

First Session – Forty-First Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS

Official Report
(Hansard)

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Speaker*

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-First Legislature

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, May 19, 2016

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

Please be seated.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

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

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Boundary Trails Health Centre

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance): Today I rise to congratulate Boundary Trails Health Centre on their 15th anniversary serving southern Manitoba. To celebrate, on Saturday, May the 14th, the hospital served cake and coffee to patients and visitors and even visiting MLAs.

Opened in 2001, Boundary Trails is located between Morden and Winkler at the intersections of highways 3 and 14 and was created after the closure of two older health-care facilities, including Bethel Hospital in Winkler and the Morden District General Hospital. It is now one major state-of-the-art regional facility.

Boundary Trails is a 94-bed, acute-care regional facility with a full-service emergency, ambulance, rehabilitation, clinical testing facility, CT scanner, MRI, cancer care, dialysis, palliative care, maternity and many more services, serving approximately 50,000 people in southern Manitoba. It represents the latest in technology and hosts the most sophisticated building systems available to date and has been largely supported by the communities that it serves.

The hospital has seen a growing demand for obstetric, cancer-care and emergency services ever since it opened. Cancer-care outpatient treatments had 2,100 patients in 2015. When it first opened, Boundary Trails delivered 434 babies, and now,

almost 1,000 deliveries per year. In addition, this year, Director Angie Cusson is expecting the facility to complete over 400 orthopedic joint replacements.

And I acknowledge and celebrate that in this community the front-line professionals are driving the change; front-line professionals are funding efficiencies and finding innovations in order to focus attention on patient care and meet the demands of a growing region.

I congratulate Boundary Trails Health Centre on their 15 years of service. I thank the board members and staff for their commitment and dedication to providing high-quality patient care and setting an example for all of us to learn.

Komagata Maru Apology

Mr. Mohinder Saran (The Maples): Madam Speaker, 102 years ago, in 1914, 376 people of the Sikh, Muslim and Hindu faiths left the Punjab region of India in search of peace and opportunity. They boarded the steamship the Komagata Maru in Hong Kong and crossed the Pacific Ocean hoping to start new lives in Canada.

Due to discriminatory laws in place, the Government of Canada turned its back on these people. After forcing the passengers to remain on their ship for two months off the port of Vancouver, the government admitted only 24 passengers into Canada. The rest were turned away because the ship violated exclusion laws, the passengers did not have the required funds, and they had not sailed directly from India to Canada. After their long, harsh journey, they were forced to return to Calcutta, where British soldiers killed 19 of them in clashes and threw others in prison for the duration of the First World War.

Yesterday, with descendants of the passengers in the House of Commons, Prime Minister Trudeau apologized for the Canadian government's failures.

Madam Speaker, I'm proud to have worked in solidarity with members of the Sikh, Muslim and Hindu communities to advocate for a formal apology. In 2008, I put forward a private member's resolution in this Legislature to urge the federal government for its past failures and to hold a moment of silence to pay our respects. Together, all

members of this Legislature passed the resolution unanimously.

I thank the Prime Minister for answering the calls for a formal apology. I hope it brings some sense of justice to the descendants who have suffered the intergenerational effects of this tragedy, and I hope it honours the memory of their parents and grandparents.

We must work every day to ensure we do not repeat the mistakes of the past. We must work to build communities that do not reject diversity but instead celebrate it.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mood Disorders Run

Ms. Janice Morley-Lecomte (Seine River): Madam Speaker, last Sunday I attended the Shoppers Drug Mart Run for Women in support of Mood Disorders Association of Manitoba. The goal of this event is to increase awareness of women's mental health issues within Canada. One in five Canadians are faced with mental illness, meaning that this is an issue that affects all of us in some way.

Madam Speaker, this year, Shoppers Drug Mart will be hosting the Run for Women in 15 cities across Canada. Thousands of participants will take part in the runs alongside hundreds of volunteers in one-, five- and 10-kilometre races. The runs will take place throughout the month of May and June. Shoppers Drug Mart kindly gave the Mood Disorders Association of Manitoba a cheque for \$42,000, which will allow it to increase the supports that it provides for mental health education, advocacy and programs. The Mood Disorders Association of Manitoba is a non-profit organization that was founded in 1983. It provides various services to those affected by mood disorders, as well as their friends, families, caregivers and supporters.

Mental health is a highly stigmatized issue, and the Run for Women is one of many initiatives that allows for thousands of individuals to take part in a national effort to discuss women's mental health. One of our government's initiatives is to make mental health a priority. We will work towards developing a comprehensive mental health strategy that will feature mental health and addictions programs and services while also emphasizing better co-ordination and access.

Madam Speaker, I would like to thank all of the organizers and volunteers for their work in hosting

the 2016 Shoppers Drug Mart Run for Women and look forward to attending the event again next year.

* (13:40)

Madam Speaker: Any further statements?

Altona Community Gardens

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): Madam Speaker, we all know how important community and belonging is to Manitobans. That is why I'm pleased to rise today in the Assembly and bring great praise for the town of Altona and the fine volunteers who made its community gardens a reality.

These volunteers—this volunteer-led initiative was started last August when the Town of Altona donated land beside the Millennium Exhibition Centre. Land lots vary from size from small to large in response to the demand from both long-time residents and the new Syrian refugee families that now call Altona home.

These lots will allow our neighbours from Syria to work side by side with the community and strengthen their sense of belonging. It also provides the additional benefits of growing some of their own food and a sense of familiarity, as many come from an agrarian background.

These five families bring as many as seven to 13 individuals who are ready and looking for ways to engage with their neighbours. Some of these new families to Manitobans have also—to Manitoba have also brought seeds with them, which will certainly provide for new experiences for many other residents. These new families to Canada bring insights, skills and an opportunity to learn and share with each other.

Agriculture has played and continues to play such an important part of life in Manitoba. It is truly great when we can share these experiences. The opportunity to establish independence while bringing a community together is always a commendable idea. Fostering co-operation and a team feeling within the community will allow the town of Altona to continue to flourish and set an example that we should all strive for.

Madam Speaker, I ask all members to join me in commending the work by these fine Manitobans in Altona seeking to welcome and support our new friends and neighbours from Syria. I ask that we all encourage initiatives like these in our constituencies to bring all Manitobans closer, because we all know that Manitobans are better together. Thank you.

Crime and Safety

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): Madam Speaker, crime and safety is an issue that affects all Manitobans. The residents of Burrows have expressed to me their fears and their concerns.

Allow me to give you a few examples as to what I have been hearing. My neighbour, a young woman in her early 20s, is too nervous to walk by herself to the local convenience store at night even though it's only a block away. Last summer, three houses along Selkirk street were hit with arson over the night, causing three garages to burn down. Lastly, it seems all too often we are hearing stories of innocent Manitobans ending up in emergency rooms due to the reckless use of weapons.

Madam Speaker, I could continue with more examples. However, I want to express the dire need for effective ideas and solutions.

I want to fight to reinstate more community policing. It was under the past NDP government that many of the facilities were closed down.

Madam Speaker, we should also reconsider programs such as youth justice committees. This would allow the community to be directly involved in dealing with youth and crime, which will make our neighbourhoods a safer place.

Safety is always enforced and considered to be the No. 1 priority, yet it seems to have fallen through the cracks.

Madam Speaker, this government needs to take the safety of Manitobans seriously because everyone deserves to feel safe.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: Prior to oral questions, I would like to direct your attention to the gallery where we have some visitors with us today. We have seated in the public gallery from Pineview Mennonite School in Barwick, Ontario, six grade 7 and 8 students under the direction of Mr. Robert Heatwole.

On behalf of all honourable members, I welcome you here today.

Also seated in the public gallery from Kelvin High School there are 29 grade 9 students under the direction of Mr. Gerry Urbanovich. This group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard).

And also seated in the public gallery from River West Park School, eight grade 9 students under the direction of Mr. Todd Johnson. And this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger).

On behalf of all honourable members, I would like to welcome you all here to the House today.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Women's Representation Treasury Board Appointments

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Leader of the Official Opposition): Madam Speaker, if we want to support progress for women, we have to ensure that women are represented in key positions of power.

Research from UNICEF explains how empowering women in the political arena has the influence to change societies. Yet the Premier has shown us his exclusionary approach by his appointment to Treasury Board that makes decisions for us all.

Madam Speaker, the government has able and talented women ministers.

Why is the Premier so set on excluding those with the talent to succeed and leaving out the knowledge and voices that can change our province for the better?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Well, I thank my honourable colleague for the opportunity to add to the record that we have just elected—Manitobans have chosen to elect a record number of women to the Progressive Conservative caucus [*inaudible*]

I also would be remiss, and I neglected to say the other day, and I must say today, a welcome to all new members of the House and to—and a sincere congratulations to all new members of the House who are here with us. Two new members of the Liberal caucus, congratulations, through you, Madam Speaker, to them, and three new members of the NDP caucus, congratulations to you for being here, and to 24 new members of the PC caucus as well, I would say congratulations, not because they are women or men but because they are devoted, caring, compassionate Manitobans. I believe all of us in this House are, and we believe in merit, and we believe in the honour of our work.

Thank you for the question.

Ms. Marcelino: Madam Speaker, I didn't hear the reason why there are no women members of the

Treasury Board. I wonder, maybe, after thought, maybe if there were women presidents or generals during the time of World War I or World War II years, maybe we won't even have those two world wars. Never know because women weren't there.

Madam Speaker, New Democrats understand the need for opportunities of our young women and girls. Recent research by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and Oxfam Canada clearly establishes the need for government to take an active role in improving services.

I'm wondering when the honourable First Minister says things on radio like don't ever blame your circumstances on your gender, is he aware of these important findings, or is his lack of understanding the reason why he has excluded support for high-quality, centre-based child care that is—

Madam Speaker: Order. The member's time has expired.

Mr. Pallister: I won't comment on the wisdom of any comment that references the causes of world wars being gender based, Madam Speaker. I would say this, though, that the member is quite wrong in her assertion that women didn't play a key role in standing up for freedom and protecting others during both world wars. They did. They most certainly did.

* (13:50)

I don't stand here pretending to be the best dad in the world, but I am the father of two young women who were raised to believe that they had every right to equal opportunity and to demand that in our society, and I expect that that's what all women should do and have the right to do, and I would encourage all members here to make sure that we give every opportunity, every equal opportunity to people not on the basis of—solely of gender, race or any other factor but on the basis of their sincere values and abilities to contribute to a better society. That's certainly how our society will advance and benefit all members of our society.

Minimum Wage Increase Government Position

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Leader of the Official Opposition): Still doesn't answer the question why there are no women in the Treasury Board, no women ministers.

Madam Speaker, the Premier clearly doesn't get it when it comes to supporting women. He has made

repeated comments about women being fickle, about copping a woman's answer. And research shows that women are overrepresented in jobs that pay the minimum wage.

My question is: Is his lack of understanding why he has failed to commit to a significant expansion of the minimum wage?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): With the help of a great many others, including members elected on this side of the House past and present, we have advanced and encouraged participation of women. I know that other parties have as well encouraged that to happen within their organizations. We've been somewhat successful in advancing that pursuit.

We had a record number of women participate in our annual general meetings last year, the year before. These are, I think, commendable steps along the road to true equality of opportunity. And we want to continue on those fronts. We had a record number of women contest for seats in this election in our party, the most ever, and the most ever elected as well. These are positive steps.

As to the personal references to my attitudes, I devoted a decade of my life to working with Aboriginal women across the country to promote their equal opportunities for property ownership. And I praise them and the accomplishments that they achieved. And I was proud and honoured to be part of that cause. I think that speaks about my attitudes.

The references, the attempt to divide is just a simple continuation of the partisan, political, sad tactics of the members opposite.

Crown Corporations Privatization Concerns

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Leader of the Official Opposition): There's no intent to divide. We're just asking the question why the valuable role of women ministers are not in the Treasury Board.

Madam Speaker, the Premier has shown us his true colours by what he has left out. And his political announcement yesterday is right out of the Tory handbook to set us all up for damage to our Crown corporations. The Premier has failed to answer simple yes-or-no questions about his plans for important services such as health and valued assets such as Manitoba Public Insurance and Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries.

My question: Does the Premier understand that his premiership does not include a mandate to

damage the things that Manitobans value, which are the Crown corporations?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Well, the NDP government, previously elected on four occasions consecutively, did not have a mandate at any point to politicize Crown corporations but chose to. It did not have a mandate to abuse the trust of Manitobans by using political preference instead of common sense, logic and good research to locate a 500-kilometre extra-long line all around the province, costing billions of dollars and hurting Manitobans who must pay hydro bills that are inflated as a consequence. It did not have the mandate to sole-source contracts to its friends.

Yet, in spite of not having any of those mandates, it acted in a manner contrary to the best interests of Manitobans. We will act in support of Manitobans and their best interests. We will protect front-line services. We will protect the people who provide those services.

Ms. Marcelino: Madam Speaker, the Premier spoke yesterday about the already existing fear that Manitobans have about the future. Why is the Premier so down on Manitoba? In our experience, it has been uplifting that Manitobans have seen a steady economy where other economies are faltering.

Will the Premier commit to protecting our Crowns as important drivers of the economy, rather than his risky approach of austerity and privatization?

Mr. Pallister: I'm certainly high on Manitoba and I expect that Manitoba will do very well under our government.

What I am down on and everyone is down on, and certainly the public showed they were down on the NDP government, was the reality that they have misrepresented and overspent. In every single year of their mandate, they have overspent. They have a spending problem, and we have inherited that spending problem but will not repeat it. The reality is also that we have to get off the track of jeopardizing our future front-line services through overspending.

The members opposite choose to totally disregard internationally respected bond rating agencies such as Moody's, who have given them a warning. They disregarded that. Their warning was about the—their spending problem jeopardizing front-line services for the people of Manitoba. They chose to ignore that as well.

They embarked on a record spending spree and caused our province to receive its first bond downgrade—bond rating downgrade in 30 years. They disregarded that as well. They failed to listen. The people of Manitoba spoke. They still fail to listen.

Ms. Marcelino: Madam Speaker, the Premier talks as if he's still in opposition where to him everything is a target. But we tell him as Premier he must care about the public services and Crown corporations that Manitobans strongly support.

Madam Speaker, I ask again: Will he protect our Crown corporations from damage?

Mr. Pallister: Well, actually, Mr.—Madam Speaker, I'm sorry—where the NDP ignored danger repeatedly, we will address it. Where the previous NDP government caused damage, we will repair it. Where the NDP lost their way, we will correct the course.

Infrastructure Investment Highway Capital Expenditures

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): My question is to the Minister of Infrastructure.

Investment in infrastructure is critical to the future of Manitoba, and in recent years we've seen an historic increase in investment in highways.

Can the minister indicate what the actual dollar amount was in highway capital program for the last fiscal year and how much it's increased over the past two years?

Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Minister of Infrastructure): Madam Speaker, I thank you for the question to my friend across the way.

In our—throughout the campaign and our Throne Speech, our government commitment was for \$1 billion-plus in infrastructure investment, and this is an investment. And this will be guaranteed and it will be predictable to Manitobans, unlike the former government who chose to raid, raid, raid and then parade it prior to the year. We will do this each and every year.

Freedom Road Construction Government Commitment

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Well, I'm very surprised that this minister doesn't know that there's been a 70 per cent increase in highway construction in the last two years alone.

The Conservatives have had a history under the Filmon government of cutting highway expenditures in areas of the province like the North. They've already said they'll eliminate the East Side Road Authority, which is also building the Freedom Road.

And they'll be investing—will they be investing the \$90 million a year that our NDP government had committed to extending all-weather road access, and will they live up to the Freedom Road commitment?

Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Minister of Infrastructure): And, again, I thank the member for the question.

And, again, I just want to reiterate that we will do infrastructure investment in a predictable and sustainable manner, and that will be a—we have guaranteed to do that in \$1 billion-plus each and every year, unlike the former government who chose to raid it, raid it, raid it and then, just prior to the election, parade it. And we will look at strategic infrastructure for all of Manitoba.

Northern Road Upgrades Government Commitment

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Less money than we're currently spending.

Will the minister deliver on the commitment to upgrade northern roads such as the highways to Moose Lake, Nelson House and highways such as No. 6, 10, 39, 280, 391, 373, 374 and other northern highways?

