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

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-First Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALLUM, James	Fort Garry-Riverview	NDP
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	NDP
BINDLE, Kelly	Thompson	PC
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

Wednesday, May 25, 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 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

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to table the Annual Report of the Manitoba Office of the Commissioner, Law Enforcement Review Agency for 2014 and the Annual Report of the Provincial Court of Manitoba for 2013-14.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Madam Speaker: The required 90-minutes' notice prior to routine proceedings was provided in accordance with rule 26(2).

Would the honourable Minister of Families please proceed with the ministerial statement.

National Missing Children's Day

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Families): Madam Speaker, I'm honoured to rise today in the House to recognize National Missing Children's Day in Canada.

Declared in 1986 by the Solicitor General of Canada, National Missing Children's Day is commemorated internationally on May 25th every year. This special day serves as an important opportunity to raise public awareness about the plight of missing children and their families.

It's also an important opportunity, Madam Speaker, for governments and communities to renew their efforts in finding missing children, honouring

those still missing and take action to improve child safety and strengthening efforts to locate and unite missing children with their families.

As a parent myself, I can only imagine how the time during which a child is missing must seem like an eternity to parents and families regarding of its duration. I can only imagine the deep feelings of emptiness and despair that these parents feel with their families must face.

Madam Speaker, this is why I am—extremely important and we're pleased as a government to introduce—will be introducing the protecting children act to make it easier for government departments, child and family service authorities, community service providers and law enforcement agencies to share information and collaborate while dealing with victimization and at-risk children.

On National Missing Children's Day, I would also like to remind the parents and families of missing children that they are not alone, to pay—and I want to pay tribute to the work and service that service providers, community members and law enforcement officers and officials working tirelessly to find missing children and reunite families and to reaffirm our commitment to strengthening the information-sharing tools and resources that are available to support these important issues.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): Madam Speaker, I rise today to mark International Missing Children's Day, an opportunity to reflect on how we as a nation work to make child protection a priority, and, what's more, to acknowledge the thousands of families left devastated owing to the traumatic and sorrowful disappearance of their children.

Of the hundreds of children who go missing across Canada each year, a disproportionate number of them are young indigenous children. A 2015 United Nations report found that young indigenous women and girls are more than five times likely to die under violent circumstances or to go missing; this compared to their nonindigenous counterparts.

Today is an opportunity to honour the thousands of sons and daughters who have never returned home to their families.

Madam Speaker, children like Sunshine Wood, a typical 16-year-old girl with an exuberant sense of humour who moved to Winnipeg to attend high school. Sunshine disappeared from the downtown Winnipeg on February 20th, 2004 and has never been seen again. Sunshine's father, Anthony Wood, is a loving, caring father who is very active within the missing and murdered indigenous women and girls movement, attending countless vigils, memorials and gatherings as his health permits. Anthony has never stopped looking for his daughter.

Or like Lucas Degerness, who slept over at a friend's house on June 7th, 2007 in Prince George, BC, and, like, Sunshine, has never been seen again. His mother, Gina, and his baby sister are also very active in bringing attention to missing and murdered indigenous men and boys. Each year on Lucas's birthday, Gina organizes a vigil in honour of his memorial, annually rededicating her life to bringing him home, while highlighting for all Canadians the devastating impacts and trauma these disappearances leave on their families—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave of the House to allow her to continue? *[Agreed]*

Ms. Fontaine: Or children like Jennifer Catcheway, who went missing the day before her 18th birthday on June 19th, 2008. Jennifer was expected back home for her 18th birthday party that her parents, Bernice and Wilfred Catcheway, organized for her. She never returned home and has never been seen since. Bernice and Wilfred are also incredibly active in bringing attention to their daughter's disappearance through media interviews, documentary presentations and speaking engagements. Every spring and fall, Jennifer's parents search all over Manitoba for their daughter, searching in garbage dumps, along rivers, deep in the bush, all the while raising dollars towards a \$10,000 reward for any information leading to the whereabouts of their beloved daughter. They have and will never stop looking for their daughter.

Too many families across Canada tragically have children who are missing. Indeed, they are left confronting an unimaginable nightmare with no answers as to where their sons or daughters are. And

yet these families provide an example of the spirit of perseverance, resiliency and unconditional love as they continue to fight to bring home their children.

These families became leaders in the call for a national inquiry on missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. They launched local initiatives to protect marginalized and vulnerable indigenous girls and have built a network of support for other grieving families. And with the launch of the national inquiry, we will finally have a comprehensive understanding of how and why a disproportionate number of indigenous children go missing each year.

Still, there is more work to be done in safeguarding our children. For instance, we must ensure the safety of children with the development of a 24-7 drop-in centre for indigenous women and girls and provide additional supports for families living through such trauma.

* (13:40)

And so, Madam Speaker, let today be yet another reminder of how many families are affected by this crisis and how many lives might be saved if we continue to invest in and commit to the safety of our children.

Miigwech.

Madam Speaker: Prior to proceeding, I would just like to remind members that documents or pictures should not be held up because they could be construed as exhibits, so I would ask all honourable members to remember that in the future. So thank you.

Mrs. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook): I'd like to ask leave to respond to the minister's statement.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave? *[Agreed]*

Mrs. Klassen: I thank the minister for his statement on International Missing Children's Day.

I am proud that Canada is one of 22 countries that are actively participating in the global Missing Children's Network. My hope is that we never relax on our duties to protect our most vulnerable, our children. We can all reflect upon the most recent case of Chase Martens, the toddler that went missing from his home in Austin. We were all equally overcome with grief as we heard of the tragic outcome in this situation.

Chase Martens is, unfortunately, only one of many stories. I remember while living in Brandon my parents took all five of us kids to the local community hall. A two-year-old had gone missing, and my parents wanted us to all participate in the search-and-rescue efforts. Sadly, this young child was found face down in an uncovered pool. It was a sad time in my young life, and I learned early on to be fearful of children going missing.

I have met many people along my campaign trail that are living daily with this type of perpetual grief. Manitoba has the highest rate of missing children. In this great city of Winnipeg, 83 per cent of the missing children are in CFS care, with a total of 8,684 cases reported in Manitoba alone.

I want to thank all the people in this room that have dedicated their lives to helping those afflicted with the loss of a child, but I especially want to thank our indigenous advocates, our families of these children who are missing today. When each of you return to your homes today take a long look into your child's eyes, or your nieces' and nephews', and share a hug with them on behalf of myself because I care equally for the safety of all your children as I do for the ones I cannot hug.

Thank you.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Paramedic Services Week—Aid to Fort McMurray

Mr. James Teitsma (Radisson): Madam Speaker, I'm honoured to rise in this House today during Paramedic Services Week. Our paramedics are dedicated, caring, compassionate and professional. They're ordinary people who do extraordinary things, and that's why we take time to honour these women and men who are saving lives and working with integrity every day in their service to Manitobans.

But, Madam Speaker, I can tell you that sometimes our paramedics go above and beyond our already high expectations for them. Earlier this month Canadians watched in horror as wildfires raged throughout Fort McMurray, destroying the homes and livelihoods of tens of thousands.

