingers and hoping that even though every month they max out their Visa card and they pay the Visa card with the MasterCard and they meet only the minimum payment, that by lining up at the kiosk and by spending the milk money on the lottery tickets, somehow they will get lucky again.

Well, in the quarter three result, I mean, it did happen that Hydro profits were way up. I would submit, though, Mr. Speaker, to you, that is no way for a government to run the finances of the Province. It is no way for a government, over 15 years, to actually demonstrate that it is moving forward.

Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I did not also state at the outset of my remarks that I said I was proud to represent Morden-Winkler constituency, but I must say that I was never more proud to represent Morden-Winkler constituency than when the Power

Smart Manitoba Winter Games came to Morden-Winkler-Stanley only one month ago.

And, Mr. Speaker, I would invite the members opposite to listen, because I think they would be excited, and I know that the member for Dawson Trail (Mr. Lemieux) joined me at the closing ceremonies. I know that the member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon) and the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Wishart) were with me at the opening ceremonies. What a showcase that we, in our part of the province, were able to welcome some 7,500 athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers, all to our communities. The volunteers who made these games work were fantastic. The sense of ownership in their roles was so exciting to see.

And we welcomed these athletes, ranging in age from 10 to 18 years old, for sports, including ringette, hockey, table tennis, curling, wrestling, Special Olympics curling, cross-country skiing, gymnastics, badminton and figure skating.

I know that watching some of the games, the member for Portage la Prairie had to explain to me some of the ins and outs of ringette because our area is known for some sports, but ringette was quite new to our area, and so we were able to watch that game with interest. The central—the southern and central team did very, very well. In that particular match, Westman proved to be a little stronger, but we got them back in some other events.

Mr. Speaker, I would just want to say, what a fantastic commitment from the cities of Morden and Winkler and the RM of Stanley to host these games, what a fantastic job by the organizing committee and all the volunteers and what a great showcase of sport.

\*(16:00)

A surprise to see that, in the fall, that the government did not see fit to actually recognize that the games were taking place. Sure, they did now with the budget speech, but they kind of forgot to do so, and it was not—that fact was not missed by my community. And, Mr. Speaker, I would remind them that any time we're inviting thousands of young athletes to compete at the top of their game, that is indeed cause for celebration. And as much as the Olympics is cause for celebration, and we all know that we should stand and cheer those athletes, we should also stand and cheer these young athletes who we may very well one day be staying up late at night and tuning in the TV to watch when they go to the Olympics. These are our finest athletes, and

what a wonderful event to see and witness in Morden-Winkler and Stanley.

Mr. Speaker, it is not just the deficit failures of this government that we should be speaking about today, we must also recognize their terrible legacy of debt. As I had mentioned, in just five years this government has managed to add \$10 billion to the provincial debt, and they make audacious claims that they are paying down debt at the same time as they racking up record debts.

Mr. Speaker, this is uncharted territory for the province of Manitoba. With respect to accumulated debt, I believe it now stands at something like \$12,000 per person in the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, we need to keep in mind as well that just two years ago the government was predicting a surplus, and now they are in deficit. Whatever they are saying now about when they will get out of this debt hole, Manitobans have every reason to be very, very skeptical.

Mr. Speaker, oh, and by the way, I should correct myself, I was wrong; it's not the sad legacy of our children of having a debt that is equal to \$12,000 a person, it's actually \$25,000 per person. I stand corrected.

And, Mr. Speaker, this government must admit that beyond all their promises is a legacy of financial mismanagement and uncontrolled spending that is digging our province deeper and deeper into debt.

I've reminded this Finance Minister that all this occurs not at a time as she suggested—what was the word that the Finance Minister used today—the great recession. I remind this minister that in the—that the revenues accruing to government have continued to rise. I remind her that the interest rates that her government has enjoyed for 15 years continue to be at record low levels. I remind her that the federal transfer payments that her government continues to receive from the federal government are record high.

These fundamentals owing to opportunity for her government have not changed, Mr. Speaker, and neither has the legacy of what this government has accomplished, or rather not accomplished, with the incredible, unparalleled opportunity that they were given to do better, to face the challenges, to put this province on a course towards sustainability, towards jobs, towards opportunity for young people, towards fiscal stability and sustainability, and that is a fail. As my son would say, that is an epic fail.