* (14:00)

Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Minister of Infrastructure): Madam Speaker, we are very serious about our investment in infrastructure. We realize that infrastructure and partnering with our communities, with our municipalities, and that helps to bring—move Manitoba forward. What we're looking at is strategic and predictable infrastructure planning.

We are on track to make Manitoba the most improved province in the next four years, and that's our plan.

Thank you.

Front-Line Services Employment Protection

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): Madam Speaker, this week, the Premier (Mr. Pallister) once again failed to guarantee that he would not privatize parts

of our health-care system. In fact, while he's been keen to talk about front-line services, he refuses to clearly define what he thinks those services are or guarantee the workers who deliver those services their work is valued and protected.

Could the Premier please let us know: What exactly is his definition of a front-line worker?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): Certainly, we do value and appreciate all of those who are working within our health-care system.

And I would say to the member, and I would say to him earnestly, that the greatest risk that we've had to protecting those individuals is the debt that this member rung up. And I think that the question that he has to ask himself and his colleagues is how is it that the former government spent all of that money but wasn't able to improve services at all.

We will protect those health-care workers, and we will ensure that services improve and do it in a financially responsible way.

Mr. Wiebe: Madam Speaker, we know it takes a lot of dedicated people to provide the care that Manitobans count on. And, of course, that includes the nurses and the doctors at the bedside, but it also includes the administrative staff who are busy admitting patients or filing charts. It includes the health-care aides who are giving patient care at the bedside as well and includes the maintenance staff who are making sure that the equipment is running.

Can the minister tell me exactly who he sees as a front-line worker and assure them here today that their reckless cuts won't affect them?

Mr. Goertzen: Madam Speaker, we respect all of the people who are working within our health-care system.

And when I talk to people within our health-care system or I talk to those who are receiving services within the health-care system, they talk about ensuring that the system is sustainable and there today, but also talk about ensuring that the system is sustainable and will be there for their children and their grandchildren. That is not a vision that the members opposite had when they in government. They didn't look to the future of the system.

We'll ensure that the system is protected and respected today as well as for the children and grandchildren of Manitobans in the future.

Mr. Wiebe: Madam Speaker, once again the minister refuses to put on the record exactly who he thinks is a front-line service worker or what he sees as a front-line service.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that their Throne Speech is full of code words about austerity, and we hear that again from the minister here today.

I'm going to give the minister one more opportunity: Will this minister table tomorrow in this House a complete list of what he considers a front-line service and all those jobs associated with providing them?

Mr. Goertzen: Well, I hope he'll give me more than one more opportunity. We have 21 minutes left. I'm happy to answer this question all day long, Madam Speaker, because I want to say again we respect those who are working within our health-care system.

That is a government that presided over a system that was 10th out of 10, dead last when it came to many indicators within the health-care system. Despite all of that spending they got no results for patients, Madam Speaker.

That is the end result of success; we'll be working to ensure that front-line workers are protected, but ensuring that patients are getting that support not only today but in the future as well.

Conflict of Interest Forms Premier's Asset Disclosure

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): Yes, Madam Speaker, this Premier (Mr. Pallister) wants Manitobans to accept that he believes in transparency and accountability, yet the Premier, the Attorney General (Mrs. Stefanson) and his House leader have refused to acknowledge that year after year, he's filed conflict of interest forms that failed to disclose at least two corporations owned by him.

We know from his senior staff that he owns them. We know that, from a search of the Clerk's office, he failed to disclose them, and we know that he never filed an opinion from the Conflict of Interest Commissioner.

I will table for him the relevant page of the declaration, and it reads: I hereby declare that I and/or the following named dependants hold a beneficial interest, share warrant or option in 5 per cent or more of the following issued capital stock worth over \$500 per holding.

My question for the Premier is this: What part of the declaration does he fail to understand?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): Madam Speaker, we've already indicated that members on this side are complying with the conflict of interest legislation.

I do want to correct the record, though, on something I said yesterday. I did indicate that all members are complying with the conflict of interest Legislature in this House when, in fact, I have no idea if the members opposite are complying with the law, given their record on things like Tiger Dams and untendered contracts. I should never have made that assurance.

So I want to correct my answer yesterday. I actually have no idea if the NDP are finally following the law.

Mr. Swan: The declaration's quite clear. There's actually a checklist provided to every member of this House to assist them with completing the form, and there's just 14 questions that are asked of members, and I will table a copy of this checklist for the benefit of the Premier, and the checklist advises members as follows: This checklist is formulated as a series of questions. If you answered yes to any of the questions, you need to make the disclosure on the asset and interest schedule noted next to the question.

Question 3 says: Do you, your spouse or child own or have a right to own 5 per cent of the shares valued at \$500 or more of any corporation, and it says disclose on schedule B, shares.

Is there a part of this checklist the Premier doesn't understand or does he simply believe he doesn't have to follow the law of Manitoba?

Mr. Goertzen: I am encouraged, Madam Speaker, by my friend's new interest in disclosure, and let's talk a little bit about a checklist.

I wonder if he was concerned when they didn't disclose of the government the severance pay that went to the Premier's former staff to get them out of a political jam. There was no check there.

Madam Speaker, I wonder if he was concerned about not disclosing those free Jets tickets that the members of their Cabinet took. He wasn't concerned then. There was no check there. It's a good thing that there's a long weekend coming up because the members can have lots of time to be concerned about disclosure, and the first place he should go is the door of the NDP caucus office.

Mr. Swan: Well, it's clear, Madam Speaker, that neither this Premier nor the Attorney General, nor, clearly, the Government House Leader take this matter seriously. They do not take the Premier's failure to follow the law seriously, and I therefore table, for the Attorney General's benefit, copies of schedule B of the Premier's conflict of interest declarations from 2012, 2014 and 2014, schedule B only, dealing with shares, none of which include disclosure of the foreign corporations we know the Premier (Mr. Pallister) owns.

The Attorney General can do her own search for 2015 in the Clerk's office, but I can tell her it doesn't include those either.

Will the Attorney General now agree, in light of this information, to do the right thing for transparency and accountability, and agree to refer this matter directly to the court?

Mr. Goertzen: What a pattern we have from my friend opposite to blame others. We saw him blame others within his own party during the rebellion a couple of years ago. We saw when he sat at the Cabinet table, Madam Speaker, he didn't care about disclosure when it came to those Jets tickets he was getting.

When he sat at the Cabinet table he wasn't concerned about disclosure when they used the civil servants in a partisan way in this very Assembly. He wasn't concerned about disclosure now.

Now, all of a sudden he's concerned, Madam Speaker, and you wonder why. It's because he's trying to create a distraction—to create a distraction—from his government's record. He can put up as much smoke as he wants; Manitobans aren't going to forget that that was the government that disrespected Manitobans every day that they were in government.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: Prior to proceeding with question period, I would just like to introduce some other guests that we have in the gallery.

We have seated in the public gallery from Country View School nine grade 6, 7, and 9 students under the direction of Michael Penner. This group is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living (Mr. Goertzen), and we welcome you here today.

* (14:10)

Youth Justice Committees Government Support

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): Madam Speaker, many residents in the North End of Winnipeg want to see a proactive approach in dealing with youth crime. I believe that volunteer community-based justice committees have a huge impact for both youth as well as the community. These committees deal with offences such as joy riding, shoplifting, possession of drugs, assault and theft.

I want to begin by asking: Is the minister open to the idea of having a youth justice committee in Winnipeg's North End in order to better serve the community?

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I want to thank the member for the question and welcome her to her new role in the Manitoba Legislature.

We, of course, are open to ideas from all Manitobans when it comes to making our communities safer. And, through you, Madam Speaker, I just want to assure the member opposite that we will continue to work with local police officials to—and work with other officials to do everything we can to ensure that they have the tools to make sure that our communities are safer. We need to do that in order to protect all Manitobans.

So, again, we will work with many different communities all across this great city and province of ours to ensure the safety of all Manitobans.

Thank you.

Ms. Lamoureux: I appreciate that you're open to the idea.

Madam Speaker, during the '90s, the Filmon government expanded justice committees. I believe that getting the community involved in dealing with youth crime would be beneficial for both the community as well as young offenders.

Will the government support communities that want to establish youth justice committees?

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

And, again, I look forward to working with her and with all communities across the city and our province to ensure that there are programs in place to ensure more safety for Manitobans. And so, again, I

work—I look forward to any ideas that she wants to bring forward to my office.

Ms. Lamoureux: Looking forward to working with you, and I think we'll have a lot of communication going between us.

Division programs, such as youth justice committees, have proven that communities care about young people and the crimes that they commit. The issue is does this government support our communities' involvement in the justice system. The previous NDP were negligent. They reduced the scope of these committees to the point of near extinction. Youth justice committees are a provincial program under the Manitoba court system.

I am asking: What role will the government play in re-establishing youth justice committees?

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

Madam Speaker, again, I look forward to working with all Manitobans towards better and more safer communities within our city and our province. And, again, I reach out to the member opposite. I look forward to some of the ideas that she has, and we look forward—we've always looked at a collaborative approach to new ideas and towards making Manitoba a better place, and so I look forward to working with her on this initiative.

Ministers' Mandate Letters First-Term Priorities

Ms. Janice Morley-Lecomte (Seine River): Madam Speaker, I am honoured and humbled to have the opportunity to represent the people of Seine River.

After the NDP decade of reckless, rising debt and broken trust, Manitobans welcome a new Progressive Conservative team committed to clean, open government and inclusive decision making. Our commitment to open government includes higher standards for transparency, accountability and ethics.

Madam Speaker, would the Deputy Premier please tell the House what steps our new government has taken today towards these goals?

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I want to thank the member for Seine River for her question, welcome her to her new role in the Manitoba Legislature.

Today, Madam Speaker, we are pleased to announce that the government has released the ministers' mandate letters. These letters will outline

in detail what is expected of us as ministers to achieve within—what is expected of us to be achieved within our first mandate.

This continues, along with our commitment to an open and transparent government, with some of the things that we've already put into place, Mr. Speaker—or Madam Speaker, sorry. Manitobans gave us a solid mandate in the last election, and they want a government that is more open and transparent, and that is exactly what we intend to deliver on behalf of all Manitobans.

Healthy Baby Initiative Future of Program

Mr. Kevin Chief (Point Douglas): Madam Speaker, there's been concerns raised about the elimination of the Department of Children and Youth Opportunities and how it's going to affect its programs. People like Stephanie [*phonetic*], who's a low-income mother, a single mother. She's overcoming hardship every day. She has an incredible story of resiliency, but she has that story because of the programs at Healthy Child Manitoba. In fact, the Healthy Baby Prenatal Benefit program had a huge impact on her life: resources provided to increase the access to good food, community support.

I ask the minister responsible for Healthy Child Manitoba, state for the record: Will this program be cut, or can expectant mothers continue to rely on this vital service?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): Madam Speaker, I want to congratulate my friend on his re-election to the constituency of Point Douglas. Certainly, every member of our Cabinet, of our caucus, considers very strongly the future of our youth and the opportunities that they are going to have in the future. It's not something that's limited, necessarily, to one department.

All of our members believe that the future of Manitoba is reliant on our young people, and that is why we're not just thinking about today and how we can support young people but ensuring that in the future they're going to have good jobs and good opportunity, and that is only going to be there with a strong and resilient economy.

Mr. Chief: The outcomes from the Prenatal Benefit program are clear, Madam Speaker. It reduces pre-term births; it increases healthy weight for babies, increases breastfeeding. Of course, we know that has a big impact not only economically but for

the health of the baby and mother. Mothers, grandmothers, families throughout Manitoba, our seniors, our elders, health-care professionals, are asking to increase and expand this prenatal benefit.

Will the minister commit today to expand and increase the prenatal benefit for some of the most vulnerable families in Manitoba?

Mr. Goertzen: And certainly, Madam Speaker, we will continue to make it a priority to support families, to support mothers, and to support expectant mothers. We know that the future of Manitobans is going to be young people, not only those that are born here in Manitoba but those who will be coming from other provinces and from other countries. That is why we will continue to support initiatives that will make Manitoba the most improved province in all of Canada.

Mr. Chief: Well, Madam Speaker, I know that the Premier (Mr. Pallister) has a record on what his idea of the most improved province is. In fact, when he sat around the Cabinet table, in one budget he cut 56 organizations that provide support to our most vulnerable children and families.

In fact, friendship centres under—when he sat at the Cabinet table were wiped out. The Friendship Centre in Swan River, funding gone; Friendship Centre in Dauphin, gone; Friendship Centre funding in Portage la Prairie, gone. You know, these is—this is the record of the Premier.

I ask the minister: Is this the same plan that the government has for or do they have a different plan for some of the most vulnerable families and children, Madam Speaker?

Mr. Goertzen: Well, and certainly the plan of this government, is to work in partnership—to work in partnership—with all Manitobans: those in the North, those in the south, those in Winnipeg, those in parts of rural Manitoba, because you only improve a province when you work together with all Manitobans.

But not just with Manitobans. We have other partners as well, and that is why I'm glad that the Premier's been talking about the issue of the New West Partnership, Madam Speaker, and how can we ensure that all Manitobans benefit, not just by working with Manitobans today but everyone across the country, so that those who are young, those who are older and those who haven't even been born in Manitoba will benefit from those efforts.

Immigration and Labour Department Representation

Mr. Mohinder Saran (The Maples): Congratulations, Madam Speaker, on your election to the position of Speaker. I understand it was close, with less than a 50-vote difference.

* (14:20)

The question is: Immigration and labour are two pillars of Manitoba's strong economy—I want to direct this to the minister responsible for immigration—why is the new government hiding the departments within other departments?

Hon. Ian Wishart (Minister of Education and Training): I appreciate the question on immigration.

We're not hiding anything. We are actually working very much with that sector. In fact, I met with them several times already. They are looking forward to a promising, open and honest relationship with our new government. And we will work very closely with them to make sure that Manitobans all have the advantage of continued immigration opportunity.

New Immigrants Contribution to Manitoba

Mr. Mohinder Saran (The Maples): Madam Speaker, glad we solved that mystery and now know where immigration is housed.

An Honourable Member: We think.

Mr. Saran: Yes, we think. We are not sure whether he's the proper minister or somebody else was supposed to answer.

Manitoba has been well known for its generosity, especially when it comes to welcoming refugees, supporting families in crisis. Our side of the House advocated to increase the number of people coming to Canada. And this past October, we committed additional supports to bring many families here to safety.

Skilled workers contribute to reducing poverty.

Why does this government not recognize the value immigrants have to offer and create avenues to allow them to be easily exploited?

Hon. Ian Wishart (Minister of Education and Training): Well, certainly, this government does recognize the opportunities that new immigrants and the advantages that new immigrants bring when they come to this country. And we're certainly going to be

there to support them, as we have in the past. Governments have been there to support them both federally and provincially.

I think the minister—or the member is very aware that it was actually a PC government that created the PNP program here in Manitoba, the one that he is so proud of and that has worked so well for Manitobans.

Mr. Saran: Skilled workers contribute to reducing poverty.

Why does this government not recognize the value immigrants—value to offer and create avenues to allow them to be easily exploited?

Mr. Wishart: Well, certainly, we're there for—to help government—or sorry—to help new immigrants when they come to Manitoba. We provide Welcome Home facilities. In fact, with the refugees, that has actually been expanded a little bit, though with the temporary reduction in number of refugees, one has been temporarily closed, which will be reopened based on demand in the future.

So we are there to help new immigrants that have any issues with their settlement in Manitoba, both the government-sponsored immigrants and the community-sponsored immigrants.

Manitobans with Disabilities Ministerial Representation

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): Manitobans living with disabilities have fought for decades to have their rights respected and their voices rightfully heard. It was an NDP government who first appointed a minister responsible for Persons with Disabilities in 2001 and passed The Accessibility for Manitobans Act in 2013. These were historic steps in bringing forward a partnership between government and Manitobans with disabilities and making our province more accessible.

Despite all of this, the Premier (Mr. Pallister) decided to ignore Manitobans with disabilities by not appointing a minister responsible for persons with disabilities to his Cabinet.

Can the Premier please explain why this government did not see the value of including a minister responsible for persons in disabilities in his Cabinet?

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Families): First of all, Madam Speaker, I want to congratulate you on your role. It's—you're someone from the area of town

that I represented, and I used you as somewhat of a mentor in terms of when I first started my political role.