Manitobans wanted to help, but to make that happen, leadership was needed. Radisson resident and paramedic Kevin Martin stepped forward. He, together with his father Mel and his paramedic friends remembered that the assistance that the entire country gave to us here in Manitoba in the flood of

1997 should now be returned, and it was Manitoba's turn to help.

They arranged for a semi-trailer to be filled with baby wipes, diapers, soap, shampoo, toothpaste, blankets, bottled water and so much more to go to the Edmonton emergency relief society. Kevin received extensive support through social media, newspaper articles, TV interviews and radio.

In just a few short days the trailer was completely filled, thanks to the generosity of Manitoban businesses and individuals. Kevin and his truck-driving father then drove the rig out to Edmonton so that it could directly benefit those who needed it as soon as possible.

Paramedic Kevin Martin is in the gallery today, together with his family and another paramedic, a member of the Paramedic Association of Manitoba, and I ask that the House honour his efforts in showing love to the—our neighbours in Fort McMurray and bringing out the best in us as Manitobans.

Thank you.

Stittco Energy Propane Explosion

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): Madam Speaker, a propane explosion levelled a Stittco Energy building in Flin Flon this morning, injuring at least one person. Our thoughts are with all of those that are affected and their families as they deal with their injuries and the shock of this incident.

So far, the company has confirmed that one person was injured and is in the hospital. We are waiting more details on who the injured is, whether it was more than one person, and how severe those injuries might be.

According to Flin Flon's chief administrative officer Mark Kolt, as reported by CBC this morning, employees at the propane supply company, Stittco Energy, were doing repair work at 7:30 and they did not realize that apparently there was a propane leak.

The explosion knocked out power to parts of Flin Flon, including many homes. The city closed Third Avenue, which essentially cuts the city in half. Ruth Betts Community School temporarily cancelled classes as many students had no way to get through to get to school.

I expect that Stittco Energy and Manitoba Workplace Safety and Health will conduct thorough investigations that provide answers for those injured

and their families and a way forward to protect workers and the community.

It pains me to be talking in this House about another workplace accident so soon after the metal worker's death that occurred May 5th in Winnipeg.

It is worth repeating that anytime someone is injured in a workplace accident it is an injury to all of us.

Our caucus will work to do its part to make sure that Manitoba government is doing everything it can to protect workers' health and safety.

Madam Speaker, we extend our sympathy to everyone who has been affected by this accident. Our thoughts are with them and their families. Thank you.

1994-1995 Manitoba Alliance Teams

Mr. Bob Lagassé (Dawson Trail): Good afternoon to my fellow members of the Manitoba Legislative Assembly, and thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity to address the Chamber.

Today, I rise in the House with great pride and enthusiasm to commend the 1994 and 1995 Manitoba Alliance Junior Men's teams as the first softball teams inducted into the Manitoba hall of fame on May 7, 2016.

The 1994 team captured many successful moments, including bringing home silver medals from the Canadian national championships in St. Catharines.

The success of the team continued, and in 1995, John Peters, an avid athlete himself, led the 23-man team to win Manitoba's first gold medal at the Canadian Junior Men's national championships.

Although the team founded Alliance in its name through having players from other parts of Canada, including Saskatchewan, Flin Flon and Ontario, it was founded in Landmark by Fran Giesbrecht. Many talented players from the great constituency of Dawson Trail made lasting impressions in the hearts and minds of many athletes and other—and baseball enthusiasts alike.

Today, I would also like to touch on the word teamwork in this speech—oh, sorry—by the word teamwork in the speech by echoing what Mr. Peters said in a recent interview, which was: Not everyone on the squad was equally talented, but it was just the right combination of talent and character for them to be awarded.

I believe this statement reflects what a team needs to be to succeed, and I will take that with me on my journey as a member in the Manitoba Legislative Assembly.

Madam Speaker, I ask leave to have the names of the players and the coaching staff added to Hansard. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave to add the names into Hansard? *[Agreed]*

1994: Rob Giesbrecht, centre field; Kelly Peters, pitcher; Darryn Thiessen, third base; Brad Bouchard, catcher; Shannon Nepinak, pitcher; Randy Reimer, first base; Mike Nigh, infield; Nathan Giesbrecht, first base/catcher; Adrian Brown, first and third base; Thor Barkman, left field; Curtis Rouse, pitcher; Chris Taylor, outfield; Matt Funk, infield; Dan Daneault, infield; John Peters, manager; Fran Giesbrecht, coach; Ralph Nespor, coach; John Weier, manager.

1995: Rob Giesbrecht, centre field; Barry Zerbin, left field; Thor Barkman, left field; Randy Reimer, first base; Shannon Nepinak, pitcher; Tim Nichols, outfield; Trevor Salamandra, pitcher; Richie Thorvardson, pitcher; Kelly Peters, pitcher; Darren Rosenberger, second base; Curtis Rouse, pitcher; Darryn Thiessen, third base; Dougall Dubinak, outfield; Jamie McCloy, catcher; Nathan Plett, infield; Mike Skene, shortstop; Rod Peters, coach; Fran Giesbrecht, coach; John Peters, manager.

Everybody Has the Right Program

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): Madam Speaker, the Winnipeg School Division is remarkably diverse in its students, staff and the communities it serves. For the past two years, Winnipeg School Division has been teaching students about Canada's human rights journey through the Everybody Has the Right program.

The program kicked off last October with a student summit address by Winnipeg's mayor, Brian Bowman. Mayor Bowman challenged students to find ways to celebrate the many wonderful cultures in Manitoba and work toward ending racism. Throughout the year, students shared their own stories of diversity and brainstormed how to promote acceptance within schools and society.

* (13:50)

All this work and learning culminated in a day-long celebrating diversity event at The Forks last week. More than 2,000 students marched in a circle

around the Canadian museum of human rights as a symbolic tribute to everything they had shared and learned over the year. They carried silk banners painted with images of equity and diversity and watched performances from different school dance troupes and choirs.

If you visit the Winnipeg School Division website you can see pictures from the celebration taken by students from the photography program at Tech Voc High school.

Madam Speaker, it's never too early to teach young people about diversity. Education is the key to building citizens who respect their peers and consciously push for equality in their schools, workplaces and homes. I am proud that my children and the children of so many of my constituents attend schools in the Winnipeg School Division. Programs like Everybody Has the Right are, without question, key investments in Manitoba's future as we continue to pursue reconciliation, welcome newcomers and celebrate human rights and diversity.

I congratulate the Winnipeg School Division on its efforts to make its students the best citizens they can be.

Thank you.

Shooters Family Golf Centre

Mr. Nic Curry (Kildonan): I rise today to share with my colleagues a hidden gem located in my constituency, Shooters Family Golf Centre. I would like to thank the Cerasani family who own and operate Shooters Family Golf Centre. In attendance today are Guido Cerasani, Sue Cerasani, Amy Cerasani and Eason Cerasani.