Mr. Speaker, I want to go on, I want to remind this government that as they continue to fail when it comes to all things financial, the CIBC recently reported in a Globe and Mail article that paying down debt remains the top financial priority of Canadians. And that's of tremendous significance.

This article was printed on January the 3rd, so it's just a few short months ago, and in it Christina Kramer, who's the executive vice-president of retail distribution and channel strategy at CIBC, is quoted saying, while the intent to reduce debt is clear, we also know that some Canadians are not yet making the progress they want to on reducing overall debt levels, which speaks to the importance of having a clear action plan in place to reach your goals in 2014. And I thought to myself how applicable that same summary could be if applied to this provincial government that somehow has this fuzzy plan, this really touchy-feely plan, that in the end, in the final analysis at some unpinpointed place on the continuum on a moving-forward basis, they would like to be able to return to surplus. The problem is that they have proven to be unequal to the task. And even as this senior executive with CIBC says, it speaks to the importance of having a clear action plan. And I would ask, even today, does this government have a clear action plan to get us out of deficit? Does this government have a clear action plan to get Manitoba on a path away from debt? Does this government have a clear action plan to create jobs in the economy? No, Mr. Speaker.

As a matter of fact, I would remind this government that, in fact, in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, debt reduction was selected in this poll as the most important goal by 16 per cent of all respondents. I would say, Mr. Speaker, if I was warning this government, that they ignore the key interest of Manitobans at their own peril.

Mr. Speaker, I asked this Finance Minister the other day, what if interest rates go up? We have debt that is financed. We understand we have paid this debt, and we have serviced this debt in some of the most advantageous conditions in modern history, and what would be the effect, the net effect of a rising interest rate. We understand that debt servicing costs right now are up \$36 million just from last year. We understand that debt servicing costs are up \$75 million from just two years ago. We understand that we pay double the debt servicing costs of our neighbours to the west in Saskatchewan. We understand that we pay 10 times the debt servicing costs of Alberta. This is not an advantageous position

for Manitoba to be in. And it is important that this government show leadership, show a plan and get moving on this; leadership matters.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, on the topic of leadership matters, I think about the debts and the failure of this government to get this—to get our province on to firm footing, and it reminds me of an article that I saw just a little while ago. Matter of fact, not even—it's exactly a month ago that this article appeared, and also in the Globe and Mail, but this one is one that I think the government might pay attention to.

This is Premier Christy Clark talking about the challenge that every government, she says, regardless of ideology, must face to make the tough decisions. She says each government has unique pressures, but, broadly speaking, we face the same set of challenges: a fragile global recovery, stagnant revenues, cherished institutions that cost money. And, Mr. Speaker, if I was to interject, I would say this government has even faced better times than the ones that Premier Clark refers to.

But, in any case, she says, leadership matters. It might not be colourful enough to make the news, but the most important part is simply having the discipline every day to say no to growing the size of government. It is hard to do, but balancing the budget is the first step to paying down our debt. You cannot eliminate long-term debt if you don't first stop overspending every year.

And here is where Premier Clark gives the implications of all of this because this is not just some kind of philosophical exercise. There—this is not just an ideological exercise. There is a place where the rubber hits the road, and I appreciated her final analysis which was this—or her final reflection: imagine what our children can achieve with the freedom to make their own decisions when it's their turn to lead, free from the burden of the decisions that our generation made but couldn't pay for. End quote.

Mr. Speaker, it's exactly this legacy that the NDP, the spendP's overspending and mismanagement will cost our children. It matters that we get our fiscal house in order. It matters that we join the New West Partnership and send a powerful message about interjurisdictional harmonization of regulations and encouraging trade. It matters that we focus our energies onto helping grow a better education system and not throwing trustees under the bus. It matters that we develop respectful dialogue

with municipal and federal government and stop throwing them under the bus and learn how to participate. These are the fundamentals when it comes to governing with integrity, and these have proven beyond the grasp of this government.

\*(16:10)

Mr. Speaker, in the time remaining, fiscal stabilization account—we brought this issue to the Finance Minister when we asked her, you're drawing another \$100 million out, you drew another \$55 million out. As a matter of fact, this most recent withdrawal from the fiscal stabilization account in essence reduces the size of the account by 20 per cent. Really, what is left at this point? We've seen this government that has stopped its required debt payments. They say they'll return to them when we get back into balance. All right, well, where is that point on the horizon? It's far beyond the point that any Manitoban can see.