I also want to congratulate the member from St. Johns in terms of your position. I believe I met her for the first time when I was a chair of the Police Board and we served on a committee to address women and safety. So I do appreciate the question.

I can tell you this government is committed to accessibility issues for everyone. And as such, the—you know, we are committed to consultation piece. I know that process will be going on in the near future, so.

Implementation of Legislation

Ms. Fontaine: A key role for the minister responsible for Persons with Disabilities was meeting with those in the community to make recommendations on future accessibility legislation. One such group was the Manitoba Accessibility Advisory Council whose recommendations formed the basis of the accessibility Manitobans act.

Madam Speaker, will the Premier please tell the House when they plan to meet with the council, and if they will honour the former government's commitment to implementing accessibility standards in the areas of customer service, employment, transportation, communication and the built environment?

Mr. Fielding: Well, I can tell you, Madam Speaker, that this government is committed to consulting with people, consulting with front-line people that are involved within the system.

We take legislation that was passed very seriously, and there is a consultation session that is ongoing, and we are engaged by that, and that process will happen in the near distant future.

Madam Speaker: The time for question period has expired.

Petitions?

ORDERS OF THE DAY GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

House Business

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): On House business, Madam Speaker, I rise to inform this House that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen) will present a budget speech to

the House on Tuesday, May 31st, under routine proceedings.

Madam Speaker: For the information of the House it has been announced that the provincial budget will be presented on May 31st.

An Honourable Member: Under orders of the day.

Madam Speaker: Under—yes, I did call orders of the day, yes, under orders of the day.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Official Opposition House Leader): Madam Speaker, on further House business, in accordance with rule 33(8), I would like to announce that the private member's resolution to be considered on next Thursday of private members' business will be Protecting Strong Public Health Care, brought forward by the honourable member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe).

Madam Speaker: For the information of the House, it has been announced by the Official Opposition House Leader that in accordance with rule 33(8), I would like to announce that the private members' resolution to be considered on the next Thursday of private members' business will be Protecting Strong Public Health Care, brought forward by the honourable member for Concordia.

THRONE SPEECH (Third Day of Debate)

Madam Speaker: Resuming debate on the proposed motion of the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Reyes) and the amendment and subamendment thereto, standing in the name of the honourable member for Fort Garry-Riverview, who has six minutes remaining.

Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview): I was delighted to get another two seconds onto my six minutes today, and I have to tell you that I'm very much looking forward to the speech from my friend from Fort Rouge to come later this afternoon. I know, along with my sister from St. Johns and my new brother from Flin Flon, they represent a dynamic trio of new voices and new thinking with fresh ideas representing Manitoba in the 21st century.

Yesterday, as you'll recall Madam Speaker, I spent some time thanking those who helped me in the past during this election, and I failed to mention a few folks. I'd like to thank Bev Suek, of course, Andrew Morneau, of course. But most of all I want to thank my family and my friends and the many volunteers who stood with me not only in this

election but in many elections in the past, some 'successful,' some not so successful.

Mr. Doyle Pivniuk, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

You'll recall yesterday, as well, in speaking about the Throne Speech, I was looking at the amendment that had been put forward by this side of the House which articulates in very specific detail all of the things that were missing from the Throne Speech, and we talked about, of course, the lack of recognition for diversity. We talked about the absence of any mention of Truth and Reconciliation Commission. We talked about the omission of any discussion around missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, talked about the failure of the Throne Speech to acknowledge the value of our Crown corporations and our public services. I talked about the omission in the Throne Speech to talk about—to fail to recognize the LGBTTTQ community and to place any emphasis on social inclusion.

* (14:30)

We talked about the importance of focusing on environmental and water protections, and yet there was nothing in the Throne Speech about that. We talked yesterday about the absence of any mention about the minimum wage or moving toward creating a living wage for all Manitobans. You won't find that anywhere in the Throne Speech.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in addition, though, as you keep going through the list there are more and more omissions. The absence of any mention of public child care is a terrible omission for moms, for dads and for families all across this great province. The omission in addition of any discussion around prevention and support programs in the early years—my friend from Point Douglas just asked a very pointed question about a very important program that this government—our government—put in place many years ago on early childhood development. Instead, what we got back from the member from Steinbach was rhetoric that was irrelevant and not consequential to the debate we were having about important supports for families and young people in this province.

That's—Mr. Deputy Speaker, there was no mention in the Throne Speech of community schools, of early childhood hubs and after-school programs in the inner city and in northern Manitoba to ensure that there are wraparound supports for kids every day so that they can lead healthy and productive lives.

The list goes on a full range of issues. I can tell you in education it was so disappointing to see a Throne Speech that had nothing on First Nation, Metis and Inuit education policy framework that we had as a bill here ready to go before the last election and the then-opposition had no interest in passing it. And now that they're in government we haven't seen hide nor hair of it. But it'll be back, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but because they—we're going to stand with First Nation, Metis and Inuit children to make sure that we're not only teaching the history and culture of those very important communities, but also to ensure that they have the training and the knowledge they need to have full citizenship in this province, and yet we had no mention of that in the Throne Speech as well.

This is why we have put forward a very comprehensive amendment to the Throne Speech, which I invite all members from the other side to look seriously at. I know that they were on doorsteps and I know, because we were all at doorsteps, that they heard about these very issues that are put forward in our amendment. And then they're going to have to go back to their constituents and say: well, (1) they had no input into the Throne Speech; (2) they had no input into the budget; and (3) the things that were talked about at every single doorstep were ignored in the Throne Speech, in the budget and will be ignored in the government's agenda for the next four years.

We're going to stand on this side and we're going to hold them to account for all of these omissions and they are omissions of commissions. Because the fact of the matter is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they are ideologically incapable of dealing with the full and comprehensive range of issues that affect Manitobans today. They don't look forward to a better future for Manitobans. In fact, they're looking backward to the failed policies that go back not only to Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher, but even back further to Barry Goldwater. They were discredited then and they're discredited now, and we're not going to stand with—stand for it. We're going to stand against it for a brighter and more prosperous future for all Manitobans.

We have a very, very proud record to defend on this side of the House. We have something to fight against on that side of the House that looks to take Manitoba back to the 19th century and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we're going to fight for Manitobans in the future as well.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Okay, I'm inspired.

Next, the honourable member from Rossmere.

Mr. Andrew Micklefield (Rossmere): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm humbled to stand here today to represent Rossmere. This is the first time the PC team has held this seat in nearly 17 years.

I'd also like to acknowledge the presence of my parents and my son Simeon in the gallery this afternoon.

I'd like to begin by thanking everyone who helped on my campaign in big and small ways. I'm truly humbled that so many people have gathered around to see me elected as their MLA.

More specifically, I wish to thank every old friend who bought a membership, every neighbour who put up a sign, everyone who came alongside in the months that followed to contribute because they believed that their participation was a worthwhile duty in our collective quest for meaningful and positive change in Manitoba.

I wish to thank my manager Shawn Rattai and his family. Also Barry Banek, Joyce Brown, Erich and Kathy Boschman, Kelly, Rachel and Cole Chabbert, and other core team members who made the hope of election a reality.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who did anything: knocked on doors; babysat our children, baked snacks; made suppers and brought them to our home; came outside in minus 34 degrees; to Tony who always had hot chocolate in the van; and Dave, who kept us laughing with his corny jokes; Rick, who came out every Wednesday after work; Larry, who set up countless signs; Joyce and Doris, who walked with me in the afternoons.

I'd like to publicly acknowledge and thank the Fast family for their friendship, time, and support, particularly the Fast children, who performed in several seniors homes all around Rossmere as part of our Honouring the Past, Showcasing the Future concert series. These children are a shining example of the hope we can have for the future, because a diligent piano student today is a prosperous entrepreneur tomorrow. A young woman able to play guitar and sing today will one day bless many lives with her gifts and talents. I take this opportunity to honour these kids and the parents who are raising them.

I'd like to honour Peter Manastyrsky for his enduring service in Rossmere and acknowledge that I stand on his shoulders. But I would not be here without the relentless encouragement of my parents who are here today and who I wish to thank and acknowledge on this special day, nor without my wider family and friends who encouraged me to pursue public service. I think particularly of one friend, Ron, and another, Susan, who stood by me and encouraged me during recent difficult times.

But surely it is those closest to us who see and share the greatest sacrifice, and it is with the most sincere love and gratitude that I publicly thank my wife Ruth and our children Simeon, Chloe, and Ezra, who have always encouraged, never criticized, always helped, never complained, and only ever demonstrated that our family is in this together.

I wish to go on record today and state to this Chamber I am proud of my 12-year-old son Simeon, who is a hard worker and canvassed with me probably more than anyone else. His winsomeness and hard work are a winning combination that will bless many lives in the future.

I'm pleased with my 10-year-old daughter Chloe, whose rare gifts of creativity and organization not only matched my clothes, ties, shirts, jackets, et cetera, but also kept our office tidy and me organized. Although she's only 10, Chloe leaves a sparkle wherever she goes. That will one day bring great improvement to people's lives, I'm quite sure.

I'm also pleased with my eight-year-old son Ezra, whose grade 2 mind ponders and penetrates far beyond his years and whose humour and wit keep life lighthearted, and whose unending curiosity speaks of significant future achievements and contributions.

Lastly, I would not be here without the companionship and comfort of my wife, Ruth, my best friend who I met when I was six years old. She has only ever helped me in this enterprise and I can only stand in this House because she has stood with me.

And around this core team has arisen an ever-growing chorus of volunteers and supporters of people young and old, from every walk of life, from many faiths, who have sat and shared, laughed and cried, and told me their stories and how they all ended up in Rossmere. These people have become my friends and I'm honoured to represent them.

* (14:40)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm honoured to stand here as the PC MLA for Rossmere, the first in nearly 17 years. The people of Rossmere expressed their choice for change on April 19th by handing our party a decisive mandate in Rossmere with a victory of over 1,900 votes more.

I declare that there's more than one spring that has sprung in our province in recent weeks. The blue skies we now enjoy are an apt metaphor for the warm changes that will cause many kinds of growth and new life in our province, a welcome warmth that will call families all across the province out of a long, cold winter and invite them to better times in the sunshine.

Like so many in Rossmere, I am an immigrant. I came to Canada in 1989. I understand first challenges—first-hand the challenges of a new culture, of feeling different in an unfamiliar place and, occasionally for me, though sadly for others, more frequently experiencing the sting of racism. I know first-hand what it feels like to be told to go back to where you came from. Although painful at the time, I now see how these experiences gave me first-hand sympathy for those facing similar challenges.

A few years after arriving in Canada, my first jobs were delivering papers and shoveling snow in Rossmere. I grew up riding my bike around Rossmere, and in 1999 I married the prettiest girl in Rossmere. She has retained this title for 17 years.

I'm a man of values and convictions. I believe in integrity, hard work and doing what is right to love others. These are the values my parents gave me, the values that built this province and the values that will lead us into a prosperous future.

As I have sat in living rooms and kitchens all over Rossmere, I have seen that these values are alive in our community. I see these values whenever I meet young people with a sense of ambition and work ethic, every time I meet young families buying homes in both the newer and older neighbourhoods and every time I hear of a young person graduating from high school or of a graduate finding their first full-time job. These values in these people will build this province.

The Manitoba miracle is our destiny and it will be our legacy. I do not hold this sense of destiny alone. It lives in the hearts of hundreds of thousands of people across this great province, including many I've spoken to in these last months.

My first jobs were delivering papers and shoveling snow, but now, a quarter century later, I stand shoulder to shoulder with my colleagues across this House to deliver a better, cleaner, honest and accountable government. I'm no longer delivering the news, but part of a team that will make it from this Legislature to bless the entire province.

Our government will eliminate the vote tax subsidy because people don't pay taxes to support political organizations that they don't agree with. It's their money; it's their business, and that should be their choice.

Our government will work towards balancing our province's finances because we are thinking of future generations. We are thinking of our own children. And we know that a debt load creates a tax load, which makes a hard road for families and businesses, and that's not what Manitobans want.

I reject the notion that Conservatives cannot be compassionate. It is this commitment that has caused a large group of friends and myself to gather funds to build a school in Burundi so that children orphaned by war could have an education and hope for the future. It is compassion that drew me to The King's School where I served as principal. During these years our work with children and families, many of them newcomers, opened my eyes to the hard realities faced by so many in our province. Today, I honour the fine work of our independent schools as valuable partners in providing choice for parents alongside those who serve in Manitoba's public schools.

It is compassion that has driven me to help newcomers find housing, jobs and even to reunite families separated by thousands of kilometres and many months apart, to bring them home together here in Manitoba.

It is this concern for people that provoked me to engage the City of Winnipeg to build—to partner with us to build soccer fields in East Kildonan so that youth have a place to play.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, compassion without conviction creates confusion. Compassion without commitment creates chaos. But compassion with commitment and conviction will certainly see our province prosper. And with these values aligned, we will create a better future for our families and for our children, and that's what our team will keep in line as we serve every Manitoban to the best of our ability.

Rossmere is home to more seniors than almost any other jurisdiction in Manitoba, and I'm honoured to bring their voices to our attention. As my own parents and my wife's parents both live in Winnipeg, we are personally concerned for the well-being of our senior populations. They built this province and it is important that we honour the fathers and mothers of our provincial inheritance because it's the right thing to do. I'm honoured to stand with this governing PC team and to remind all of us that Manitoba's new government will ensure the construction of new personal-care-home beds so that seniors do not need to wait for facilities they need.

Rossmere is home to newcomers from around the world, often working very hard to get established, and I am honoured to bring their voice to this House. I am grateful for the support of the taxicab community and look forward to continuing to consult with them and listen to their concerns. I am honoured to have friends in the East Indian communities who bring so much to our province. I particularly want to thank Gurcharan Singh, Sonny Dhillon, Jasvir Dhillon and Tony Sanga for their warm friendship and welcome.

I am sad to say, however, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that newcomer friends who have been in my home and lived in my neighbourhood and attended my school have now left our province to find work in other parts of Canada. Friends, this should not be and it will not be. Gone are the days of Manitoba leading the country in out-migration.

All Manitobans should be rightly excited to hear that their new government has a plan, a plan, Mr. Deputy Speaker, not just to hire more people but to create more jobs. That's why we will join the New West Partnership and the Trans-Pacific Partnership to connect with neighbours, with international partners that will bring opportunity for all of us, including our young people. We will develop our natural resources in ways that are sustainable, balanced and that will create jobs. And we will do these things with the wisdom and thoughtful advice of Manitoba's indigenous leaders.

In fact, we will not only co-operate with our indigenous friends, not only with neighbouring provinces, not only with international partners but also right here at home with a Premier's Enterprise Team. A province built for everyone must be built by everyone, which is why our PC team invites all Manitobans to join us in making Manitoba the most improved province in our nation.

Rossmere is home to families of all kinds, and I'm honoured to bring their concerns forward. I'm pleased that Manitoba families will no longer have to wait for emergency-room care longer than anyone else in Canada. As our government launches a wait times task force to sort out how to fix wait times of often more than seven hours –and I'd like to point out that the hospital that serves Rossmere has been the longest of all the long-waiting hospitals. We are the worst in Canada; there's nowhere in the country where you will wait longer if you break your arm or have some need to go to urgent-to emergency care. But we're going to change that. And not only wait times but other kinds of care and services will also be addressed so that people who need help can get out of pain and back to work, back to enjoying life and being productive, happy, contributing citizens to our province.

Rossmere is home to many hard-working, tax-paying regular people, and I'm honoured to serve their interests. In fact, our government will stand with the regular folk of this province. Why? Because we are regular folk.

Like all parts of our province, Rossmere is home to thousands of children, and that's why our team will work to improve literacy. We will work with teachers, principals, EAs, parents, boards, parent advisory councils and other educational stakeholders to set children up to succeed by being able to read. If you can't read, you can't succeed.

* (14:50)

But many of these same children need our protection. That is why our government, Mr. Deputy Speaker, will be introducing the protecting children act as an important step in protecting vulnerable children in our province. This will ensure appropriate collaboration between government departments, Child and Family Service organizations, community service providers and law enforcement so that children are put first and protected.

Time does not permit for me to continue listing the various groups and goals of our team, so let me close by summing up. Politics is about people. It's about helping people, serving people, improving people's lives and respecting people's differences. That's why I'm here; that's why we're here, and I know Manitobans join in our excitement to be part of the Manitoba miracle.