A staple of our community, Shooters Family Golf Centre is the only privately owned, family-operated publicly accessed golf course in the city of Winnipeg. Starting out as a humble driving range off Main Street at the city limits, Shooters is now considered to be a premier beginner-friendly facility which offers a wide range of golf services. Whether people want to come and enjoy a friendly game of minigolf, improve their swings on the driving range or test their skills on the 18-hole par 57 executive course, Shooters Family Golf Centre has it all.

Their services extend beyond golf with their restaurant and event centre. Excellent dining and lounging options await any who work up an appetite during their golfing activities or who wish to hold events such as wedding receptions, fundraisers or

good old-fashioned Sunday brunch. There's even a small camping site for those who wish to get away from the city without actually leaving.

In addition to all the sporting and leisure activities Shooters provides, it also plays an important role for young people in the community. Many local youths get their first summer job at the golf course, and this opportunity provides them with more than their first paycheque; it provides them life skills and character building that will serve them later in life.

Personal note, a young corporal from the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders of Canada once purchased his first set of full golf clubs there some eight years ago. I continue to be a proud supporter of this institution in my constituency.

Shooters Family Golf Centre is a shining example that hard work, prudent management and a dream can grow into something wonderful in our community.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: Prior to oral questions, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the Speaker's Gallery where we have with us today Emmett and Christel Hildebrandt. Emmett has been spending the day at the Legislative Building with the Assembly's director of the teachers institute and the classroom in the Legislature to gain a greater understanding of our democratic system. On behalf of all honourable members, I'd like to welcome you here this afternoon.

I would also like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us today Graham and Margaret Garnett, who are from England, and Keith and Pauline Miners from Winnipeg, who are the guests of the honourable member for Rossmere (Mr. Micklefield). On behalf of all honourable members, we welcome you here today.

And also in the public gallery, from Grant Park High school, 32 grade 9 students under the direction of Reshal Stein. The group is—this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard), and we welcome you here today as well.

ORAL QUESTIONS

MTS Capital Investment Cellphone Rate Increase

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Leader of the Official Opposition): Madam Speaker, every phone company has to constantly invest to compete. MTS spent \$1 billion for service investments over five years. Bell is promising more of the same.

The Premier has endorsed the deal and increased rates, saying you get what you pay for. What a dismissive attitude.

Can the Premier actually explain why he is pushing for so much higher cell rates for similar investments in cellular service?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): I thank my colleague for the question and the opportunity it gives me to respond that our party has great concern about making sure that Manitobans get value for money from their taxes and in every respect.

And this is a concern that we saw—that we demonstrated while in opposition: As an example, when we stood against the government of the day's attempts to raise taxes on Manitobans, to raise the PST, to put the PST on workers' benefits, to put it on people's home insurance and to erode the purchasing power of Manitobans, to take hard-earned money away from Manitobans who were promised that they would not see their taxes increase.

This was the record of the previous government, and their demonstrated lack of concern for Manitobans' take-home pay is well understood by Manitobans who chose not to support them at the ballot box in the last election.

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

Sale of MTS to Bell Competitive Environment

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Leader of the Official Opposition): The Premier is saying value for money, but we all know the same amount will be invested by Bell, no difference with what MTS has spent already over five years. So where's the value there?

MTS spent \$1 billion to upgrade and improve their service. Bell is promising more of the same. If we lose MTS—well, we lost it to the privatization last time—we lose one competitor, and consumers lose out.

Can the Premier please explain why he has failed to serve the public interest?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Well, thank you again to my colleague for the opportunity to say, Madam Speaker, that serving the public interest is what we're about over here and, in fact, that was not what the previous administration was about when they chose to Americanize our Manitoba Hydro, when they chose to expend hundreds of millions of dollars unnecessarily in a hydro line that goes 500 kilometres around precious land in Manitoba, destroys beautiful green space and infringes on Metis and First Nations people's homelands, interrupts their ability to do their harvesting and to engage in the quality of life that they want to create for themselves and their families. And to see the results of that is—it saddens one who cares about the beauty of our natural resources in this province.

The acceleration of hydro rates under the previous administration as a result of the total disrespect that that administration showed to Manitobans' pocketbooks and to giving them value for money is well understood by Manitobans who, again, Madam Speaker, rejected that agenda of paying more and getting less that the previous administration became known for.

Madam Speaker: The honourable interim Official Opposition Leader, on a final supplementary question.

Opposition to Sale

Ms. Marcelino: Madam Speaker, a lot of Manitobans—and I've spoken to some of them on the doorstep—has—this Premier has a hidden agenda. These last few days perfectly illustrate why. Only days after the election, he endorses a deal that will lead to dramatic increases in costs for consumers without increased investment for services.

Manitobans are concerned: Will the Premier stand up for Manitoba consumers and oppose the sale at the Competition Bureau and CRTC?

Mr. Pallister: Well, no, Madam Speaker, you see, what the opposition doesn't seem to understand is that the coverage will be improved for Manitoba consumers along a major trade artery, Highway 75. Opportunities for job creation and additional wealth creation by Manitobans and by those who travel to our country will be enhanced. We will have additional opportunities for tourism, and encouraging people to come back here is easier to do when they can get cell reception along Highway 75.

And we believe there is more to come. In fact, the best interests of Manitobans will continue to be served by this administration in every respect.

* (14:00)

Sale of MTS to Bell Government Support

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): To the Premier (Mr. Pallister) I would say that MTS is already doing what he has been—what he's talking about. The Premier said he's fine with paying more for cellphone service. And regarding Bell's \$1-billion promise of new infrastructure over five years, that is \$200 million per year, exactly what MTS has been spending in each of the last five years.

The—can the Premier explain why he's supporting a deal that will mean Manitoba families will pay much higher rates and lose their unlimited data?

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for this important question.

I do, first of all, want to thank the minister—sorry—the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Lindsey) for his statement in the House today. Clearly, all of our thoughts are with the people that were impacted by the—that situation this morning in Flin Flon. We are hopeful the injuries or injury is not too serious. Clearly, this is a case where it could have been much worse.

I will advise the House that the Office of the Fire Commissioner will be arriving in Flin Flon soon. Workplace health and safety people are on scene right now. And we certainly will work with the community of Flin Flon.

Thank you.

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

Mr. Maloway: Thank you, Madam Speaker, though the government is totally ducking its answers to questions on the Bell takeover of MTS.

The Globe and Mail recently pointed out that MTS's own investments and projected investments compare either favourably to or better than Bell offers. This means that no added investment is coming for Manitoba families.

Can the Premier tell Manitobans why his government is so keen to welcome Bell's \$1-billion investment but not MTS's?

It's the same amount of money over five years. Even though having a fourth cellphone company helps keep rates low for families who can't afford the \$100 or more per month for their phone bill—and, by the way, contrary to what their own federal government, the Harper government, tried to do over 10 years: promote a fourth provider.

Mr. Cullen: Madam Speaker, again, I thank the member for the question.

And in terms of safety, I think we should—we can address this issue in terms of safety. Clearly, we're going to work with any private enterprise that wants to invest money in Manitoba, and we certainly applaud that investment in Manitoba. We're particularly excited about it when it will improve access and, I think, safety in Manitoba.