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to transfer payment, no government has had it better, and I would remind this government I had a chance to look at a graph this week, and I know that they are unperplexed with a need to express fidelity to history. But I would invite them to look back and see the size of the federal transfer payment between 1999 and 2014, and I would invite them to notice the point where the financial support from the federal government dipped sharply downward at the—they don't concern themselves with anything more than trying to produce a caricature of what it was like in the '90s, but I remind them that Premier Romanow faced the same challenges. Other governments faced the same challenges. Oh, they want to rewrite history, but they will never table a document to actually show that overnight federal support for our province dipped by a billion dollars.

We had never seen, in those years, a fiscal transfer payment of more than \$2 billion. This government has never seen a transfer payment of less than \$2 billion. I guarantee my colleagues that such a document shall never be tabled in this House on that side of the House. That's the information they hope to goodness that Manitobans do not come quickly to realize.

Mr. Speaker, there are so many missteps from this government. I know that my colleagues have unpacked, in the days that have gone by, all the promises made by this government. We've heard about the infrastructure lie, whereby they said we're going to spend it on infrastructure, but they

underspent by 27 per cent. Over four fiscal years, they underspent by \$1.9 billion on infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, we know that, when it comes to this hydro expansion plan, our critic and others have taken the time to clearly explain how it is that this government is rushing headlong into a capital development plan that, at one time, had merit and now should at least be fact-checked. And as much as they want to distort and as much as they want to mislead, and as much as they want to simply throw our legitimate concerns under the bus, it has been clear in our remarks, it has been clear through the speeches and through the communications we have given that what we're saying to this government is do not proceed unilaterally. We're saying, listen to the experts. We're saying, develop a respectful dialogue. We're saying, think twice before you jump headlong into an enterprise that is now very much up in the air.

All the experts say, other provinces are showing tremendous reluctance to move over. The natural gas exploration and supply has changed energy needs. There's a reason this government does not want to open the contracts. There's a reason they pull down the shroud around all of the contracts that they have signed with US states. These are the arguments that my colleagues have put forward in the past number of days.

There's an article in the Free Press that says this government is digging deeper, and, indeed, that's the case, that they are digging deeper as time goes on, and Manitoba cannot afford anymore. Mr. Speaker, I remind you, as I've reminded this House in question period, that, when it comes to income tax, we pay far more than our neighbouring provinces. As a matter of fact, Manitobans pay as much income tax to this province as Saskatchewan, Alberta, and BC combined, and the average family of four earning \$60,000 pays \$1,500 more than BC, twice as much as Alberta, and they pay almost \$3,000 more than the same family living in Saskatchewan. And the Finance Minister can try to cast aspersions on that data all she wants, but all you have to do is talk to someone who lives in Yorkton. You can actually do it two ways: You could either look at the data that clearly bears out this, or you can just phone a friend. You can call a friend who lives in Yorkton and say, hey, what do you pay in income taxes?

Mr. Speaker, I remind the government, at a time of low interest rates, at a time of record government revenues, at a time of record transfers from the federal government, they have blown it.

I liked what my colleague from Charleswood said yesterday, that they are hosing Manitobans. They are hosing Manitobans every day, and they're like a giant shop vac that just keeps sucking resources out of the pockets of Manitobans, and, Mr. Speaker, it's unsustainable.

Mr. Speaker, I saw a graph the other day that showed that, when it came to income tax bracket threshold change, we are the laggards of Canada, bottom of the barrel, the least changed. This government taxes big time, but then they also tax behind the scenes. They tax sneakily by not adjusting upward income tax rates. They tax sneakily by not adjusting upward the basic personal exemption.

And, for a party that says they are the protectors of those Manitobans who earn the least, their record shows anything but— that they are quick to the trough. As a matter of fact, when the idea was put forward again by our party, the Finance minister said that the idea would rob the coffers of government; that the money of poor income earners in Manitoba is best left in his pocket, and not in the pockets of Manitobans who work for the money.

Mr. Speaker, I know that my time is almost over, but let me just say this—I know that my colleagues across the way are hanging on to my every word—but I have to say, for the reasons put forward by my colleagues, I must support the amendment of our leader. I must support an amendment because the biggest fraud that this government has perpetrated on Manitobans is their PST hike of 8 per cent. I must support the amendment because they have done a— trying to do away with the referendum that Manitobans deserve, that they continue to deficit-spend. that they are threatening the services to Manitobans, that they are breaking their promises to seniors, that they are breaking their promises to landowners, that they are neglecting vulnerable Manitobans, and that they are gambling with Hydro and not joining the New West Partnership. For that reason, the amendment must—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The honourable member's time has expired.

**Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to get up and close debate on Budget 2014.

And I wanted to start—I'm sure many members of the House know that the federal Finance Minister has just announced that he is resigning effective today, and I just want to send him my best wishes. I didn't

get to know him very well in my time as Finance Minister, but I certainly wish him well in the next chapter of his life. Anyone who serves the public, I think, demands our respect and our thanks for taking that on, even when we don't always agree with everything. And I just hope that he enjoys his time with his family and whatever challenges lie ahead.

I also want to—I didn't get a chance in the budget speech—I want to thank all of the staff who worked so hard to put the budget together. It is an impressive thing when you become Finance Minister to see the breadth and depth of intelligence, of concern for Manitobans, of concern for what they need, what their priorities are, concern for the way that their tax dollars are used. And I want to thank the staff of Treasury Board and the Department of Finance, and the staff throughout government, who worked very hard to put together a budget and do that exceedingly well.

I also want to just briefly thank my family. This work, the work that we all do, means many nights and weekends away from our families. And I know we probably all tell ourselves, we'll make it up, and maybe we will, but those are times that once gone are gone. And I just want to thank them for their understanding. I think I probably stayed healthier this cold and flu season because I wasn't at home long enough to catch anything. So that's a upside, but there were too many evenings and too many weekends missed.

\* (16:20)

In listening to my friend across the way give his speech, you know, what he forgot to talk about—that this budget is about? People. This budget is about the people of Manitoba. This budget is about creating good jobs today and tomorrow, and it's about making sure that our kids, and Manitobans who have never worked before, have the opportunity to get the skills and training to take those good jobs and build a life right here in Manitoba. And why is there so much emphasis in this job—in this budget on jobs? Because that's good for people. It's good for people to have a job, a job that they feel good about, that's interesting, that makes a contribution to their community. And it's good for the economy.

Mr. Speaker, we need to grow the workforce in Manitoba. The No. 1 barrier that we hear from businesses to growing their businesses is a lack of skilled people to take those jobs. And that's why there's such an emphasis in this budget on skills and training, so people can get those good jobs that we

know are being created by businesses, are being created by the investment that is in this budget.

This budget also mirrors the priorities of Manitobans. It protects and invests in the services that families count on, services like health care and education, services like child care. And it does that while looking for more efficient ways to deliver excellent results to Manitobans. And this is how we get to balance responsibly—not by cutting deeply into those services, not by throwing people out of work, not by leaving people behind, but by responsibly growing the economy, investing in our assets, our geographic hub at the centre of the country; the promise for a transportation hub; hydro, which is one of our greatest natural assets; and our people, investing in our people.

This budget contains, and we've heard it, and we are going to hear more about it in the coming weeks and months, a historic investment in building our infrastructure: 5 and a half billion dollars in building infrastructure in this province. And that is good for the economy. It is going to create conditions for future economic growth. That's what we heard when we went around and listened to Manitobans, to business leaders and others, that we need to make those investments if we want to continue to grow our economy. And that plan creates 58,900 jobs, Mr. Speaker, over five years. Or, if you prefer, 12,500 jobs a year. Or, if you prefer, 8,500 jobs in the first year, [inaudible] jobs the year after that, more jobs the year after that.

But, you know, what I came to understand in this budget-making process, and I think what I've come to understand whenever I've worked on a budget, be that a budget of a small community organization or the budget of the Province of Manitoba—and it is a tremendous honour and privilege to get to do this work. I come from a very working class family; I grew up in the west end of Brandon and went to high school there; and I don't think anybody ever thought that I would be standing here delivering the budget of Manitoba. But that is the promise of this province; that is the promise of this province; and that is what we want for our kids, for them to dream and be whatever it is that they want to be, to have the opportunities that we've had; and that's what this budget invests in.

Do you know what all budgets do? What they really are an expression of is what we can do when we act together. And Manitobans know this. They know what we could do when we act together to

invest in flood protection. Today we heard about the successful expansion of the floodway. That is something we do when we come together, when we come together with other levels of government. They know what we do when we come together to look after each other. This year we'll celebrate the 40th anniversary of home care in this province.