May God keep our land glorious and free. Thank you.

Mrs. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook): I want to thank the people of Kewatinook for entrusting me with this position.

Kewatinook is comprised of 14 reserves and two towns. We are the poorest of the poor. I also want to thank Noel Bernier for recruiting me and for actively seeking out indigenous and northern candidates. I want to thank my team, namely, Ralph Harper, James Walter Wood, Gary Wood, who are all members of my home community, St. Theresa Point First Nation. All of them travelled with me at one point or another up and down the winter ice roads on my campaign trail.

James Walter Wood was the one that I went through the ice with at 3 a.m. in the morning. Luckily, I was driving along the shoreline at that point. Gary was actually nipped by a dog in Berens River, and even though his skin wasn't broken, he was quite shaken up. And Ralph was equally shaken up when he travelled to Manto Sipi First Nation with me when Mr. Eric Robinson also boarded our plane.

I also want to thank Rana Bokhari, my leader, for continuously inspiring me.

I also want to thank my family for their love and patience and support for the period leading up to the election, and especially for my time today in going forward on this new journey. I am a mother of six beautiful children: Brittany, Morgan, Jarri, Corbin and Jason Jr., and now I carry many more children, citizens, and elders in my heart.

I wish to express gratitude to Mr. Eric Robinson for his dedication and his commitment to the people of Kewatinook. I am not naturally a negative person, as you will all come to know. But I must continuously remind you because where I'm from, a remote northern reserve, my life, indeed, many people's lives are in a continuous state of despair and heartbreak. But we do laugh; we laugh loud. We all equally suffer from the processes and policies put in place by previous governments.

My parents are residential school survivors. They were physically abused when they spoke in their native tongues. As a result, I was not raised to speak my own father's native tongue of Oji-Cree and I cannot speak my mother's native tongue of Saukteaux. Even though my parents were well educated with bachelor of education degrees, at the time they still lived in fear of the government policies that had so darkly affected their lives.

Their fears were realized, and by the time I entered high school when I had to leave for residential school, I was well equipped to handle the government school system, though, because I only spoke English.

My parents, my siblings and I could have all easily succumbed to the tragedies of the Indian residential school system, but we were, in a way, very blessed, as our experiences, in contrast to many others, were not as traumatizing.

I need to specifically point this out and make this distinction because there are countless others whose experiences with the Indian residential school system was nothing short of tragic. And so it is necessary to be mindful that many didn't make it out of the school system healthily balanced. In fact, many did not make it out alive.

I feel a sense of peace knowing that through the truth and reconciliation act, all our children in Manitoba going forward will now learn a part of our indigenous history. People of the North have endured and survived. They now look to me to help them, and I am committed to being their champion. With this new government, I aim to bring hope and work toward better—to a better tomorrow for my people.

The next time you walk down a sidewalk and see a crack in the cement and see a beautiful dandelion sprouting from that crack, remember that dandelion has overcome an impossible barrier. It grew despite the odds and it is a life force. This is the type of resilience that reflects the strength of my people.

My people face overwhelming challenges. I've heard members here list them over and over again: overcrowded houses, food insecurity, diabetes epidemic, unemployment, underfunded schools, lack of economic development, high number of kids in care, lack of potable water in our homes and a hindered ability for our community leaders to change the laws that keep us in this constant state of struggle and despair.

If we can all go back for a moment and look at the village we as indigenous people once had compared to our village of today, you can see that there is a vital missing component and that is that we as a government must learn to value the indigenous people of this land.

During my campaign, I not only saw the dysfunction but also the resilience of the members of Kewatinook, and it is this resilience I will fight to bring hope to the people of the North. Like that

dandelion growing through the crack in the cement, residents of Kewatinook remain strong in the face of adversity. We live in God's country, after all. The people of the North have the solutions to all the issues we face. And if we all here in this room today work strategically and reunited these communities, these challenges would cease to exist.

Indigenous people do want and we do need to be active participating members of our larger society of Manitoba. However, there are unfair and unjust provincial laws that are in place that seem to keep us in this perpetual state of struggle. Once this is no longer the case, I foresee a Manitoba to which the likes no one has ever seen.

If this new government truly believes in the values integrity, caring, inclusion, common sense and teamwork, then let's get to work. The key to making Manitoba the most improved province in all of Canada is to begin by valuing the indigenous populations of Manitoba.

I now ask leave for a moment of silence for my big brother, Christopher Riley Harper, who lost his fight on Monday from diabetes, and for his daughter, Nikki, who committed suicide while I was on my campaign trail.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Does the House have leave for moment of silence? [*Agreed*]

A moment of silence was observed.

* (15:00)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Continue. Want to continue?

Mrs. Klassen: Thank you, Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for Radisson.

Mr. James Teitsma (Radisson): It's a great honour for me to rise today to speak for the first time in this Chamber. I want to congratulate you on your appointment as Deputy Speaker and also to Ms. Driedger for her appointment—or her election, rather, to Speaker, and not just because I got to move into her old office.

I believe that our Speaker has always been an excellent role model, especially for young women in our province like my two teenaged daughters, and I look forward to more results from her, the model that she has given to young women.

I have always had tremendous respect for this Chamber as well as admiration for the architecture

that houses it. I distinctly remember my first trip to this building when I was just eight years old. I was standing on the Grand Staircase in awe of this building and of what it represents to Manitobans. Now, 37 years later when I stand on that same staircase, I am still in awe, and that level of respect is something that I work to instill in my five children, soon to be six children since my wife and I are expecting a baby due Canada Day, July 1st.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Teitsma: Thank you.

I'm very thankful for the support of my family, especially my wife, Joanne, and all of our children, throughout this entire election campaign, including many months, in fact, years, of preparation before that. And I'm grateful that I continue to have their support today as I stand in this House to serve as member of the Legislative Assembly.

My parents also taught me to recognize the legitimacy of governmental authority and the need to respect those who serve in public office. They taught me about my rights and my obligations as a citizen of this great country of Canada. I am so thankful that I and my family can live in this free country, a country where our rights and freedoms are enshrined in the Constitution and a country where our democratic processes have a proud and peaceful history. This is a country where citizens have long enjoyed freedom of religion, freedom of conscience, freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, freedom of association and protections against discrimination, and I'm committed to ensuring that those freedoms are preserved and protected, especially for those most vulnerable in our society. And, most of all, I want my children to be able to enjoy those same rights and freedoms that I have in the decades to come.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Teitsma: Thank you.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm humbled that I have been selected to serve as the member of this Legislative Assembly for the people of Radisson, and I want to thank them for entrusting me to represent them and their interests in this House. I also want to acknowledge my predecessor, Bidhu Jha, who served in this role for the past 13 years and has been supportive to me through the transition and helpful in getting me up to speed.

I also want to take a few moments to thank the many volunteers who worked hard on my campaign and also those who supported me financially. I often wonder: why would they be so willing to give so much of themselves so freely and so generously? And it's humble—it's humbling to know that they're willing to do so simply in the hope that I, their elected representative, will serve well; that I, their elected representative, will prove worthy of the office to which I've been appointed. So that's something I strive for each and every day, to conduct myself in a way that honours the efforts of the volunteers and supporters who worked so hard to ensure I was elected. And I want to encourage all the members of this House also to remember their volunteers and supporters each and every day.

I believe it was nearly three years ago that the honourable Minister of Crown Services (Mr. Schuler) took many of—one of his many trips to his well of experience and insight for me to tell me that I should expect to work harder, to give more and to work longer hours than any volunteer in my campaign. And at the time I heartily agreed with his advice, but I can tell you that I didn't imagine it would be quite so hard to keep up to them. My volunteers have worked amazingly hard and they've shown me what can happen when you work together as a team. A team that has the same goals, the same vision, clear leadership and good organization can accomplish great things, and I look forward to doing that with my team here in this House.

I can also tell you that my team ended up being bigger than I'd ever imagined it could be, as volunteers from across this province signed up to help our campaign in Radisson. One large group I want to recognize came from the honourable Minister of Finance's (Mr. Friesen) constituency, and I thank him for that. I intend to honour their efforts also with my service as an MLA.

And I also want to take a moment at this time to thank the staff of the Legislature and of the Clerk's office for their help in these past weeks. This was a historic election with a record number of new MLAs being elected to this House, and all this has translated to a record amount of transition-related work and training work for all the staff here at the Legislature. I believe they've responded wonderfully to this challenge with grace, humour, patience and professionalism, and I want to recognize them and appreciate them personally, and I encourage you all to do the same.

I also think it's appropriate to dwell a little bit longer on the historic nature of this recent election. Under the auspices of a first-past-the-post electoral system, achieving a majority of seats is not particularly rare, but doing so with a majority of votes is rare indeed, and that's what we have done. Perhaps Manitobans have taken a page out of the books of our immediate neighbours to the west in Saskatchewan. I hope so, and I hope that the Bombers can also learn from their example by bringing home a Grey Cup soon.

Speaking of 12-member teams, I also want to say that I'm tremendously proud of the 12 members of our Cabinet team. You have a tremendous responsibility but also a tremendous opportunity to steer Manitoba towards a better future, and I want you to know that you're well supported by your legislative assistants and by the backbench and the rest of this House. We are ready and willing to step up and to help in whatever way we can.

Our first Prime Minister John A. Macdonald once said, if you give me better wood, I'd give you a better cabinet. Well, our Premier (Mr. Pallister), the honourable First Minister, has been given exactly that, and with this better Cabinet we will be able to build a better Manitoba.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's been almost three years since I first declared my interest and willingness to serve as the member of the Legislative Assembly for Radisson, and over those three years I've gained a deeper and deeper appreciation for what is the constituency of Radisson. It's possibly the largest urban constituency—purely urban constituency in the province. Radisson's size also presents some unique challenges in dealing with other levels of government. I'm open to correction here, but I believe that Radisson is the only urban provincial constituency that has—that is being served by two different federal MPs in Daniel Blaikie and Dan Vandal, two different city councillors with Matt Allard and Russ Wyatt, and two different school boards with the Louis Riel School Division and the River East Transcona School Division. So, in that sense, Radisson is sometimes best described as two halves of a whole.

The southern part of the constituency includes all of Windsor Park and Southland Park north and east of the Mint respectively. The northern part of Radisson includes Mission Gardens and Waterside Estates, along with parts of Transcona and Lakeside Meadows. Not only that, but it is currently the home

of a new large—the largest residential development within a 15-kilometre radius of Portage and Main. Now, between these two halves lies a very large area with very few voters living in it, but it's that area that contains so much of what makes Radisson a special constituency.

There are places to work and places to shop. Radisson is home to the second largest retail and shopping district in the province after Polo Park, in the area around Kildonan Place.

Radisson is home to the largest volume rail yard in the province in Symington Yards, capable of handling 3,000 cars per day. Radisson has the largest conglomeration of automobile dealerships in the province, and although the honourable Minister of Health might tell you it's worth the trip to Steinbach, most Manitobans agree that it's just better to shop the strip in Radisson.

*(15:10)

What you might not know about Radisson is that it's also home to the largest concentration of recreational vehicle dealers in Manitoba, the largest Internet drug pharmacy in Canada and the—it's the home of the St. Boniface and Terracon industrial park's many hotels, many more restaurants and countless small businesses.

I'm confident that the strong fiscal plan that Manitoba's new government will put forward will be embraced by the people of Manitoba and by the people of Radisson. We're looking forward to reductions in taxes. We're looking forward to the elimination of unnecessary red tape. As outlined in the Throne Speech, this will help our businesses grow and prosper. We're also looking forward to the increased trade opportunities that will be afforded us through the New West Partnership and the Trans-Pacific Partnership. And we're eager to engage with the Premier's Enterprise Team to pursue stronger economic growth in our province.

But what I love most about Radisson is its people. The constituency of Radisson is home to some of the most philanthropic people in our province: the honorary Lieutenant Colonel of the Royal Winnipeg Rifles, Albert El Tassi, someone known to many of you, I'm sure, has long been a resident of Radisson. Others like John and Bonnie Buhler or Larry and Tova Vickar have their businesses established in Radisson. These are people who have juxtaposed their success in business with the legacy of generosity and giving. That's why I was

so pleased to hear that generosity acknowledged and embraced in the opening paragraphs of the Throne Speech.

As I walked and talked and knocked throughout Radisson, it became clear to me too that the people of Radisson are kind and caring and compassionate, and they have common sense. They recognize that the challenges our province is facing are significant and there are no quick fixes. A steady hand at the rudder is what is needed to coax us out of the turbulence and into smoother waters to a government that's the right size, that's focused on providing services to Manitobans and that's fiscally responsible.

Changing gears for a moment, I should tell you that—I can tell you that my heart breaks when I think about the brokenness and pain that our Child and Family Services workers encounter each and every day. I'm thankful that the Throne Speech made it clear that protecting children is a top priority of this government and will be one of the first bills to be introduced. I personally share that priority because there's so much more that needs to be done. And government cannot do it alone. So I offer the honourable Minister of Families (Mr. Fielding) my support and my prayers, and encourage every member of this household to do the same, to recognize the significance of the challenges that we face in this area and the need to work together as a team to solve them.

I've always believed that life should be valued from its very beginning to end. And I'm encouraged by the commitments made in the Throne Speech and its initiatives for protecting and for educating our youth, for developing an improved mental health strategy and for caring for our seniors with the construction of additional personal-care-home beds. I believe that good government has a responsibility to all of its citizens, but especially those—to those most vulnerable, including those living with a disability or those who are supporting a family member with a disability.

And one question all of us as members of this House have had to answer is: Why did you run for office? Why do you want to be an MLA? And I was asked that question a lot of times, often by coworkers. At the time I would tell them that I've always been drawn to occupations where you're underappreciated, work countless and thankless hours and are mocked and subject to public ridicule on a regular basis. But all joking aside, what drives

me, and I'm sure drives many of you as well, is a desire to serve, a desire to build a better province for the future and for our children.

Throughout my career in the information technology and financial planning worlds, I've made it my mission not to be promoted but to serve well. Perhaps predictably I was promoted anyways. But even in my senior management role I made it my goal to lead by serving, because when individuals who make up the team are successful, then the team is also successful. And I've always believed that that's the only way the leader of the team can be successful as well, not at the expense of others, but by investing in them.

So I look forward to bringing my 20 years of management, financial planning and information technology experience, as well as my extensive volunteer work within my church and community in the service of this government and of our province.

Our traditions and our history have given us this hallowed hall. And at times, this place may seem downright adversarial in nature. I'm reminded of question period. But then I'd like to point you to what Václav Havel, the first democratically elected president of what was then Czechoslovakia said. He said, the main enemy is not our political foes; the main enemy is our own bad traits, indifference to the common good, vanity, personal ambition, selfishness, rivalry. The main struggle needs to be fought on that field.

So today I want to challenge all the members of the PC caucus and all the members of this entire House to take up that struggle to be the kind of leaders that Manitobans will love and respect.

Protect your core values, fight clean even if the other guy fights dirty, be honest, be truthful, be respectful of others no matter what your differences, work together as a team, be kind-hearted, be humble and be compassionate.

As I've grown in experience and hopefully with a little wisdom as well, I've found myself embracing more and more, what might seem at the first glance to be conflicting ideas or at least highly contrasting ones. What I find is when you embrace that contrast is when you can achieve an elevated understanding of the true underlying meaning. By way of an example, I take my life as a Christian. On the one hand, I know that I fall short every day of the ideals that I strive to live by. Not only that, but here we all are, just a few tiny specks of the billions of the tiny

people on the infinitesimally small dot that is earth in a spectacularly enormous, amazing and complicated universe. But, on the other hand, as a Christian, I believe that I'm individually, thoroughly and undeservedly loved by Jesus Christ. Now, that's a stark contrast and it's beyond my ability to comprehend, but the more I embrace it the more I understand what it means to be Christian. So in the same way, I want us to recognize that these kinds of contrasts are not uncommon in our work as government either.

At least my fellow caucus members should have an idea of what it means to be both progressive and conservative.

Another example: we all need to work hard to defend the freedoms and rights of citizens to be able to believe and to say what we ourselves might strongly disagree with. Some of these contrasting ideas were mentioned in the Throne Speech as well. Our government is to be humble, but it's also to be proud of what we achieve. We are supposed to listen to Manitobans, but we're also supposed to kept-keep them informed of what we're doing. We are to govern this province and we're to do so by serving its people.