Certainly, I had a situation in my riding not too long ago with the lack of access to cell service. Could have been certainly a benefit in resolving a very critical situation. So we think this \$1-billion investment is an investment in safety for all Manitobans. And we support that.

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

Mr. Maloway: Madam Speaker, the government's going to extraordinary lengths to avoid answering our questions on this matter.

The government has jumped to endorse a corporate deal that will make Bell Canada shareholders very happy but only made vague promises about better service while admitting that it's probably going to cost Manitobans a lot more every month. This deal just doesn't make sense.

Since the deal isn't benefiting Manitoba families, can the Premier explain what his motives are behind supporting Bell Canada?

Mr. Cullen: Madam Speaker, again, I appreciate the member's concern on this issue.

Clearly, the NDP are all over the map on this particular issue. We had the previous member from Kildonan, back on March 15th of this year, say, and I quote: And now we have no cell service in rural Manitoba. Our rates of—telephone rates are amongst the highest in Canada. End quote.

Madam Speaker, we work—continue to work with private enterprise, we will build Manitoba and we will build the telephone system here in Manitoba.

Madam Speaker: The honourable interim Official Opposition Leader, on a question.

Sale of MTS to Bell Job Creation Promise

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Leader of the Official Opposition): Madam Speaker, I just heard the Premier's response that the sale will be—will result in additional wealth creation.

Just wondering: For whom?

My question, Madam Speaker: The Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade (Mr. Cullen) promised yesterday that with the Bell acquisition there is going to be job creation here in Manitoba.

Has the Premier had assurances that this is, in fact, the case?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Well, the first part of the question was opportunities for who, and that would be for all Manitobans and we would expect—*[interjection]*

The former leader of the—well, for small-business people across the province, for farmers, for people who run retail businesses, for—in fact, for civil servants who travel, the additional safety opportunities in terms of transportation safety for people offering care in rural communities, there would be innumerable advantages Manitobans would derive.

Also we have a commitment to invest not only in Manitoba, but to make Manitoba the western head office for the newly—new association of the two companies. These are all assurances which we will follow up on and make sure that these assurances are kept.

But it is—it passes strange that the government opposite now strikes itself as the defender of what was and will continue to be a massive employer in our province, when just three months ago their former leader said, quote, every time a young person or somebody picks up their cellphone bill they notice it's one of the higher ones in the world. They're trying to defend something they decried for 17 years. There's no consistency, Madam Speaker, no consistency in the positions the members opposite are taking. Thank you.

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

Ms. Marcelino: I'm thinking the Premier ought to let his minister in on the secret that is, in fact, the levels of investment proposed by Bell are no higher than what MTS is already doing. If you don't increase investment there won't be more jobs, and there was—there is no increase in investment.

Will the Premier address this fact today and correct his minister on this issue?

Mr. Pallister: Attracting investment to Manitoba is critical, and I appreciate the member raising it. The fact is we are 10th out of 10 under the previous administration in doing so, and so we have nowhere to go but up at this point, and we'll continue to make every effort to make Manitoba a more attractive place to work and live and invest as well. Investment attraction is critical to creating jobs. Members opposite may not believe that, but it is a fact well understood to members on this side of the House.

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

Ms. Marcelino: There will be much higher rates for consumers but no increased investment in capital to improve services, no assurances that there will be increased jobs. In fact, the loss of jobs at MTS has already started. MTS announced late last year that positions would be eliminated.

Can the Premier please tell the House what assurances he received to preserve jobs before he wholeheartedly embraced the deal?

Mr. Pallister: I appreciate the member's concerns, Madam Speaker. All of us share those concerns when people lose their jobs or are transferred to other provinces, as has been the case under the previous administration. All too often we have led this country among all the provinces in out-migration. We have lost more people than every other province for our size.

So these are legitimate concerns that she raises today. But service enhancement, better cellphone coverage, better Internet, faster Internet for Manitobans is a good-news story for all Manitobans. We'll benefit all Manitobans. We'll help all Manitobans to create greater job opportunities and to have more job security, and to have more safety here in the province they love. And we will continue to work on behalf of all Manitobans to see advances

such as this continue and better opportunities for a better future to be created here in Manitoba.

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

Sale of MTS to Bell Employment Loss Concerns

Mr. Kevin Chief (Point Douglas): Yesterday the minister quoted a survey done by innovation and research in the Globe and Mail, and he said that they found that jobs and economy—and economic growth were the highest priority for Canadians. On this side of the House, Madam Speaker, we agree with that survey. Manitobans agree with that survey. Jobs are important to Manitobans.

* (14:10)

So I ask the Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade: If he thinks that jobs are important then he should be able to clearly indicate today what assurances he has received that there will be no job losses in the sale of MTS.

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade): I appreciate the question from the member opposite.

And, you know, I would concur with the interim Leader of the Opposition. We have suffered job losses previously under this—under the previous government across Manitoba. We've also lost headquarter offices here in Manitoba as well. We've seen headquarter offices move outside of Manitoba.

We think under this new partnership with Bell, obviously, the expansion of the head office in Winnipeg should be a good thing for Manitobans, and we will continue to work with people who want to invest in Manitoba.

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

Mr. Chief: I asked a similar question yesterday; he gave me an answer. I asked a similar question today; he gives me a different answer. He's a bit confused on what's going on with the sale of MTS. He doesn't know if he's representing Bell Canada here in the House or if he's representing Manitobans.

So I'm going to ask him again: Yesterday the Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade stated for the record that with the sale of MTS, he said, for the record, that there's going to be job creation here in Manitoba. That's what he's saying. I don't know if

he's saying it on behalf of Bell Canada, he's saying it on behalf of Manitobans. But that's what he said.

And if that is true, and he said it yesterday, how many of those will be permanent jobs in this deal?

Mr. Cullen: I appreciate the concern that members have. We obviously have concern about jobs in Manitoba as well, and that's why we continue to join in partnerships with free enterprise across the province. We've seen an increase in investments coming to Manitoba.

We're going to continue to work with those people who invest in Manitoba, and we think great things will happen in Manitoba. There is a tremendous amount of potential, great opportunities in Manitoba, and we continue—we will continue to work with Manitobans and free enterprise to deliver jobs to Manitobans.

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

Mr. Chief: Madam Speaker, it's clear. The last time the Premier (Mr. Pallister) made a deal for MTS, his friends got richer. Manitobans paid more. He seems to be comfortable with that formula, hundreds of jobs gone, if not thousands of jobs gone.

I've travelled to those member opposites' rural ridings, and you talk to those young people, they will tell you they're still devastated by the sale of MTS and the lack of connectivity. That is true. We know that the sale of MTS—and the Premier sat at the table—it was a bad deal for Manitobans then; we know it's a bad deal today.

When will the Premier and the minister stand up for Manitobans, stand up for young people and oppose the sale of MTS?

Mr. Cullen: Again, I appreciate the question from the member.