But you know what is the fundamental difference, I think, between our side of the House and the other side of the House, what I think is the fundamental difference in our philosophies, is that we believe that we have a responsibility to each other, that when you are part of a community, or part of a family, or part of a province, that you have a responsibility to each other. We don't want to return to a time when it was everyone for themselves and when people who were weak or vulnerable or didn't maybe have every advantage, or maybe made some mistakes along the way, that they were left behind, that they were cast aside. I don't think that is what Manitobans expect of us. It's not the path that we're going to choose. It's not our way, and it is not Manitobans' way.

This budget, Mr. Speaker, it's been endorsed by child-care advocates and food bank directors. It's been endorsed by CEOs and economists at some of the leading banks in the country. This is a good budget. It's based on the priorities of Manitobans. It's a blueprint to realize their dreams, that their children will get a good job, will build a good life right here in Manitoba. And that's not only what families want; that is what is good for the future of this province, for our future economic prosperity. And that's what this budget invests in and that's what this budget will deliver on.

This budget is about people. Fundamentally, that is what guides our actions, is listening to the priorities of Manitobans. And I'm going to just—I shared a few stories in the budget speech. I have time to share one more from the road. I spoke on the Friday before we brought in the budget to a group of students at the Aboriginal Centre, and I talked to one man—and I've done this kind of work in the past and so I'm not naive. I know that there are lots of people who are struggling in our province, and I talked to this one young man and he—last year he had started doing carpentry education, and this year he was getting his GED.

And he talked to me about the struggles he'd faced in his life. He's overcome some difficult things. And—but he's doing everything we could ask of him.

He is doing everything we could ask of him. He's got his life back together. He's getting an education, and he needs a little bit more help. And, when we stood in this budget and talked about our commitment to get more money in the hands of guys like that so he could have a safer place to live, he is the one that I was thinking of, Mr. Speaker.

And I have to tell you, I have seen some examples of—I don't know what the right word is, probably not parliamentary in this House. I have not seen anything like today when we first had the official opposition try to take credit for increasing social assistance rates, and, in a few minutes, we're going to see them vote against it, Mr. Speaker. But that is the truth of who they are.

I want to finish with a quote of one Manitoban. I talked about some of the people who have endorsed this plan, Mr. Speaker, and I want to just end with one quote of one Manitoban who, in the days before the budget, saw that the province was on the right track. And this Manitoban said: We believe very strongly our province is on the way back up, and we want to be part of it. Who was that Manitoban?—none other than the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Pallister) who said that. And I want to say: Be part of it. I invite you on board with the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Pettersen)—as dubbed the love train and the hope train. I invite you to come on board and vote for Budget 2014. This is a blueprint for the future for Manitobans, for them to realize their dreams for their children to have the kind of opportunities that we have had and enjoyed in this province.

This is a good budget. It deserves the support of every member in this House, Mr. Speaker. It is the way forward to balance responsibly. It's the way forward to grow our economy, and it's the way forward to make sure that we can all continue to be proud to choose Manitoba, to call this place home not only for our own selves and our own lives but the lives of our children. Thank you very much.

**Mr. Speaker:** Is there any further debate?

**An Honourable Member:** Question.

**Mr. Speaker:** The House is ready for the question?

The question before the House now is the proposed amendment moved by the Leader of the Official Opposition to the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Finance (Ms. Howard) that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

Do the members wish to have the amendment read?

**Some Honourable Members:** Yes.

**Some Honourable Members:** No.

\* (16:30)

**Mr. Speaker:** I hear a yes.

It was moved by the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition

THAT the motion be amended by deleting all of the words after "House" and substituting:

therefore regrets that this budget neglects the priorities of Manitobans by:

- (a) failing to repeal the massive tax and fee increases imposed in Budget 2012 and Budget 2013 including the PST hike the provincial government previously referred to as "ridiculous" and promised never to impose; and
- (b) disrespecting Manitobans by refusing to hold the legally required referendum before increasing the PST and going to court in 2014 to permanently remove the rights of Manitobans to vote on major tax increases; and
- (c) breaking the promise to eliminate the structural deficit of nearly \$400 million created by years of government mismanagement and overspending despite record federal transfers, historically low interest rates and record government revenues; and
- (d) failing to address the growing threat to services Manitobans count on such as health and social supports which are severely impacted by more—by the more than \$32-billion provincial debt, a debt which was created by overspending even with record federal transfers, historical low interest rates and record government revenues; and
- (e) breaking the promise to seniors by failing to provide promised tax relief; and
- (f) neglecting vulnerable Manitobans by ignoring repeated calls from the official opposition and anti-poverty coalitions to immediately raise the Employment and Income Assistance rental allowance rates to 75 per cent of median market rents; and