And so I'm back at the beginning. How can I, how can you adequately thank your supporters and volunteers? What can I do in response to the trust that the people of Radisson have placed in me? What I will do is work hard for them. I will put their interests ahead of my own. I will maintain my integrity. I will deal honestly and I will serve. I will strive to have the strength, wisdom, courage, conviction and confidence to do what is right for Manitobans each and every day that I'm here. Thank you.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Before we continue, I would like to offer a reminder to all members that in the House we do not refer to another member by name. Instead, we refer to them by constituency or portfolio. I want to thank the members for their attention to this practice.

We'll continue.

Mr. Wab Kinew (Fort Rouge): *Ojibwa spoken. Translation unavailable.*

Mr. Deputy Speaker, allow me to translate into English from Ojibwa, the original language of the Anishinaabe nation who signed Treaty 1, on whose lands we are gathered here today.

My name is Grey Cloud. My other names are Turning thunderbird and Sits-on-the-earth-colour. I am from the lynx clan. I'm from a place on Lake of the Woods called Raven's Nest Portage. I'm a member of the spirit lodge Midewin and a sundancer. I'm very happy to be here in the Legislature and I acknowledge the Metis nation on whose lands we are also gathered.

The rest is in English.

* (15:20)

I'm deeply honoured and grateful to be here as representative for the good people of Fort Rouge. I'd also like to thank the many people who sent me here, including the many volunteers, both young and old. You inspire me.

I see some of them here today, like Tim Catcheway, Janell Jackson, Danielle Morrison, my mother-in-law, Debbie Beach-Ducharme. And let me tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I show up on the doorstep with my mother-in-law, people are impressed.

I also see Gina Smoke, Jean Palmer, Marilyn, Mitch Bourbonniere, who mentors many young people, Ayat Mneina, Darren Gibson, Guy, and I think that just about covers it. So I want to have everyone's name on record here in Hansard.

I also want to thank the campaign staffers like Paul Mason, Tessa Blaikie Whitecloud, Natalie Copps, Carolina Stecher and Brandy Schmidt. I say miigwech to my wife and, of course, my mother, who is here with us today, Kathy Kinew. They both knocked on almost as many doors as I did. And I have to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that my mom was a good sport. I watched her one evening get a door slammed shut in her face, and she yelled at the closed door, hey, that's my son you're talking about. So I appreciate her very much. Without her and my wife's support, I likely would not have entered the race in the first place.

Finally, I want to thank my two sons, Oshkii'anang and Bezhigomiigwaan. They are my greatest motivation. Anything good I may do is because of them, so they deserve the credit. Only the mistakes are my own.

I am proud to represent one of the most diverse constituencies in our province, diverse in every sense of the world. There are indigenous people, newcomers and the descendants of settlers who arrived many generations ago. There are many

young students, parents with young families, retirees. During the campaign, I even attended the birthday party for somebody who was turning 100 years old, Bea Stewart. There are some of the most opulent homes in the province in Fort Rouge, as well as social housing. There are some people who sleep outside, underneath bridges or on the sidewalk. I am here to try and bring all of those diverse voices forward.

I'd like to offer my congratulations once again to the Premier (Mr. Pallister) and his government. In addition to the fun times in question period, I know that we can work together to do what's best for Manitobans.

I also want to acknowledge the previous MLA for Fort Rouge, Jennifer Howard. Her legacy on advancing the rights of Manitobans with disabilities is one to be proud of. I have promised her and others to continue this work and look forward to collaborating with the government towards the full implementation of The Accessibility for Manitobans Act.

I would also like to thank her constituency assistant, Sharoo Modha, who is here today. Sharoo's been an invaluable source of advice in connecting with our community. I'm also deeply grateful to previous MLAs from the area like, Tim Sale and Lloyd Axworthy, who have been great sources of advice.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, 143 years ago Treaty No. 3 was signed. This is the treaty which covers my homeland on Lake of the Woods as well as southeastern Manitoba. During the deliberations, one of the signatories, a chief by the name of Sah-katch-eway, whose name means the light of the rising day, spoke and addressed the Queen's representatives. Sah-katch-eway said, I will ask you to lend me one of your daughters and one of your sons to live with us and, in return, I will lend you one of my daughters and one of my sons for you to teach what is good, and after they have learned, to teach us.

Remarkable words. One hundred and forty-three years ago, this chief understood that education was key to fulfilling the treaty relationship but also that education is key to the project of building a multicultural, inclusive society. Sah-katch-eway understood that in order for us to live together, we should learn a bit about one another. In today's parlance, we might summarize Sah-katch-eway's vision as follows: Education is key to reconciliation.

Sadly, as we know, only half of his vision was fulfilled. Only the indigenous children were taken. And my family knows this all too well. My late father, Tobasonakwut Kinew, was the last generation of our people to grow up free on the land, immersed in traditional Anishinabe culture. Yet, when he was just a child, he was taken from his parents and sent to St. Mary's Indian Residential School. There he suffered abuses too terrible to mention in this House. We now know that he and hundreds of other children like him at St. Mary's and at other residential schools across the country were actually experimented on by federal government-funded scientists. This happened within this country, within living memory.

Today, education is a powerful force for transformative change. Consider my younger sister, Shawonipinesiik Kinew. She's a Ph.D. candidate at Harvard University, one of the best universities on earth. She's not alone. And I share this with you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to point out a simple truth that in the indigenous community, in one generation, education has gone from being the tool of oppression that was used to hold us down to now being the tool of empowerment that we are using to raise ourselves up.

But more young people need that opportunity. Education is important to everyone in Manitoba. This point was driven home to me countless times during the campaign, speaking with students worried about their debts who told me they cannot afford tuition increases or to families who need daycare, early childhood education. These parents told me that not only is affordable child care an important part of their child's educational journey, but it's also an investment in our economy. Every mother, father and caretaker who could get a daycare spot is another person who can get a job, go to school or start a business.

A good education benefits all, and it is my hope that every young person in Fort Rouge and across Manitoba can finish high school, attain a post-secondary credential and find a meaningful career path. Every child in this province deserves a decent education. Yet the educational outcomes of indigenous people in this province remind us that history looms large and that the challenges we all have inherited are particularly acute in this area.

During the recent campaign, I visited the Manitoba Youth Centre to speak with some of the young people there. We talked about the ramifications of a self-destructive lifestyle, my own

journey to leave behind the anger of my youth and the path to sobriety. As I was getting ready to leave, a young woman—I'll call her Q—gave me a handmade beaded medallion with the image of a lynx on it, my clan animal, Pizhiw Ndoodem. As Q stared at me, I recognized her from more than a decade ago when she was just a skinny seven-year-old kid who used to visit a drop-in centre in the North End where I volunteered. She'd show up for a hot meal every day. When I asked here why, her brother simply replied, because our parents don't feed us at home.

In the juvenile detention facility that day, this spring, we spoke about Q's future. I told her she should take responsibility for her actions and leave the self-destructive lifestyle behind, and, absolutely, 100 per cent she should take responsibility for the actions that led her to the Manitoba Youth Centre. At the same time, the simple fact is she did not have a fair shot at life. The deck was stacked against her by poverty, by her family situation and by the intergenerational impacts of residential schools. And so we have work to do, work to strengthen education for all Manitobans, but also on the social side, to ensure that the next young person growing up in poverty, like Q, faces a pathway to post-secondary instead of a pipeline to prison.

Recently, two long-time friends, Edee and Matthew lost their mother, Maryanne O'Meara, to a heart attack, so some—though some people might say it was a broken heart. Maryanne passed away on Mother's Day. She was better known by her Anishanaabe nickname, Shee Sheeb.

The memorial service for Shee Sheeb was a beautiful one that mixed both evangelical Christian and traditional Anishanaabe teachings. She was honoured as a good, community-minded person who raised a wonderful family. A memorable moment came when her seven-year-old granddaughter, Lanna Moon rose in front of the hundreds of people in attendance and sang one more song for her kookum, her grandma.

Shee Sheeb and the rest of her family were forced by flooding to evacuate the Lake St. Martin First Nation in 2011. Five years have passed and they are still not allowed to return. Shee Sheeb could not be buried in her home community. Instead, she was cremated, and when her ashes are spread around Lake St. Martin, only then will she go back home. And so I honour them.

*(15:30)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm glad the government mentioned floodfighting infrastructure and an outlet for Lake Manitoba in their Throne Speech, but I would remind them and everyone else here that there is a human toll to flooding. The people of Lake St. Martin, Dauphin River, Pinaymootang, Little Saskatchewan and other flood-affected communities bear witness to this; they must return home. This will mean engaging the federal government to ensure they carry out their fiduciary duty, but perhaps, more importantly, their moral duty to these Manitobans. And the Province must be a good partner in this work.

The issue of flooding as well as wildfires and the global rise in temperatures tell us that now is the time to act to protect our mother the Earth and to accelerate the transition to a post-carbon economy. It makes economic sense for a province with so many hydro resources to pursue a green job strategy. But it makes for sound social policy as well. We owe a duty to our descendants seven generations into the future to preserve the environment for them. We don't own the land; the land owns us.

We must honour those who brought us into this world as well. One day, while canvassing during the election, I knocked on a door in a seniors' home, Fort Rouge. I heard a faint, come in, from inside, so I entered. An elderly woman turned to look at me and motioned me over. So I sat down. And, as we spoke, I noticed her sallow skin, thin arms and her movements, slow and methodical as though every motion required deep concentration and effort. After a few minutes, she told me she might vote for me—if I'm still around on election day, she added. Then she turned away, her gaze resting on a bookcase across from where we sat. I turned to see what she was looking at and saw the photos of two young women who I assume to be her granddaughters. I assured her that her relatives would be there to visit her soon. And, after a few more minutes of small talk, I said goodbye.

It is moments like this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that remind us of the sanctity of life, that each of us has a basic human dignity which must be respected. While we must engage with committees, budgets and debate, we should not lose sight of the fact that what we are really trying to do in the health-care sector is guarantee the most basic right of all, the right to live.

I'd like to close the anecdote about my late father. I don't want to leave the impression that he was only defined by the trauma of his residential

school experience. His journey of reconciliation saw him become a sun dance chief, saw him hear the 2008 apology from the government and led him to give a statement to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 2010. His journey culminated in 2012 shortly after receiving a terminal diagnosis of cancer. With that finish line in sight, he decided to make things right and bring back together the pieces of his heart which had been broken apart so many years earlier.

On April 15th, 2012, he, his brother Fred Kelly, Phil Fontaine and Phil's brother, Bert, adopted the then-archbishop of Winnipeg, James Weisgerber, as their brother in a traditional adoption ceremony at the Thunderbird House.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, a traditional adoption ceremony is a peacemaking ceremony for many indigenous nations. When two people are in conflict, rather than escalating things, they are asked to take one another as relatives. They commit to working things out through thick and through thin by taking one another as kin.

The adoption of the archbishop was a remarkable ceremony to behold. It was a powerful lesson in what makes a good human being. Here were four men who had perhaps every right to be angry, angry at the way they had been treated. Instead, they rose above those feelings and embraced the person who represented their past torments with love. They had been mistreated, apologized to, and they simply said, it's okay, we are brothers.

Reconciliation is something tangible; it is something real, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Reconciliation is what happens when the sun dance chief and the archbishop become brothers.

Fast-forward a few months later, we'd also completed the hard work of the intergenerational reconciliation that was needed in our family. We repaired what might be the most damaging part of the residential school legacy, the emotional chasm left between survivors and their descendants.

The things my younger sister wanted to say to our father, she said, and vice versa. The man I had feared throughout my childhood was now my best friend. We had put everything on the table, and I am proud to say that for our family, because we took the time to help our relative navigate the end of life, there were no regrets.

So there we were in late December, in a dark room, gathered around the old man, listening to his

breathing. The archbishop came and blessed our father, and in one of his last actions my father reached out and said to the archbishop, ahow kaa'anishinaa nimishomis, beginning a beautiful Anishinabe prayer for his brother, the black robe. The divisions between faiths had ceased to matter. Different languages, different traditions, the same great spirit. Only the basics mattered at that point.

But then those things disappear too: food, but then you can't eat; water, but then you can't drink; air, and then there comes a time when you've drawn your last breath. And in that moment you have the last resource that each of us will exhaust: time. And then your time's up. And what's left after you're gone? Love; the love he had for us, the love that we still have for him and hold in our hearts. That is what remains.

When you think about things in that perspective, it makes you wonder why we don't always get along. What is it that prevents us from seeing one another as brothers and sisters every day? It's with that vision, that sentiment that I wish to serve the people of Fort Rouge, to collaborate with my colleagues around the House here.

I know many hard-working indigenous people who pay their taxes. I know many non-indigenous people who love the land and respect their elders. None of us are going anywhere. We're all fallible; we're all human. And, as a result, we need to understand this process called reconciliation, how we might atone for our own shortcomings.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is no red race; there is no white race; there's no yellow race, no brown race or no black race. There is only one race, the human race, and we are all in this together. The diversity of the cultures, languages and, yes, even political beliefs in communities across Manitoba is a multi-faceted prism through which the universal human values of love, kindness, sharing and respect shine through.

I'm proud to stand before you as the MLA for one of those communities, Fort Rouge.

Miigwech. Thank you.

Hon. Ian Wishart (Minister of Education and Training): It's a pleasure to rise to put a few comments on the record regarding Throne Speech, and I would like to compliment the previous speaker on what a good job he did and how many of his sentiments I can certainly second, and we look forward to the opportunity to work together and find

solutions not only for the human race but for everyone living here in Manitoba.

Now, this is—I'm also very proud to rise as a newly re-elected MLA for the constituency of Portage la Prairie. I'm very proud of that and very humbled by their trust in me. The first time was certainly a learning experience, being not only the MLA but also active role and critic in particular, critic for Child and Family Services, which I served the last three years of my term being elected. And it was very eye-opening. I certainly had some exposure to it before, but as critic you pretty much have to dive right in to do the job right, and I met so many people and was exposed repeatedly to so many problems, came to realize how much of a crisis we have in particular in Manitoba.

* (15:40)

And one of the things that was driven home was our continued problem with poverty in this province and in this country, to some degree, particularly poverty in the North. And Manitoba, unfortunately, leads the way in terms of poverty, particularly child poverty—29 per cent is the number that was used for many years, and on the rise. And I see some—I understand some new numbers are out and I have not had a chance to examine them yet. But I did understand that the 60 per cent of child poverty that was common in the North is now closer to 75 per cent and I am, frankly, embarrassed and appalled to be part of a province that has that level of poverty. There are far too many families impacted by that and it changes far too many lives, and far too many children who are—have no opportunity—and I—certainly, I'll get back to the issue, being Education Minister and having the opportunity to, perhaps, try and fix that. But there are far too many lives who do not—far too many children and far too many lives that do not reach their potential because they do not have the access. They do not have the opportunity because of the way they grew up in poverty, and it changes their whole lives.

I can't help but think of—that so many cases that we looked at, but one young mother in particular who had—was doing fairly well, had done pretty much everything right. She had managed to find housing for herself and her two young children. She had managed to find daycare spaces for her two young children. Everything was going well, but she was in—and she was back getting an education, getting trained. And the littlest things can upset a life.

The housing unit she lived in—which was Manitoba Housing—came down with bed bugs; relatively simple thing, right? Should be curable. They got so bad her kids actually carried them to the daycare. And daycares, though they're supposed to have policy of tolerance and a solution, have waiting lists in the thousands, as we all know. And, rather than deal with the issue of follow their protocols, they simply told her, keep your kids home, and gave the spaces away to somebody else.

And she could not find any other care for her kids so she had to drop out of school, so she lost another two years out of her life before we were able to find her another place. We had to move her because we couldn't deal with the—couldn't get rid of the problem in Manitoba Housing.

So we had to find other location for her, and we worked with her very patiently during that two-year period to find her another location where she was able to get her life back together again, find more housing, get back in school, her kids back in daycare. But that does show you how fragile anyone's life is and how the smallest thing can have an impact on.

Now, I would like to thank, also, the many, many volunteers that helped in my election campaign in Portage. It was kind of different this time because we had two candidates running against me. We never really saw one at all. I don't think he ever came to Portage. But a very good local candidate representing the Liberal Party, a First Nations man who I have great respect for, and we were in a number of debates together and he was—he's a very well-educated man, certainly someone that I would like to call my friend. And in the future I hope we have the opportunity to work together on a number of issues because I do have three First Nations communities that I have the pleasure of representing: two Dakota and one Ojibwa. And, certainly, they have different points of view, they have different needs and they have different people and they have different views on what they would like to see out of life and different goals than perhaps each other, and certainly different than some of the other people I deal with.