You know we're not going to debate the past here; we're focused on building Manitoba into the future.

Manitobans have asked us to increase infrastructure, and infrastructure includes better cell service, better broadband across our province. We think this is an opportunity to partner with a company like Bell to bring better services to Manitoba.

We stand up for better services for Manitoba, unlike the previous government.

New Child-Care Spaces Government Campaign Promise

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): During the last campaign, the Minister of Education announced that in addition to the 500 spots promised, there would be additional centre-based child-care spots for this year committed later in the campaign. Yet no further commitments were made and a child-care strategy was completely omitted from the Throne Speech.

Can the Minister of Education please tell the House when the construction will begin on those additional spaces and when he expects them to be completed?

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Families): Thank the member for her question.

Child care, of course, is an important piece for us, and we're absolutely committed to providing access, full access, for child-care spaces in this province; it's a really important piece.

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

Ms. Fontaine: I'm not entirely sure what that answer was, but recognizing this commitment addresses a mere 5 per cent on the waiting list. The press asked if there would be an additional child-care commitment. The Minister of Education promised, and I quote: We could expect more commitments in the campaign.

Can the minister comment on these additional child-care promises?

Mr. Fielding: Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the question.

We very much are supportive of that. We made campaign commitments in terms of child care, which are extremely important. We need to consult with stakeholders. We need to consult with groups. We need consult with front-line workers to identify policies that make sense. We know right now, for the last number of years, we've had over 12,000 people on waiting lists. That's unacceptable, in our opinion.

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

Ms. Fontaine: Madam Speaker, the minister concluded the announcement by telling the press, and I quote: We're not really making a large financial commitment at this point. Unquote.

So, Madam Speaker, the government's child-care strategy is unclear to Manitobans. They've promised more than 500 spaces this year but have no financial plan to fund them.

Can we get some clarity from the minister on what this government will actually provide to hard-working Manitoban families who expect affordable, accessible and high-quality daycare?

Mr. Fielding: Madam Speaker, and what—as mentioned, what we want to do, we want to—we're a new government. We want to consult with stakeholders, front-line workers.

One thing that is for sure: After 17 years of government, having 12,000 people on a waiting list is completely unacceptable.

Aboriginal Communities Mortality Rates

Mrs. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook): Madam Speaker, recently, while I was sitting in the hospital waiting room, I overheard someone say, I hope to die of natural causes.

I thought to myself, how lucky. As an indigenous woman, I will likely never have that luxury.

I was grateful to learn of the program held here on May 5th, Unto Every Person There is a Name. I would like to honour Precious Pascal, Teresa Robinson, Tina Fontaine, three of our murdered girls. Erabella Harper, Throne Kirkness, Kayleigh Okemow: three of our children who perished in house fires.

What measures is this government going to take so that I can stop burying my people from unnatural causes?

Hon. Eileen Clarke (Minister of Indigenous and Municipal Relations): Madam Speaker, thank you to our member opposite for that question, very heartfelt, and we experience this and see this across our province consistently, and we will certainly be aware of this and continue to do everything possible to ensure that lives are not taken early because of neglect or whatever other reason.

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

Drug Trafficking Prevention

Mrs. Klassen: Thank you for your response on record.

Where there is no real market or a monopoly system exists, the black market flourishes. Gang life, prescription drug and alcohol abuse plague us. I would like to honour Scottie Mason, Eric Harper, Dakota Hunter, our murdered boys.

In this city's major airport, one knows there is a possibility of being searched by a drug-sniffing canine. There are numerous measures in place to keep drug trafficking at bay.

Why can't these same security measures, which we rightfully deserve, be in place at our airports that service the North to help us combat our ravaging drug and alcohol problems?

Ms. Clarke: Madam Speaker, again, I'd like to thank the member opposite for that question.

We will continue to follow these and work with the stakeholders, regardless whether it's in the North or the rest of the province of Manitoba, working to see that people are safe and that they can live lives without fear and concern about where their future lies.

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

Mental Health-Care Services

Mrs. Klassen: I appreciate the response.

Suicide has a strong hold over the North. A total of 53 children died under CFS care in the last four years, seven from suicide. Those children cannot be named. I would like to honour Marietta Wood, Nikki Harper, Miah Monias, three youth who have committed suicide. This does not mean they don't have a voice. I refuse to let them die in vain.

*(14:20)

Can this government tell me what types of measures they are putting in place to counter these unnatural deaths so that when I look into the eyes of any resident in Manitoba, I can boast that we, together, are working to be the most improved province for everyone?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): I want to thank the member for her question. I know it's very heartfelt and it comes from personal experience and personal understanding of many families.

Certainly, we know that in the short time that I've been minister, it's one of the issues that I've raised on behalf of our government in terms of providing support for mental health for those who are living in the North. I know that I've had officials that have visited some of the northern communities recently to talk about mental health and to talk about suicide and other things. It is a collaborative effort. There are a number of different areas that we need to work with.

I look forward, as well, with working with my federal counterpart, and I hope to meet with her soon to also look at other strategies. We know that no one answer exists, but it will only come to an answer if we all work together, and I hope to work with her as well in the years ahead.

Centrallia 2016 Trade Convention

Mr. Nic Curry (Kildonan): Madam Speaker, my colleagues, it is an honour and privilege for the people of Kildonan that I stand here for them today. I'm eternally grateful for their support.

Madam Speaker, Manitobans rejected the NDP campaign of fear, division, false promises and chose a new Progressive Conservative government that is determined to overcome the challenges facing our province. We'll work together with Manitobans to ensure that our decisions reflect the values of integrity, caring, inclusion, common sense and teamwork.

The values of inclusion and teamwork the people of Kildonan and our entire province are known for are on display today at Centrallia.

Madam Speaker, would the Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade please tell the House the role Centrallia plays in promoting the partnerships needed to attract new businesses and assist entrepreneurs?

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade): I thank the member for Kildonan from his question and welcome him to the Manitoba Legislature.

Centrallia 2016 will allow Manitoba companies to explore a wide spectrum of opportunities to establish new business relationships. There are over 700 business leaders attending Centrallia from over 30 different countries representing five continents.

Our new government is committed to supporting Manitoba businesses and expanding trade relations

around the world. Developing new avenues to move Manitoba products and assessing new markets are important for Manitoba's economic development.

By taking a team approach and developing partnerships, we will grow business and we will make Manitoba the most improved province in Canada.

Minimum Wage Increase Budget 2016 Commitment

Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview): To the great shame of the government, in last week's Throne Speech there was no attempt to address poverty in this province. In fact, the word poverty didn't even exist in the Throne Speech.

And then in the very minimalist letter that the Premier (Mr. Pallister) sent to the Finance Minister as his so-called mandate letter, the—any attempt to address poverty was not mentioned in that, nor was the word poverty even mentioned in the letter at all. In fact, what the Premier directed the Finance Minister to do was to engage in a very severe attempt to gut the programs and services that Manitobans depend on.

So can the Finance Minister at least assure the House today that he will continue the fine Manitoba tradition of raising the minimum wage every year?