- (g) failing to relieve the income tax burden for low-income families; and
- (h) ignoring repeated calls from the official opposition and independent experts to review the provincial government's \$25-billion Manitoba Hydro expansion gamble which has already resulted in dramatic hydro rate increases for Manitoba families and will continue to impose dramatic hydro rate increases for generations to come; and
- (i) failing to encourage business confidence by stifling economic growth through excessive red tape and worsening the already uncompetitive tax environment by raising the PST; and
- (j) continuing the provincial government's isolationist trade policies by failing to act on the repeated calls of the official opposition, leading employers and industry groups to join the New West Partnership.

As a consequence, the provincial government has thereby lost the confidence of this House and the people of Manitoba.

All those in favour of the amendment—is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

**Some Honourable Members:** Yes.

**Some Honourable Members:** No.

**Mr. Speaker:** I hear a no.

#### Voice Vote

**Mr. Speaker:** All those in favour of the amendment will please signify by saying aye.

**Some Honourable Members:** Aye.

**Mr. Speaker:** All those opposed to the amendment will please signify by saying nay.

**Some Honourable Members:** Nay.

**Mr. Speaker:** In the opinion of the Chair, the Nays have it.

#### Recorded Vote

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader):** A recorded vote, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** A recorded vote having been requested, call in the members.

\* (17:00)

Order, please.

The question before the House now is the proposed amendment moved by the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Pallister) to the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Finance (Ms. Howard) that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

#### Division

*A RECORDED VOTE was taken, the result being as follows:*

#### Yeas

*Briese, Cullen, Driedger, Eichler, Ewasko, Friesen, Goertzen, Graydon, Helwer, Martin, Mitchelson, Pallister, Pedersen, Pivniuk, Rowat, Schuler, Smook, Stefanson, Wishart.*

#### Nays

*Allan, Allum, Altemeyer, Ashton, Blady, Caldwell, Chief, Chomiak, Crothers, Dewar, Gaudreau, Gerrard, Howard, Irvin-Ross, Jha, Kostyshyn, Lemieux, Mackintosh, Maloway, Marcelino (Logan), Marcelino (Tyndall Park), Melnick, Nevakshonoff, Oswald, Pettersen, Robinson, Rondeau, Saran, Selby, Selinger, Struthers, Swan, Whitehead, Wiebe, Wight.*

**Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk):** Yeas 19, Nays 35.

**Mr. Speaker:** The amendment is accordingly lost.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Speaker:** The question before the House is the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Finance (Ms. Howard) that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

**Some Honourable Members:** No.

**Mr. Speaker:** I hear a no.

#### Voice Vote

**Mr. Speaker:** All those in favour of the motion will please signify by saying aye.

**Some Honourable Members:** Aye.

**Mr. Speaker:** All those opposed to the motion will please signify by saying nay.

**Some Honourable Members:** Nay.

**Mr. Speaker:** Opinion of the Chair, the Ayes have it.

**Recorded Vote**

**Mr. Goertzen:** A recorded vote, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** A recorded vote having been requested, call in the members.

Order, please.

The question before the House is the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Finance (Ms. Howard) that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

**Division**

*A RECORDED VOTE was taken, the result being as follows:*

**Yeas**

*Allan, Allum, Altemeyer, Ashton, Blady, Caldwell, Chief, Chomiak, Crothers, Dewar, Gaudreau,*

*Howard, Irvin-Ross, Jha, Kostyshyn, Lemieux, Mackintosh, Maloway, Marcelino (Logan), Marcelino (Tyndall Park), Melnick, Nevakshonoff, Oswald, Pettersen, Robinson, Rondeau, Saran, Selby, Selinger, Struthers, Swan, Whitehead, Wiebe, Wight.*

**Nays**

*Briese, Cullen, Driedger, Eichler, Ewasko, Friesen, Gerrard, Goertzen, Graydon, Helwer, Martin, Mitchelson, Pallister, Pedersen, Pivniuk, Rowat, Schuler, Smook, Stefanson, Wishart.*

**Clerk:** Yeas 34, Nays 20.

\* (17:10)

**Mr. Speaker:** I declare the motion accordingly carried.

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

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, March 18, 2014

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