But together we all want Manitoba to move forward. And it is extremely clear, to me and to many other people in our communities, if we want Manitoba to move forward, this time it has to be very inclusive and bring everyone along, including First Nations and Metis.

We have a very large Metis presence in the town of Portage la Prairie and a couple of small—sorry, the city of Portage la Prairie—and the—and a number of small communities around, many of which are impacted by flooding, actually. And so I certainly share the concern about getting Lake Manitoba back to a—in a range where it can be managed and where we can predict how the future will impact those communities and that people can actually begin to rebuild with confidence that they have not had since 2011. Many of them have been displaced. A few have managed to move back, but it certainly made a significant impact on a number of communities and many individuals, and it is something that we as a government I know have as one of our highest priorities in the future, that we want to be able to work together to try and deal with the uncertainty.

And the constituency of Portage la Prairie has the pleasure of not only having Lake Manitoba, but we have the Assiniboine River and the almost infamous Portage Diversion. So we have the gateway to control the flooding that occurred in 2011 and again in 2014, and we are on the front lines, and I have probably thrown more sandbags than any man in this House—any person in this House, I would dare say, because both at the lake and on the river and along the Portage Diversion we have thrown sandbags at different times and in different places for different reasons. But always it was too much water, and of course it comes down the river from west and much of it from other provinces, and we have limited ability to control, and certainly there are things that we can do as Manitobans to deal with some of the flooding that occurs from landscape in Manitoba.

There's less that we can do working with Saskatchewan, though we need to relate to them much more and get engaged with the people in Saskatchewan because they're people just like us. They suffer from the flooding on occasion as well. Certainly many areas in the—or many people in the Yorkton area are tired of their repeated flooding, which has been a problem as well.

So we need to work to get solutions that work for all, because there are some solutions. You look at other places in the world and the issue has been dealt with, and I know that many people want to relate it to climate change, and perhaps it is. I mean, I certainly don't know the future, but there's a long history of flooding on that river, hundreds of years back, so it's certainly not something that has just occurred in modern history. But we have changed it, not only because we have added drainage—and there's

certainly been lots of that done. A lot of wetlands have been removed and that has an impact not only on the flooding, but it also has an impact on Lake Winnipeg in terms of the nutrient loads and the quality of the water in Lake Winnipeg.

But we've also changed our cultural practices in western Canada, and traditional agriculture that has occurred since we came and occupied this country and had tillage-type agriculture actually dried out the countryside and probably reduced the amount of flooding in that, and there's actually studies that recently came out of University of Regina that suggest very much the same thing.

Now we have brought back a different type of practice with better technology, and it's probably a great thing, but we use zero tillage now so we do not disturb the soil anywhere near as much as we used to. But one of the consequences besides reducing soil erosion, which is a positive thing, and reducing costs and many positives in terms of the soil management, it actually conserves moisture, almost 30 per cent more.

Well, once we've adopted that across western Canada—and we have, virtually all of western Canada is now 100 per cent zero minimum till—we actually fill up the soil with water again. It takes a few years to happen, and then what do you get? You get more runoff, not less.

So, are we done with floods? I suspect we've only seen the beginning of floods because we are now going to be dealing with more water more often in that Assiniboine River basin. So I think we have—it's important that this government plan for that in the future, and I think it is very important we pay attention to that.

Now, I haven't said too much about my local constituency other than the water that is a problem for us and that we have had to deal with, and it's been a very significant thing to the community in the last four to six years, absolutely.

* (15:50)

But it is a city and an area that I'm very proud of. I've lived there my whole life. Many of you know that the Premier (Mr. Pallister) lived there, too, for his—in his younger years, and we knew each other very well then. I was nowhere near the sportsman that he was, but we certainly knew one another and have common background in many ways. I understand his values and I understand what he stands for. I understand in particular his desire for

inclusion and in particular his open and honest ways and the fact that he is compassionate, and I think that everyone needs to pay attention to what happens not only to your own family but to your neighbours, and in the bigger picture, that neighbourhood includes all of Manitoba. So I think that it is important that we as a government be a compassionate government and an inclusive government.

Portage has become—it's quite a lovely city, and I know that many people just cruise on by or cruise on through. Some they take the second entrance into the city, the one that says Southport one way and Portage the other, and visit our lake, which many people don't even know is there, a beautiful part of the province. See Island Park, which is one of the most lovely parks and golf courses that you will ever see, and all of the lovely people that live there. It's a great community with great talented people.

A great place to retire to but a great place to live and a great place to raise your children, and when you're going through there, you'll probably pass through some many vegetable fields. It's about 90 per cent of the vegetables that we consume here in Manitoba are grown in the Portage la Prairie constituency. There's many, many acres, actually over 1,100 acres of carrots are grown in that constituency on an average year, which is more than enough for all of Manitoba and more than enough for most of western Canada. But we, through Peak of the Market in many cases, ship all over. We have between 40 and 60 acres of red beets, which is enough red beets for all of western Canada. They ship them all the way to BC, so Peak of the Market red beets are often on the supermarket shelves in BC in competition with the ones brought up from the US.

So we are very proud of the productivity of those soils, and actually my background includes a bit of soil science so I'm always quoting the statistic that there is really only a quarter million acres of class 1 soil in western Canada. Class 1 has no limitations; if you have the climate, you can grow anything, 200,000 acres of that is in the RM of Portage so we certainly have some of the most fortunate—we are some of the most fortunate in terms of the soils that we have available to us, and we have people with the skills that know how to grow almost anything from asparagus to zucchini basically within—in our area. And we have research farms there to support them—*[interjection]*—you like that one? Good for you, but they actually do grow both of them there, so just so you know. But we are very proud of that in that

community and that's certainly something that we like to be known for.

Madam Speaker in the Chair

Now getting back to the volunteers, we had many very dedicated volunteers and I should thank each and every one of them and it would be difficult to do that but there were half a dozen of them that committed a lot of time, and I'd certainly like to mention a few of them including Stephanie Roy, who was my campaign manager and worked very hard; Wendy Bennett, who was a volunteer that did a lot financial work and also kept track of a lot of the numbers; and many, many more including Shauna-Lei Leslie, who handled the volunteers very skillfully. And we actually enjoyed having many more volunteers than we have ever enjoyed before. We lost count of them, literally. There would be over 100 volunteers that came forward at various times both to help locally and to also help out in other constituencies as well, which certainly made a significant difference, and I'm very proud of them all. And I am very thankful to them for helping me and helping the party in this election. So we certainly want to express that, Madam Speaker.

But I guess ultimately, we need to remember that we are here to make a difference. And I heard from a number of other people in the House today as to why did they go into politics, and I guess for me it was somewhat simpler in that I like helping people and I have always done that. And this was probably the best opportunity I could think of, I guess, at the time when I ran the first time and, of course, once I got into it I found that I actually could make a difference, and I think that's why we're all here. We're all here because we want to make a difference, and whether it's one constituent at a time, which is sometimes all we're able to help, or whether we get our opportunity to do more than that and make a difference to all Manitobans. I certainly hope I'm remembered when I'm done as someone who made a difference.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): Now, Madam Speaker, I've never done this before, and I probably will never do it again, but I wanted to start with a poem.

If you can keep your head when all about you /
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you, /
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you /
And make allowance for their doubting too, /
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting, /
Or being lied about, don't deal in lies, /
Or being hated, don't give way to

hating, / And yet don't look too good nor talk too wise,

If you can dream and not make dreams your master, / If you can think and not make thoughts your aim, / If you can meet with triumph and disaster / And treat those two imposters just the same, / If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken / Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools / Or watch the things you gave your life to broken / And stoop and build them up with worn-out tools,

If you can make one heap of all your winnings / And risk it on one turn of pitch and toss / And lose and start again at your beginnings / And never breathe a word about your loss, / If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew / To serve your turn long after they are gone, / And so hold on when there is nothing in you / Except the will which says to them, hold on,

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue / Or walk with kings nor lose the common touch, / If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you, / If you all men count with you but none too much, / If you can fill the unforgiving minute / With 60 seconds' worth of distance run, / Yours is the earth and everything that's in it, / And which is more, you'll be a man, my son.

These words were written by Rudyard Kipling over a century ago. They were written as advice to his son. The language may be a little bit dated and, of course, could be gender neutral. There's a back story to this poem that I'll leave to the English majors who may be in the room or may be listening attentively at home. To summarize, of course, the poem is about keeping calm and carrying on. The name of the poem is *If*; it's not what if.

Everybody makes their own choices, and I chose to seek to have the people of Minto vote for me again and return me to the Legislature, and I'm very proud to represent the people of the West End in this place.

Of course, it was former Premier Gary Doer who went through six general elections—three he lost and three he won—who would always say the same thing on election night, and he would say the people are always right. And, as usual, Gary's correct. And maybe it's easy for us to say because every one of us lucky enough to be seated in this Chamber can say, well, of course, the people were right; they elected each of us. And I suppose that's true.

Kipling, of course, says that the real measure of character is if you can lose and start again at your

beginnings and never breathe a word about your loss, you're showing leadership. And so it's with those comments, Madam Speaker, it's my honour to speak about the Throne Speech, my 13th opportunity to watch the Throne Speech but my first in opposition.

First, of course, thanks to the people of the West End who've sent me back here for the fourth time. I told people on the doorstep I was reapplying for the job, and I'm proud they decided to keep me on, and I'm very proud they gave me the largest margin of victory of any opposition MLA. People in Minto, of course, are incredibly diverse. They're hard-working; they care about family; they care about community. They're proud of their country and their province and their city, but so many of them are very, very proud of their roots, wherever in the world that may be. It is a wonderful community to represent in this Legislature, and I can let all members know I tend to brag about it a lot. It is a wonderful community for anyone to get to know.

I will let it be known that I have bought members of this Legislature, and not just on my side of the House, lunch on Sargent Avenue. You can always hit me up for a copy of the West End Biz Restaurant Guide and discover for yourself. An experience knocking on doors in Minto usually means coming home with a pocket full of tomatoes from an Italian garden, perhaps a Tupperware container of lumpia, perhaps an offer of Ethiopian coffee or a pocket full of Vietnamese candies. There's a lot to learn, and I do learn something every day in my community, and I hope all of you, especially those new members, will continue to learn something new every day in this Chamber.

*(16:00)

I want to thank everyone who helped on my campaign: my campaign manager, Heather Laube; my voter contact specialist, Devon Kelly; my tremendous E-day organizers, some experienced hands, Sonia Kowalewich and Becky Barrett. I had two men who joined me all the way, who never complained when it was snowing or it was windy or it was raining, to go out and canvass one more poll or drop more pamphlets: Aaron Goss and Daniel Smith.

There was a host of other people who worked inside, who worked outside, who were on the phone, who were behind the scene in an election campaign where every single person in this room knows it was possible to get not just frostbite, but sunburn on the same day.

I want to thank my family. I think everyone should know that my re-election campaign was only the third most stressful undertaking in our house. My daughter Rhiannon wrote her final international baccalaureate exam just yesterday afternoon. So this campaign was very, very poorly timed for her as it was in the middle of preparing for these difficult European exams. Of course, I was part of the first international baccalaureate class at Silver Heights Collegiate many moons ago, and there were not a lot of bright spots in this election, truly, but knowing that there will at least be another graduate of Silver Heights Collegiate at the Cabinet table will keep that tradition going, Madam Speaker.

My daughter Catriona, in the middle of the campaign got her beginner's driver's licence, and so she began not just her classroom training, but also her in-car session. Of course, it's a great deal with our public insurance company, Manitoba Public Insurance, a kid can get her beginner's licence at 15 and a half, and for the princely sum of \$50 you get 34 hours of in-class training and 16 hours on the road. In the middle of a campaign, of course, that meant a lot of work to get her to and from the classes.

It's only made possible with my wife—last week we celebrated our 20th wedding anniversary. More than half the time she has been burdened with being married to an MLA. But, however, on the other side, for the rest of the time she was burdened with being married to a lawyer. So many people say that perhaps she has traded up. You'll have to ask her.

Now, I've heard it said, of course, that life back in the Middle Ages was nasty, brutish and short, and that has a lot in common with this Throne Speech. And that is no reflection on the delivery of the Lieutenant Governor who, of course, delivered it with grace and with respect. But we were given a speech not even 15 minutes in length, not even one minute for every year the Progressive Conservative Party was in opposition, and it spoke to few people that I represent in this Legislature and, I dare to say, few average Manitobans.

You know, a Throne Speech is a signature document. It's meant to be a statement of philosophy, a statement of principles and, in this case, Madam Speaker, it was a statement of principles of the very few. It's as if they took this Throne Speech and pressed it out of the dark wood of the walls of the Manitoba Club. It's a Throne Speech open only to the privileged few.

And there's no more clearer way in which this new government tried to put forward its philosophy than the way that this Throne Speech is singling an attack on labour and working Manitobans. For the first time since the 1940s—the 1940s—there is no minister of Labour, and issues affecting Labour, affecting workplace health and safety, employment standards, pay equity are now on the desk of a very busy minister. And that's no knock against the minister, but it's a very, very busy portfolio, and the fear is that those issues are simply going to be forgotten about.

But it gets worse. We've already had a message from this—from the government in the Throne Speech that they plan to destroy automatic certification, forcing employees who wish to bargain collectively to vote not once, but twice: once when they sign their union cards and a second time after open-season on employees when employers have the right to influence or to threaten workers with their jobs.

And right now when 65 per cent, a substantial majority, larger majority than most of us were elected to this House, would sign a card—right now there's automatic certification. There is no need to take on workers to provoke fights with labour by rolling us back to the 1940s or the 1920s or whenever they got their inspiration from.

There was also a message in the Throne Speech that this government will destroy the existence of project labour agreements which have ensured labour peace and have allowed big projects to happen on time and on budget. I know some of my colleagues have commented that this new Premier (Mr. Pallister) is to the right of Roblin and Lyon and Filmon. It's quite frightening that, actually, this new Premier has proven himself to be the—to the right of former Ontario Premier Mike Harris. Even Mike Harris understood the value of project labour agreements in getting major projects done while at the same time having the benefit of ensuring work for Manitobans, for northerners, for indigenous people, and we are not going to stand by and let that go without one heck of a fight, Madam Speaker.

Now, I know the Premier seems to be a fan of using Orwellian language, but it's very, very clear. There's an old labour song, of course, called Which Side Are You On, and it's very, very clear which side that member is on, and it's also very, very clear who stands on the side of working people. It's the New Democrats in this Legislature, and we are never, ever going to back away from a fight.

Now, of course, I'm sure many members are recognized as they were knocking on doors. Not only were there political signs on the lawns—well, I guess they were political signs themselves; there were disability matters, disability vote signs on many, many homes in the West End and across the city, and there was not a word about disabled Manitobans in this Throne Speech, not a word about increasing accessibility, not a word about opportunities for Manitobans with disabilities, and New Democrats in this House will be a strong voice to continue we keep on with the progress and we make sure that every Manitoban matters.

In terms of newcomers, of course, immigration is critical to the West End, and a visit to any of the schools that I have the honour of representing will make that very, very clear, and, you know, I guess I'm disappointed, maybe not surprised, that the Premier (Mr. Pallister) has repeated his views just yesterday in question period. When the Premier talked about out-migration and, once again, as he always does, refused to count people coming to this province from all over the world. And, you know, I believe that someone who comes to Manitoba, whether they come here from Saskatchewan or Nova Scotia or the Philippines or Germany or England, we're all worth the same when we come to this province.

And, you know, Tory math, of course, it's very ironic. Aside from our indigenous brothers and sisters descended from our original Manitobans, the Premier actually wouldn't have counted any of our ancestors who came to Manitoba, and, you know, I think that's a shame.

In terms of poverty, there's not a word about alleviating poverty. I know the Premier has already spoken in this House about tax changes, which, in truth, under any analysis, will provide great benefits to the wealthy and only pennies to those living in poverty. That's why we've worked on increasing the minimum wage each and every year. That's why we've worked on a better and more inclusive education system, on getting more people through high school. The high school graduation rate went from just 71 per cent back in 1999 to over 87 per cent last year, and we are not going to stand by and let that progress stop.