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Families): I want to thank the opposition member for the question.

Poverty is an extremely important issue that needs to be dealt with. There's a number of government programs that are part of that. We are committed to ensuring that people pull themselves up in terms of poverty to make sure they have an affordable place to live and affordable living conditions for everyone.

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

Mr. Allum: Well, Madam Speaker, that question was directed to the Finance Minister. It's clear that they don't have a complete understanding of their roles and responsibilities across the floor.

So I want to ask the Finance Minister very directly, yes or no: Will he raise the minimum wage in the budget next week, yes or no?

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

The premise is a bit confusing, of course, because we must understand the context is that in Manitoba child poverty has grown faster than in any other province, in any other jurisdiction. This is the context that we find ourselves in. This is the legacy that has been left by our opponents across the way, and it is the commitment of this government to address these things.

Where they have failed, we will succeed.

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

Mr. Allum: Madam Speaker, the minister may not have liked our attempts to address poverty in the ALL Aboard strategy, but we had a poverty reduction strategy. And the government to date does not have a poverty reduction strategy.

Now, the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Families are oh for two. So we're going to keep on pitching here today.

And I want to ask the Minister of Finance very directly: In next week's budget, will he raise the minimum wage this year and every year after it like this government did every single year on behalf of the most marginalized citizens in Manitoba?

Mr. Friesen: Madam Speaker, the member certainly has a lot of zeal today on this issue, but he seemed to lack that kind of zeal for the 17 years that his party presided over this very important area.

I would remind this member that on a question of finance, any government that really took these issues seriously would not be a government that held down things like the basic personal exemption, would not have been a government that held down the tax brackets, would not have taken money from those who could least afford to give it, and they did it every year.

They failed. We will get it right.

Privatization of the Wheat Board Impact on Grain Prices

Mr. Mohinder Saran (The Maples): Madam Speaker, first of all, I congratulate the Agriculture Minister for his appointment for this position.

My question is for the Minister of Agriculture: Does the minister agree with Jan Slomp, president of the National Farmers Union, that by privatizing the Canadian Wheat Board, that the former federal Conservative government has, quote, accomplished

the biggest transfer of wealth away from farmers in the history of Canada, quote?

Hon. Ralph Eichler (Minister of Agriculture): I thank the member, my critic, for the question.

And quite clearly, Madam Speaker, this government was in power when the Wheat Board was supposedly taken away from farmers, but they had a clear choice. They decided not to do nothing.

We will listen to all our people. And we'll make sure that they get the right answers.

Mr. Saran: Madam Speaker, does the Minister of Agriculture accept the analysis from Swan River grain farmer Ken Sigurdson that with the single-desk Wheat Board, farmers received over 90 per cent of the port price, and now, with the privatized Wheat Board, farmers are receiving only 40 to 60 per cent of the port price for their wheat?

Mr. Eichler: Thank the member for the question.

What we will see is more elevators built in Manitoba. We're going to see growth in Manitoba.

Yesterday we had the opportunity to talk about TPP. What we saw from members opposite was, put a kibosh on growing the industry, seeing that the farmers have an opportunity to create more jobs.

We are for farmers. We're support farmers. This government don't have a clue about them.

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

Mr. Saran: Madam Speaker, since members of this government supported the privatization of the Canadian Wheat Board, does the minister accept that privatizing the Wheat Board undercut the ability of smaller family farms across Manitoba and Canada to push for better rail service for shipping their grain?

Mr. Eichler: Again, I want to thank the member for the question.

Quite clearly, on this side of the House, we understand that markets grow, investments on return of investments. Making sure that we have access to those markets is a priority for this government.

They had 17 years of mismanagement. Our department's quite excited to be—have a Conservative government that's going to be listening to all farmers and all Manitobans.

Health and Wellness Programs Continued Funding Commitment

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): Madam Speaker, my question today is for the Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living.

With an aging population, we know that an active lifestyle helps reduce the severity of some medical conditions and that preventative therapies can help reduce the number of people needing medical treatment.

* (14:30)

Will this minister commit to funding all wellness projects previously committed to, like the incredible Concordia health and fitness centre?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): I thank the member for the question.

It is one of the positive things that I believe our government has done by bringing Healthy Living back under the main Department of Health, because they truly do work closely together, and there are a number of issues that Manitoba faces related to chronic disease, and some of those solutions come from active living, so it was a wise and a prudent decision by our government to bring Healthy Living back under the Ministry of Health, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Wiebe: Madam Speaker, the Concordia Foundation has been a rock-solid partner in developing the health campus at Concordia Hospital. I had the opportunity to meet and present the members of the board with a letter of commitment ensuring that the province was committed to their vision of preventative health care and that the Concordia health and fitness centre would move forward.

Can the minister here and now reassure the Concordia Foundation board and to all wellness projects that the money is and will remain committed to these projects?

Mr. Goertzen: Madam Speaker, I certainly commend the Concordia Foundation board, and, in fact, there are many foundations around Manitoba who are providing support, who are raising money, who are going into their communities and asking Manitobans, who are among the most generous in all of Canada, to support worthwhile projects. We

support Manitobans, we commend Manitobans for being such generous people and we look forward to working with them in the future on many of their priorities.

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

Mr. Wiebe: Once again, Madam Speaker, I didn't hear the answer in that question.

I'm wondering how the member for Rossmere (Mr. Micklefield), who's in this House today, feels about the Minister of Health clearly not being interested in continuing an agreement that the government had with the Concordia Hospital board for a wellness centre.

I also wonder if the member for Rossmere's constituents, how would they feel about this minister renegeing on this commitment to our community to a wellness institute that serves his constituents as—in fact, is in the constituency of Rossmere.

Mr. Goertzen: As I said in my previous two answers, we are certainly looking forward to working with the many groups that exist in Manitoba who are doing good things every day, who are going to ordinary Manitobans and asking them to be part of something special, and we appreciate that.

But I do want to say for the member opposite, in the short time that I've been able to serve with the new MLA for Rossmere, I can tell you I don't know if I've met a more dedicated MLA who is more consistently standing up for his constituents and raising those concerns. In fact, I would say it's a good thing that, finally, there's an MLA for Rossmere who's bringing a true and consistent voice for his constituents here in the Legislature.

Transparency and Accountability Government Commitment

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): Madam Speaker, Manitobans knew that the previous government was no stranger to controversy, whether it came to the awarding of untendered contracts, the breaking of promises to Manitobans or the internal divisions and conflicts between its most senior members.

Can the Attorney General please inform the House about what the government's plan is to providing a clean, open government that will reflect the values of integrity, caring, inclusion, common sense and teamwork in everything we do?

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my honourable friend for the question today. It's a very good question.

We certainly heard several times during that last 17 years of Manitobans who were tired of the broken promises from the previous NDP government. We heard loud and clear that they wanted an open, clean government, Madam Speaker, and that's exactly what we're going to do, and we're going to ensure that we're an open and transparent government. We know that we have already issued our mandate letters. In several areas within those mandate letters it talks about how we are going to be more open and transparent. That's exactly what we're going to do.

Madam Speaker: The time for oral questions has expired.

Petitions?

ORDERS OF THE DAY GOVERNMENT BUSINESS THRONE SPEECH (Fifth 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 The Maples, who has 14 minutes remaining.

Mr. Mohinder Saran (The Maples): I will start where I left the last time, and I was talking about how I was ready to go back to India because of racial problems and I almost—I asked my dad to send me a ticket. And he was a normal ordinary farmer. He did not have that much money so he had to borrow first money to send me over here, now he had to borrow money again to take me back. Then he told me, I told you don't go. Why did you go at that time? But then later I—then he said, okay, I'm sending you the money and you can come back if you want to. But I said, okay, Dad, I will try a little harder to stay a little longer. And it happened then I was—somehow my friends moved to Manitoba. They were going to Ontario; they were going to try to find job over here. They found jobs and they wrote me a letter, so I came over here.

Since then, October 1971, I'm over here and there were not that many East Indians at that time, maybe 30 to 35 hardly. Today it could be about 30,000 to 35,000, we don't know the exact number.

And I had—as president of the—first of all, we started organizing ourselves, helping people who were coming from overseas. What happened, because I was in the school—high school where there was seven or eight of my villages were around there, they were attending that school, they knew I'm over here, and those people were coming over here and I was helping them and guiding them, filling out their applications free of charge and making arrangement for their stay over here and renting house for them. So that way I helped the—those people the same way MLA from Tyndall Park, MLA from Logan.

So, slowly, slowly we organized the organization Sikh Society of Manitoba, and as the president of Sikh Society of Manitoba, I worked with others to establish our province's first gurdwara. And many people may not know what a gurdwara is; gurdwara is equivalent to church in the Sikh religion. And the Sikh religion is one of the religions who believes in pray to God, have fear of God, so do whatever compatible and what is acceptable to God, but work hard—work hard—and, if you have extra, pay to the help to the—help the needy ones.

And that's what I think when I came over here in Manitoba. There was an NDP government at that time. And I felt like this is the government which has the same values I have while I was brought up. So that's where I start liking going to NDP meetings and that's where I became involved in the NDP.

I was born in Punjab, India, a country which has struggled with the corruption and economic inequality for many years. I came to Manitoba because of its dedication to the democratic process and the belief that every person, no matter the income level, deserves to have a voice.

Because of my experience in a country where corruption is in the top, I am very wary of the proposed elimination of subsidies to political parties. I have been first-hand—I have seen first-hand what happens if people need deep pockets to run and win the election. I know that it could put our entire democratic process in jeopardy.

*(14:40)

What happens if you don't have money to run in the democratic system? It will set in the process of corruption, because if you run this time and you don't have enough funds next time, you are likely to get funds from somebody whom you have to pay back through corruption. So this is not a matter of political

philosophy; it's a matter of keeping democracy going down and affordable for everybody.

We—health system, we care about everybody can get proper services, does not matter how deep their pocket is, irrespective of their pocket. Similarly, we care about everybody can get education irrespective of their depth of the pocket. Similarly, we should keep in mind that participation in democracy should be available to everybody, irrespective of depths of their pocket.

So I think every member in this House must think about that when they call vote tax. It's not vote tax; it's democracy advancement fund. And, without such situation, only 1 per cent—rich people—will be able to fight the election to sit in this Chamber, and they will be representing only 1 per cent. So that won't be democracy.

As an MLA, I have seen how the combination of so many programs and services work to sustain this democracy: affordable housing, strong public health care, inclusive schools with manageable class sizes, accessible and affordable child care ensure that every Manitoban has an equal opportunity for success. I will work to protect these services and promote democracy and equality in our Legislature. Manitobans deserve it.

As an official opposition, I will ensure that the values and priorities that Maples families voted for in this election are accounted for here in the Legislature.

As the opposition critic for Agriculture, I will be [*inaudible*] Manitoba farmers who are a key part of our province's economy.

In opposition I will demand the government honour the NDP's commitment to funding water infrastructure projects which provide economic development in agricultural industries. I will advocate for the protection of vital agriculture insurance programs. I will push the government to keep growing our economy and creating new jobs in agriculture by investing in innovation, research and targeted on farm infrastructure.

I wanted to be the critic for immigration, both for my experience working with the families and the Provincial Nominee Program, and my work making Manitoba a destination for skilled, educated immigrants.

As the critic, I will ensure the government continues supporting the local organizations who

make newcomers feel welcome and supported, especially the settlement organizations helping incoming immigrants access health care, housing and educational services.

Further, I will also hope that the minister of immigration will listen to some of the suggestions. I was discussing with the department before that EOI, Expression of Interest program, is keeping people in the dark. Maybe it's better we go, better go back to the old system, although we can make some changes by raising the English requirement to IELTS' 6.5 or higher and so we will reduce the number of applications in that area.

And also let the tradespeople come over here on the same level they used to come at before, because, in this way, we will have a lower number of the applications and, at the same time, we have a reasonable and a predictable time frame to bringing the immigrants over here.

So I hope there—I will be keeping—bring those suggestions continuously.

Other thing I think I will—I was working on, that was when immigrants come over here, they are not being employed in the same skill what were—they were doing back over there. So what we have to do—we have to do—give them two months—two weeks a kind of an orientation. After that those people should be sent to the—for three months to the same trade which they claimed and government should pay minimum wages on that one. And that way they will be in their own trade, because otherwise two countries lose: one country who trained them, they lost because they spent money on them; other country, Canada, did not take advantage of them.

Similarly, I was working on housing, social housing. Those people who stayed in those social housing, we should encourage them get some kind of trade. We don't need the one-year course; we don't need them in the two-year course. We need 40 hours instructions, then maybe three months send them to the proper trade so they can get experience and they can get—have exposure. So we can work further innovatively to improve those conditions.

Other thing: I think there are also—we need some services for the seniors. Seniors should be able to go in drop-in centres where they can socialize each other. That's why I was pushing for that because we need, in every corner of the city and every corner in every city, that there should be drop-in centres. Seniors can go there and they can have a social

gathering and that way they won't get bored, and I think it would be healthy and it will save some money on the health side too.

Other thing which I noted, that was personal care homes. Sometimes people don't speak English, and, on the other hand they don't have common culture. Their death comes before they really die. Why? I can give you an example: My aunt, she was in the personal-care home and was not able to English at all, and there's nobody else who was from the same culture, and after two years she died. So this kind of isolation—we should avoid this kind of isolation. So we should have culturally appropriate personal-care homes. I know the older culture German or Ukrainian, they have those kind of personal-care homes. But a new community like Filipino, East Indian and other communities from Africa, they don't have those kinds of personal-care homes available.

So we have to invest all in these programs. These programs does not have any political philosophy attached to it. It's just to the needs of those people who have come over here and who are in the minority, otherwise they won't have a chance and they won't have another source to provide those services.

So to make available those services, we have to work on that and we have to make sure people, all people are included and nobody left out.

Thank you very much.