You know, there's all kinds of families in this province, and it doesn't take long to recognize the diversity of the families in the West End or any other part of this province. People have different sexual

and gender identities. The main thing is that they are able to enjoy families, and I recall the first election campaign was in 2004. Soon after that I was knocking on doors. I was a keener, as I hope many of you will be, and went back out there months after the election to talk to people, and a woman invited me into her house and poured me a cup of tea and said very sweetly that because I believed in same sex marriage I was going to hell.

Well, the goal posts have moved an awful lot since 2004, but they didn't move there on their own. They moved there because of advocacy. They moved there because of courage, and they moved there because of work done in this Legislature and other legislatures to make sure that people's rights are protected. And there was not a mention of the inclusivity of the LGBTTTQ community in the Throne Speech, so I guess we have to wait and see.

I know there's some concern and suspicion on this side of the House and by that community because of comments that many members have made inside and outside of this Chamber who now form the government. We will wait and see.

As recently as last year the Conservatives refused to pass a resolution calling on the Senate to stop stalling transgender rights legislation. Of course, the opposition to that was led in the Senate by Manitoba Senator Don Plett, who, I understand, was busy running the last Progressive Conservative campaign in 2011.

* (16:10)

Let's hope that this time is different. And let's hope we can truly move forward. And I will celebrate that change. I believe that the Justice Minister, who's of a similar vintage of myself, is socially progressive and I believe will be able to continue to make those changes. I do indeed hope that's the case.

Many people in the West End, of course, are descended from our original Manitobans and original Canadians. Many people in the West End have connections to First Nations communities. When I go into schools for I Love to Read Month, I usually take along the map of Manitoba. Of course, thanks to our government, the map of Manitoba now includes the entire province of Manitoba which was not the case before. And I'm always pleased when students can point out to me where their families' home communities are.

And, you know, there was not a word about treating indigenous people as anything other than an obstacle to get out of the way of progress of the very few. Like many others, I was disappointed there wasn't a word of murdered, missing indigenous women and girls in this Throne Speech. And I hope, I hope, that this government will show a true commitment to make sure that Manitoba is not just a follower, not just a participant, but continues to be a leader in making sure the inquiry is meaningful and making sure that we do everything we can to protect indigenous women and girls.

Now, we heard some questions already in the Throne Speech debate about Crown corporations. And I was certainly troubled, as were many other Manitobans, by the refusal by ministers and this Premier (Mr. Pallister) to give some straight answers on their view of the future of Crown corporations.

We know that Manitoba Public Insurance offers the—among the lowest auto insurance rates in Canada—no straight answer on protecting that. We think the money should stay in Manitoba to keep our rates low and to make sure that profits don't flow out of the province or out of the country to satisfy shareholders somewhere else.

We, of course, have seen just recently the final shoe has dropped and MTS has announced that it will be bought out by Bell Canada. We'll be losing hundreds of head office jobs right here in Winnipeg, Canada. And it is indeed troubling that some of the people who profited the most from the sale of the Manitoba Telephone System are the same people who've been at the head of the queue and first in line to get positions on the boards of these new corporations. And that's troubling, Madam Speaker.

And, Madam Speaker, of course in terms of Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries, well, the Liberals, oddly enough, tried to get out and be more right than the Conservatives. Of course, they said they would privatize it all and allow liquor to be sold just about everywhere.

I can tell you, in Minto, that went over like a lead balloon. And when I told people that the Manitoba Liberals thought that the Balmoral Hotel should not just sell beer but whiskey and vodka until 2 a.m., you can imagine how well that went for the Liberal candidate in my riding, who almost finished fourth. And when I told them that the Liberals wanted to sell beer and wine in the 7-Eleven by John M. King School, the 7-Eleven at Arlington and Ellice and convenience stores, people were upset.

And you know, to some way, the Liberals have now done the work for the Conservatives, because whatever they propose is not going to be as crazy as what the Liberals did. But we'll be the ones fighting for a reasonable and fair distribution of alcohol to make sure there's social responsibility and to make sure the profits in the sale of alcohol are used for the things that all of us count on.

So I—my time is running short. I found it fascinating, as Justice critic, that there was not a word about justice or public safety anywhere in this Throne Speech.

You know, Madam Speaker, as you know, I spent five years as the Attorney General. I was proud of my work in those five years, five years in which Statistics Canada tells us that the crime rate and the violent crime rate in Manitoba dropped by nearly 40 per cent.

It's an active portfolio, but maybe unlike the members opposite, I don't think the work is done. I'm surprised the new government appears to have no new ideas on fighting crime, on public safety, on reducing recidivism.

Now, of course, I might take that as a compliment. I expect Rudyard Kipling, in his poem, would tell me to take that as a challenge. So I will continue to put forward ideas on how we can make our communities safer, because everybody has the right to be safe wherever they may live.

And I will be a fierce critic of this Minister of Justice (Mrs. Stefanson). But, Madam Speaker, I will undertake to give credit where credit is due. And I will work with her. And we will make sure that we go ahead to build a safer Manitoba.

Now, Madam Speaker, I could end, of course, with the references in the Throne Speech on transparency and accountability. It's troubling the Premier think that those principles should apply to him.

And we now know that the Premier has failed to report his own disclosure as required by Manitoba law, comes with major sanctions and, of course, the House leader has been doing everything but providing anything that could be called an explanation. And there's the same old hecklers and some new ones.

I'm not going to give a lot of advice, but I will give another piece from Gary Doer and that's that everybody needs to be very careful about being

holier than thou, because when you are shown to not be following the laws of Manitoba there can be consequences.

So I will not be supporting this Throne Speech because I support an inclusive, forward-thinking, progressive Manitoba.

Thank you.

Mr. Jeff Wharton (Gimli): Thank you, Madam Speaker, and congratulations on your election to the Speaker as well.

I am honoured and it gives me great pleasure to rise in this House today.

First off, I'd like to personally congratulate each and every member here today for your success in the 41st Manitoba general election. Your commitment and dedication to making a difference in the lives of Manitobans is to be commended.

Prior to reaching our goal of serving Manitobans, I was an entrepreneur, operating and managing my local business in Winnipeg, with offices in Winnipeg and Brandon. My wife Mickey and I started our company from a spare bedroom in our home in 1989. We grew our team to over 100 staff members and their families. In 2010, we moved forward with our eventual exit plan, selling our family business.

From 2010 through 2015, I worked as a consultant in the transportation industry, and in November 2015 we turned our full attention to winning an election.

My journey to the Legislature and to this great—and this great honour to serve was a storied one to say the least. Winning the nomination was one of the most memorable moments of my early career in provincial politics.

We went on 2011 provincial election with great success, building a volunteer base that was second to none. Falling a little short of an upset in our constituency, we never had any doubt that 2016 was dead in our sights.

We continued to reach out to our community leaders, constituents, volunteered on many boards and organizations. After over a half a decade of campaigning with our fantastic and dedicated groups of volunteers, on April 19th Manitobans mandated a better Manitoba and reset the course of this great province.

My family I are truly blessed to be living in one of the greatest regions of our province. The diversity, spirit and perseverance of its people are to be admired. From farmers to fishers, to small-business owners and seniors, we have all demographics covered. Our constituency runs from the south in St. Andrews to the north shores of Hecla Island.

Madam Speaker, our journey starts in St. Andrews. St. Andrews community was originally called the Rapids. The first Anglican log church in 1931 was referred to as the Rapids Church. The former name of the area was Sault a la Biche or Deer Rapids, named by the first French explorers who came through the area in the 1700s. Reverend William Cockran's stone church built in the area of the Rapids was consecrated and named St. Andrews by Bishop Anderson on the 19th of December of 1849. St. Andrews is the patron saint of Scotland and the majority of the settlers here came from the Orkney Islands in Scotland. The area from then on became known as St. Andrews.

Madam Speaker, our journey now moves slightly north and runs into Lockport. It's one of the oldest known settlements in Canada. It's full of renowned migratory birds, flocks of North American white pelicans, and readily seen are bald eagles, double-crested cormorants and many other land and water birds. The Red River Floodway joins the Red River just down the river from the dam. The bridge at the locks were completed in 1910. Today, the area is well known. The anglers are seen there every day and throughout the weekends.

*(16:20)

Madam Speaker, our journey now moves slightly north again to Lower Fort Garry, or the stone fort as it is referred to historically in western Canada as a historic site. It was built in 1830 by the Hudson's Bay Company after Fort Garry at the junction of the Red and the Assiniboine rivers, now central Winnipeg, was destroyed by the flood in 1926. It was constructed 20 miles, or 32 kilometres, north high above the flood waters, and below the dangerous St. Andrews Rapids–Lockport Bridge.

The Hudson Bay Company felt Lower Fort Garry would become the headquarters of the richest fur region in the British Empire.

Lower Fort Garry was actively involved in the volatile political atmosphere of the Red River, and from 1846 to 1848 soldiers were quartered there

during the fur trade crisis, and again in 1870 after the RID resistance.

By 1865, the Lower Fort Garry had become an economic force in St. Andrews, as an industrial complex of the fort contained a boat building yard, a blacksmith shop, a lime kiln, a brewery and a grist mill.

However, after the expansion of the eastern agricultural frontier, even these activities became less significant.

But it was at the signing of Treaty No. 1 with Ojibwa and Swampy Cree peoples in southern Manitoba at Lower Fort Garry in August of 1871 that led to the fort's commemoration by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada.

Lower Fort Garry was also used as a training ground for the North West Mounted Police and as a provincial penitentiary.

In 1951, the title passed from the Hudson's Bay Company to the Crown.

Parks Canada began the restoration of the site in 1960s and, in 1980s, carried out the conservation work on the fort's perimeter walls.

Today, the site is enjoyed and explored by visitors around the world.

Madam Speaker, the St. Andrews municipality encompasses many smaller working communities along the north Red River and the west shore of Lake Winnipeg, such as Breezy Point, Clandeboye, Petersfield, Netley, the village of Dunnottar, Matlock, Whytefold and Ponemah.

Madam Speaker, our tour now takes us to the constituency of my hometown Winnipeg Beach. Manitoba's cottage community was built by the railroad. In 1901, Sir William Whyte of the Canadian Pacific Railway purchased 330 acres for a mere \$3,000.

In June of 1903, the first Winnipeg Beach train brought up vacationers to their new summer paradise. By 1912, 10 trains took 40,000 vacationers to the beach every weekend.

Piers, parks, picnic grounds were constructed to accommodate the weekend masses that would travel to Winnipeg Beach from the nearby capital city.

By 1913, the summer retreat became a popular—became popular that the CPR added 13 trains

running the line between Winnipeg Beach and the city of Winnipeg.

The famous Moonlight Special returned to the city at midnight Saturday for 50 cents. The round-trip fare took—happened every weekend.

A boardwalk took strollers along the beach to the carnival concessions and cottages. A wooden roller coaster was one of the largest in the country and at the time carried hundreds of passengers on a busy day. The pavilion housed 14,000 square feet of dance floor, the largest in western Canada.

Sadly, in the mid-'60s, the dance hall burned down, the roller coaster was dismantled and Winnipeg Beach lost a big part of its history.

My own family history in our community dates back to the early 1920s, when my great-grandmother Sarah and my great-grandfather Sigtriggr (Joe) Johannesson built the first two cottages in Boundary Park on Boundary Creek.

The two cottages are used extensively today by my parents and the entire Wharton family. We have two pictures in my family cottage of my grandmother, my grampa Joe, my dad and his siblings fleeing Winnipeg during the 1950 flood on the train heading to Winnipeg Beach.

Madam Speaker, we head further north, and I welcome you to Gimli, or New Iceland, the home of the Gimli Viking and the world's best whiskey, Crown Royal.

Gimli's history dates back to 1875 when the Canadian government granted land along Lake Winnipeg to the Icelandic settlers. The first group to arrive in New Iceland consisted of early immigrants who had tried to settle various other places in North America.

In 1897, the Gimli area was opened up to homesteaders and saw a surge of settlers from Ukraine, Poland, Hungary and Germany. The arrival of the railroad in 1906 made the area accessible to summer tourists.

Madam Speaker, Gimli is well-known today for its festivals. The Gimli Film Festival is dedicated to celebrating art, education, entertainment and film.

The Icelandic Festival of Manitoba, *Íslendingadagurinn*, as far as we know, has been around for—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Wharton: —is the second oldest continuous ethnic festival in North America, celebrating 127 years this summer.

The Gimli Ice Festival, our newest festival, the primary mission is to help stimulate Gimli, both socially and economically, by working in partnership with the service clubs, organizations and dedicated volunteers that serve our community.

Madam Speaker, our journey, heading north again, we enter into Bifrost-Riverton and the municipality—the village of Riverton. Formerly the site of Aboriginal hunting grounds, Riverton was established by Icelandic settlers in 1876. Several other ethnic groups, including Ukrainian, German, Mennonite and Hungarian, and also Polish immigrants, settled here years later, enriching and expanding Riverton's culture and heritage. The agriculture and fishing industries have traditionally been the basis of the local economy. However, spirit, literacy, sports accomplishments such as the legend Reggie Leach and some of the finest musical entertainers in the Interlake, made up—make up the diversified community.

Madam Speaker, our journey comes to an end in a gem called Hecla Island. Icelandic settlers on Hecla Island landed in 1876. At one point in the 1920s and the 1930s, the population of Hecla was over 500 people. The park was established in August of 1969 and opened for the public in 1975. The causeway was completed in 1972 and replaced the ferry service. I personally recall, in the '70s, as a young boy, travelling up with my parents and siblings by car to the site of the ferry dock where we boarded with our vehicle and took the approximate 10-minute crossing from the mainland to the island. The island is also home to the Icelandic historic Icelandic village along the shorelines, which houses many families' homesteads for generations. It is also home to a local church and fishing pier and a museum. And I encourage you to go up to Hecla.

Madam Speaker, I would like now to take this opportunity to thank the wonderful volunteers who travelled with us on this journey. Our constituency board, our campaign team and all the other volunteers, well over 100 of them, who worked the campaign office, door knocked, lit dropped, drivers, phoners, Burma-Shavers, sign installers, walked, knocked and talked to bring a change to Gimli. This core group of volunteers are the grassroots of any campaign. The success we now enjoy in Gimli and

the province would not have been possible without their support.

Also, Madam Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to thank my entire PC team, all my colleagues and a special note to the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Eichler) and the MLA for lake du—Lac du Bonnet for their support and mentorship.

Madam Speaker, I would also like to recognize a very special friend of mine that unfortunately left us early in life, Mr. Jim Berry, who, over six years ago, set the course to help us cross the finish line on April 19th.

Madam Speaker, a special thank you to my incredible family. My parents Mike and Gayle, you have been on this journey from the beginning, from door knocking to being part of the constituency board. You both have been very supportive throughout this experience. I still recall Dad and I sitting on the deck at the beach over 20 years ago talking about one day running for town council and eventually for MLA for the Province of Manitoba. Mom and Dad, we did it.

* (16:30)

To my girls, Melany and Jennifer, I'm very proud of you both, and thank you so much for your unconditional support in sometimes very difficult and challenging times. Thank you so much for being there and not only for me but for your mom, too.

To my wife, Mickey—Marielle, you have been incredible. You have taken on every single challenge that had been thrown your way and handled it with the utmost love, expertise and professionalism. You've kept me on course; you picked me up when I stumbled and fell, hugged me when I needed it most. Honey, 34 years together and it still feels like yesterday. Thank you for always being there. Thank you for always supporting my career choices. You are my strength.

Madam Speaker, in closing, to my constituents.

Having lived most of my adult life in Gimli constituency and spending the last five and a half years learning and listening to the concerns, attending community events and volunteering for many community organizations, it is truly an honour to be able to serve and work with our community on innovative solutions to our health-care concerns, ensuring quality health care that we all deserve and is readily available to us throughout our communities,

innovative solutions to ensure our emergency rooms stay open.

We will work with community stakeholders to ensure that we address critical strategic infrastructure needs, such as our roads, water sewer systems and issues such as roads and water sewer systems.

We will work for seniors. We need the right care, at the right time, in the right place.

Lake Winnipeg is a place of natural beauty that we are fortunate to have in Manitoba. We must take tangible action that will address the long-standing issues that have contributed to the decline of this treasure in our community.

We will assist in the solution to ongoing flooding and drainage concerns.

We will provide responsible and honest government. This is our opportunity to restore trust and integrity in government and address the critical issues that face our province.

We will be the most improved province in Canada.

Madam Speaker, thank you.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, first, congratulations on your election as Speaker of the House, and I look forward to your service as we proceed over the next several years.

I want to begin by a big thank you to all those from River Heights who supported and elected me. I appreciate your continued support and confidence in me, and I will do my best to serve you well.

I've been very supportive to have a—very fortunate to have a supportive partner in Naomi, to have three wonderful children, Pauline, Charles and Tom, and three grandchildren, Grace, Alice and Zayd.

Now, I want to thank today all those who volunteered on my campaign in River Heights. There are too many to mention individually. Suffice it to say that this year we started canvassing on January the 9th and continued daily until the election on April the 19th. We went from door to door, meeting with residents when it was snowing, sometimes when it was 40 below, when it was raining, as well as when the sun was shining and when it was warm enough to wear short-sleeved shirts. The dedication and the perseverance of all who helped was remarkable. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

Madam Speaker, I want to also say that, as I was campaigning, I learned a lot from the residents in River Heights. There are a remarkable number of very knowledgeable people who are ready to share their own learned experiences. Our conversations at the door, in coffee shops, or community centres or elsewhere are always helpful in outlining issues of concern and in suggesting solutions.

I want to recognize the contributions of those who worked as part of the central Manitoba Liberal Party campaign. I want to thank our leader, Rana Bokhari, for her extraordinary commitment over the course of her tenure as leader during the time leading up to the election and her continued commitment to serving as our interim leader for the foreseeable future.

Many of the policies which we put forward resonated with the people in River Heights. For example, moving quickly to establish a dedicated stroke unit and putting psychological services under Medicare.

There was also strong support for our policies which recognize the needs of those less fortunate in Manitoba, including housing issues in northern Manitoba, in nutritional issues and in decreasing diabetes in our province, as well as ensuring that there was an inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women and girls in Canada, with an emphasis on what has happened in Manitoba.

I'd like to thank the Manitoba Liberal members of Parliament—Jim Carr, MaryAnn Mihychuk, Kevin Lamoureux, Dan Vandal, Robert Falcon-Ouellette, Terry Duguid, and Doug Eyolfson—who contributed in a variety of ways to the provincial Liberal campaign.

I look forward to working on a continuing basis with the residents of River Heights to achieve great things for our community, including, as an example, advocating for the twin arena project; a project to build two new twin arenas on the site of the Charles A. Barbour Arena, completion of this project to replace the current Charles A. Barbour Arena which has reached the end of its lifetime. Completion of this project will provide adequate ice time for hockey and ringette teams of all ages in River Heights and surrounding areas.

I also look forward to the completion of the new gym for Kelvin High School. I remember well the all-party task force of 2005 which looked at the need to improve physical activity and nutrition among our

young people and the need to increase physical activity in our schools. Out of this came an emphasis on the construction of new athletic facilities like the gym at Queenston School and now the gym at Kelvin High School.

I'm proud to work with the residents of River Heights addressing issues of local concern. Some of these concerns I hear on a frequent basis include crime and vandalism, the importance of ensuring a high quality of life for our seniors and concerns for those with disabilities.

I want to specifically recognize the fine efforts made by the Disability Matters: Vote 2016 campaign during the provincial election. It highlighted the accessibility challenges of those with disabilities and their vision for independence and for a barrier-free Manitoba, both of which I support.

In speaking with constituents, I learned of concerns about the quality of our infrastructure, our 'clumbering' streets and roads, health care and long wait times for emergency room care.

Constituencies also reiterated their concerns about the high levels of radon in many Manitoba homes and specifically in homes in River Heights. Radon is said to be the cause of approximately one in six lung cancers, and it's something we need to pay more attention to.

I also heard grave concerns over the state of our largest lake, Lake Winnipeg, and spoke with cottage owners who feel that they're not being treated fairly. People of River Heights are also deeply concerned that there are too many children being apprehended and taken away from their families, and about the far-too-long delays in people who are evacuated from Lake St. Martin, Little Saskatchewan and Dauphin River, the long time that it's been before they're even being able to return to their communities.

I'm looking forward to working with my newly elected Liberal colleagues, the MLA for Burrows and the MLA for Kewatinook. The MLA for Kewatinook overcame huge hurdles to represent people on the east side of Lake Winnipeg, all the way north to Churchill and beyond to the border with Nunavut. Kewatinook is geographically the largest constituency in Manitoba.

The MLA for Burrows represents a critical constituency in the northwest section of Winnipeg. It's a very diverse community with many residents

who've come to Manitoba from countries all around the world.

* (16:40)

On Monday of this week, the newly elected government presented its agenda for the future of Manitoba in the Throne Speech. Most concerning were the many significant issues not adequately addressed. Science and research are important to charting the way forward and improving our province, and yet they were never mentioned. I've already mentioned the vital concerns about the future of our largest lake, Lake Winnipeg, and yet it, too, was never mentioned.

We have vital concerns about the prevention of future floods, which depends critically on the implementation of a surface water management plan for Manitoba. This need was mentioned in the report on the flood of 1997, and yet in 16 and a half years in government, the NDP failed to implement a comprehensive plan. Legislation was only brought forward so late in their mandate that it was never passed. The Conservative government should have made sure that they were on top of this issue, but it wasn't mentioned in the Throne Speech.

The Throne Speech also failed to mention a plan for our growing immigrant population. It's a sad testament to the lack of recognition by this government of the importance of immigration and that, as Manitobans, it's our responsibility to develop the trade and commerce of the future, and immigrants who have connections around the world are vital to that end.

Additionally, there was no mention of the need to complete the Inuit Art Centre at the Winnipeg Art Gallery. Support for the completion of this important initiative will be a marker as to how the Conservative government will treat those who are interested in arts and culture in Manitoba.

Issues important to all Manitobans and all Canadians, including the inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, the need to address issues raised by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and the need to react to reduce all-too-high levels of suicide in Manitoba were also issues which should have been mentioned but were not.

In our subamendment, we mentioned five of the important missing issues. These include the timely construction of a road network connecting communities on the east side of Lake Winnipeg. I

remember back in 1998 and 1999 talking about the importance of this road network and the importance of proceeding quickly to ensure it's in place. Sadly, the NDP delayed for many years after this before starting to actually build the road network. Progress on the roads on the east side of Lake Winnipeg has been significant in the last several years under the leadership of Ernie Gilroy and the East Side Road Authority. It is important that this progress continue, and we as Liberals regret that this was not specifically mentioned in the Speech from the Throne.

Under the NDP in recent years there have developed problems in the timely delivery of the Provincial Nominee Program, with long waits and delays. We emphasize the need to address this problem which arose under the NDP. The newly elected government's Throne Speech failed to address this issue as it should have done.

The establishment of a dedicated stroke unit in Manitoba should have occurred many years ago. Just as coronary-care units were developed for the care of individuals with heart attacks, the same care should be given to those who suffer from a stroke. In other parts of Canada, there were stroke units functioning by the late 1980s and early 1990s. Careful evaluation of their effectiveness showed that stroke units dramatically improve the care of individuals who suffer from a stroke. Bringing together medical professionals at various levels with specific expertise in treating stroke can save lives. Every province except Manitoba has established a dedicated stroke unit. The newly elected government should make it a top priority to have a dedicated stroke unit in our province. However, they didn't provide any indication of their desire to have this dedicated stroke unit in the Throne Speech.

I want to pause for a moment and recognize the efforts that the Speaker, that you made in putting forward the cause for a dedicated stroke unit, and I hope you will be able to ensure that your colleagues make this a reality as fast as it possibly can be.

There is a major need for adequate housing in northern Manitoba communities. There are still homes without running water. I have personally visited many northern communities and seen the need. Indeed, the situation is so dire that in many communities children are being put into the care of Child and Family Services just because the homes are not up to standard. The need for improved housing in the North should have been addressed in

the newly elected government's Throne Speech, but it was not.

In 1996, it was first declared that we have an epidemic of diabetes in our province. The number of people with diabetes in Manitoba has increased from just over 50,000 in 1999 to more than 100,000 people today. The epidemic is out of control. Attention to improve nutrition, particularly in northern communities, and to reducing diabetes should have been mentioned in the Throne Speech, but it was not.

As Liberals, we will be watching the newly elected government closely and keeping them accountable. Sadly, Manitobans are all too familiar to a government in the last 16 years which said one thing and did another. Manitobans deserve better, and I say this, that the members of the Conservative Party need to remember this, that when they say something, we will be there to watch if they actually follow through.

We note how quickly the newly elected government has used their power in government to make political appointees to Crown corporation boards. We're concerned that the newly elected government may be just a different shade of the old NDP. We will watch.

In question period on Tuesday, I raised concerns about their safety of our communities in northern Manitoba. The experiences faced by the residents of Fort McMurray in the last several weeks have demonstrated that we need to take emergency preparedness to a new level. Forest fire prevention and protection of northern communities like Thompson, Flin Flon, Cross Lake, Norway House, St. Theresa Point and many, many others are very important.

In my question, I quoted the report produced by former Premier Gary Filmon, and I quote it again: I believe governments have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to implement risk reduction policies and legislation.

Currently, the government of Manitoba has such an opportunity to ensure that we have the best protection possible for those in the north and east of our province. We intend, as in this example, to be constructive in advancing solutions and being timely in our attention to issues of the day.

Madam Speaker, we live in a fantastic province, and our people have extraordinary potential. As Liberals, we want to see the potential for all

Manitobans recognized. We will work hard and diligently to represent our constituencies and to advance the betterment of our province. There is much to do, and we look forward to making our contribution and to holding the newly elected government to account, hour by hour, day by day, week by week and month by month.

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Merci. Miigwech. Ekosi.

Mrs. Sarah Guillemard (Fort Richmond): Madame la Présidente, félicitations avec votre nouvelle rôle comme présidente.

C'est un plaisir de partager quelques mots avec vous aujourd'hui.

Translation

Madam Speaker, congratulations on your new role as Speaker.

It's a pleasure to share a few words with you today.

English

I would like to begin, Madam Speaker, by congratulating you on your election. The House is blessed to have such a graceful and wise Speaker guiding our sessions.

To speak in the House is an honour and privilege that few have the opportunity to experience. It is with humble gratitude that I acknowledge the reason I stand here today is not by my efforts, but by the efforts of the many who guided me through the election process and by the actions of those who voted for me in Fort Richmond.

Madam Speaker, I would like to thank our Premier (Mr. Pallister) for setting the tone of a successful team, with expectations that each member be respectful with each other and of those whom we serve.

* (16:50)

I would also like to thank the Minister of Infrastructure (Mr. Pedersen), the Minister of Education, the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Eichler), the member for Morris (Mr. Martin) and yourself, Madam Speaker, for all the advice and encouragement as well as the welcome onto this team.

I was blessed to have my father, Dr. Ab Chudley, agree to serve as my campaign manager and equally supported by my mother, Jenny Chudley,

and grandmother, Margaret Holliday, who ran the office with love and plenty of coffee. The number of volunteers grew because of the warm welcomes and the genuine smiles that met them at the door. Not only were these people all instrumental in shaping the person who I have become, they were the reason that I stayed true to myself throughout the campaign, and I thank them.

My sisters, Tasha Ellis and Dana Chudley, who entered a world of politics that was both foreign and intimidating. I am so thankful for their sacrifices on my behalf. Neither of them hesitated when I asked for help, and both proved invaluable in the skills that they brought to the team.

I would also like to thank my husband, Arnaud Guillemard, who has always been my rock and biggest supporter. The bulk of work landed on his shoulders with four children to keep track of and a major leading role on my campaign team. In the busiest of times, he kept up the enthusiasm and energy that I needed to keep going.

My children, Ethan, Alec, Annlise and Kalyna are my biggest cheerleaders and the reason I chose to pursue politics. I see a wonderful future for them and for their friends, and I will work hard to make sure this province is well positioned to support many generations to come.

I would also like to thank, Madam Speaker, Tracy Warehem, who was one of my first non-family supporters, and her creativity and insight and many hours of constant support will remain a true gift that I cherish. Roald and Rita Kringen began as strangers on my campaign team, but they grew as close as family by the end. This was true of so many through our office doors, and they stayed to help out. I appreciate each one of them. There are many more volunteers that deserve recognition and praise, and I look forward to acknowledging them in the days and weeks to come as I work to represent the constituency of Fort Richmond.

Madam Speaker, I would like to acknowledge the courage and strength shown by the honourable member from St. Johns in her response to the Throne Speech, as well as the honourable member from Kewatinook and member from Fort Rouge. Their understanding of reconciliation using truth reveals a wisdom seldom seen in this society. It is a wisdom that is born from pain, survival and love.

I attended a performance about the residential school impact put on by an indigenous group. The

audience was largely non-indigenous, and many were uninterested in the message being presented. The performers placed blankets over the head of a volunteer to represent carrying secrets of abuse and the oppressive nature of being ignored, undervalued and rejected. The blankets increased in number, and the volunteer began to get very hot and had difficulty holding up his head with the weight of the material. I looked around the room and saw fellow members of my community group looking at their phones, some rolling their eyes and some shaking their heads. I knew what they were thinking. I used to be this way too: thoughts of, haven't they been given enough money, didn't the courts already validate their claims, haven't they had a government apologize? What more do they want?

Six years ago, Madam Speaker, one of my children was abused by an authority figure in a school. Our family has faced one of the most heart-wrenching journeys as we navigate the healing process. There is no amount of money, no number of apologies, no validation of claim that could ever take away the pain of brokenness. When a child is hurt, the whole family hurts, the whole extended family hurts. And the pain lasts for as long as the memories do; I get that now. And I am sorry that I did not know and that I did not listen with my heart. I am sorry that anyone has had to endure the gruelling journey to seek relief from the memories and pain.

Madam Speaker, I will never know the extent to which the indigenous community has suffered, but I do know a small portion of their pain, and because I know, I have a responsibility to share it. Reconciliation begins with each of us, one at a time and grows as we learn the language of respect, humility and love for one another. Patience and forgiveness are two important elements as well. Strength is not found in the proud or the loud; it lives within the ones willing to be vulnerable.

The journey that has brought me here today is not the typical story told by politicians. My dream was to be a mother. I was blessed with four children to love and raise. And I did so with plenty of struggles along the way, yet I was determined to do my part to develop responsible members of society. The lessons learned during negotiating with toddlers while balancing an infant on my knee will surely serve me as I navigate this new world of legislative procedures.

Madam Speaker, as my children grew and entered school, I joined the community of parents

who were invested in supporting the school to ensure strong educational outcomes. It was through this volunteer work at École Saint-Avila I had my first taste of community leadership and experienced the benefits of teamwork. We faced the issue of overcrowding that is still facing Fort Richmond today, and worked closely with the Pembina Trails School Division to find solutions to meet the needs of all stakeholders. I was honoured to be a part of a passionate group of professional parents and non-professional parents, all working together for a common goal. This experience opened doors to new opportunities within Fort Richmond, and our parents' group began to engage other community stakeholders.

In an innovating water stewardship project, with the help of an amazing parent named Janice Lukes, who is now our city councillor for St. Norbert South Winnipeg and acting deputy mayor, we were able to be part of a network of city officials, government representatives, community groups and neighbours. This network allowed the project to reach a level that no group acting alone could have reached, and has produced benefits for the whole community. We not only addressed the drainage issues on the shared land but were also able to create bioswales that help clean runoff water before it enters back into our river systems. This pilot project is now used as an educational tool for students on water stewardship. It is—and its success has led to other similar projects in south Winnipeg. Pathways were an important part of this project, as we wanted to provide accessibility for everyone to enjoy the beautiful changes to the community gathering places.

We have many active groups within Fort Richmond, including the Pembina Active Living group, which is a 55-plus organization. It is important to provide options for the diverse mobility needs within our area while upgrading various parks. The success of these projects would not have been—

Madam Speaker: Order. The member's time has expired.

When this matter is again before the House the—oh, sorry—when this matter is again before the House, the honourable minister—oh, sorry, the honourable member for Fort Richmond (Mrs. Guillemard) will have nine minutes remaining.

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

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<http://www.gov.mb.ca/legislature/hansard/hansard.html>