An Honourable Member: Madam Speaker, I congratulate you on your new role as well. It's great to see—

Madam Speaker: Pardon me, the honourable Minister of Finance.

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I congratulate you on your new role as you learn to work the controls behind your new desk, and we wish you every success in that and every other aspect of your new work. We know that the Legislature will be well guided under your leadership in that Chair.

* (14:50)

Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise, as so many of my colleagues have, to put some words on the record in respect of the recent Speech from the Throne. And I've enjoyed hearing the comments of especially the new members in this House on all sides of this Chamber.

But it's such an overwhelming thing as we came across the line as government and took our seats on this very first day on this side of the Chamber, and I was thinking to myself about how it is that individuals can come to this place to do this work. And, you know, you can—I've said it before in this House, you can have an interest in this work, and you can have some acumen, and you can have some training that could lend itself to this. But this work is so dependent of the—of opportunity. And so all of us in this place, we have this shared opportunity on both sides of the Chamber. And I can recall coming down and sitting in this chair the first time and thinking about those colleagues of mine who had served in this place for years and years who will not have that opportunity to ever descend to these benches on this side. So we're humbled by the opportunity that we have, humbled by the trust that has been placed in us by all Manitobans and, of course, humbled by those teams of ours who have worked to get us here.

It reminds me of a statement made by a guy named Michael Pinball Clemons. And I'm not much of a football aficionado, and I know that the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) is, and maybe others are as well. But I remember I always liked Pinball Clemons because he makes me look tall. He's 5'6", played for 12 years for the Toronto Argonauts. I once heard him speak in Winnipeg, and he made this comment. He said many times in football, he felt like a turtle on a fence pole. And I thought about that for a while. He let that sink in. He said, I feel like a turtle on a fence post. And after everyone was scratching their heads, he turned back to the people, and he said, because you know one thing about a turtle on a fence post: He did not get there by himself.

And I thought about that statement, thinking about my campaign. And all of us have this. We go—we leave this place on the day when the writ is issued, and we go back into our constituencies, and we form these teams of willing volunteers, people who line up behind us because they believe in the ideals and, you know, perhaps they believe in the candidate, perhaps they've been connected to the enterprise for a long time. But we are all humbled by those who do this work alongside with us, and we have been so well served by those who do.

On my campaign team, that means my co-campaign managers, Liz Hildebrand and Bill Potter; my brother Robert continues to act as my official agent, and so we appreciate his work during tax season to take that on; Derrick Klassen, who was

my candidate assistant; Al Wirth, who was a new recruit of ours doing our sign captain role; Tara Braun, taking on the office management; and, of course, my wife, Shelley, who is an IT specialist who comes on and assists us and does IT for the campaign, and she does it very, very well, and she didn't force me to say that; as well as the many, many volunteers who come alongside.

And, you know, I know that my other members would agree with me when I say, when you go out into stormy weather and you're going up and down streets, and the wind is whistling, and it's cold, and it's dark, and you know that you're connected to the effort, you want to win. But you look around at these, you know, other people who are there with you, and they've got their ponchos on, and they've got their literature in their hand, and they're engaging people at the door. That's the part of this that I'll never tire of, that commitment by the people of Manitoba to do that volunteer, grassroots democracy. And, truly, there is no more exciting place to be than to see those ideas being exchanged in real time.

One of my favourite moments of the—or the favourite memories that I have are those chances that I have to go into seniors' complexes and assisted livings, and we have these coffee meetings. And, I'll tell you, the kind of conversation we have, the important questions that are asked, the real debate around policy and principle, those are exciting times.

And so I was—I'm very thankful to my community of Morden and Winkler for putting their trust in me once again and to put their faith in me. We increased the margin of our victory this time around, and we did it because we ran a weal—a real campaign, taking nothing for granted, like so many of my colleagues did whether they are returning members or whether they are new members to this House. You do that work, you put every effort into it, and how rewarding it is to be across that line.

And, the same time, you remember all those candidates who do that work and never get to see the inside of this Chamber. And those people work no less hard and have no less the strength of their convictions. But our system is strong, and we should not take for granted the freedoms that we have to be able to elect a government.

I was—I made this remark to someone, that we live in a society whereby the transition from one group to the other group into government and the transition out from government to opposition is done in a manner that is completely peaceful, and we

know that that is not shared by people throughout the world. We have so many new people in our communities, and the member who spoke just before me was talking about so many new members—new citizens, new—and new members of our community who come here and are not yet even citizens. And as I've engaged some in my community, and, of course, in Morden and Winkler, we have many new faces, many new residents brought here through the PNP program and other programs. And to see their excitement in the democratic process both at the federal and provincial level is something to behold. People who cannot vote but will still come out to meetings just because they're so excited and telling me, yes, I cannot vote for you but next time I can vote. And they're so thrilled for that opportunity to put a ballot into that box.

And so, coming back to my point, Madam Speaker, we are pleased for this opportunity we have.

Le 19 avril, les Manitobains et les Manitobaines ont rejeté la politique de la peur et de la division. Ils ont choisi à la place un chemin de travail d'équipe, le chemin de la responsabilité fiscale – un chemin qui mènera à un meilleur Manitoba, une route qui reconnaît les défis, répond à ces défis avec un plan et avec des actions concrètes, et apporte une amélioration.

Translation

On April 19th, Manitobans rejected the politics of fear and division. Instead, they chose a path of teamwork, the path of fiscal responsibility, a path that will lead us to a better Manitoba, a path that acknowledges the challenges, responds to those challenges with a plan and concrete actions and brings about improvement.

English

We will improve. We will go down this road. And we will be true to our word when we say that we'll bring a better era to Manitoba, an era that the member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson) spoke about just recently in her remarks in question period, saying we will bring a new openness to government, because this province has been challenged when it comes to a government that has been open enough. We will bring prosperity to this province through measures and a comprehensive plan. And we will bring investments in front-line services. It's important that we get this right, because it is exactly the quality of the services we provide that are—that

hang in the balance. If we do not get the fiscal fundamentals right, then the threat comes to the front-line services.

I suggest to my colleagues across the way, when we are spending \$840 million a year toward debt service charges, that is money that then cannot be put towards health-care improvements, child-care improvements, immigration improvements, the very issues that they raised in the 40 minutes earlier in question period.

I received a card during the campaign, Madam Speaker, from my mother-in-law. And on the card was a really neat little thing; you could take this card and you can pull off this sticky note and then you can just stick it wherever you want to. So the problem with cards like that is they're always the ones that cost \$6. I can still remember when a good greeting card only cost \$1.25. But that's dating me a bit. The card said, behind every success is effort, behind every effort is passion and behind every passion is someone with the courage to try. And I think that can apply to anyone and all of us in this Chamber today.

Behind us, of course, are families, and I would acknowledge my family today: my wife, Shelley, and my children, Maddy, Evan and Gwendolyn. And, you know, it gets different because when I first ran for this office, like other colleagues of mine did, the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko), the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Wishart), member for Brandon West (Mr. Helwer), member for La Verendrye (Mr. Smook) in the same year. We're all that class of the 40th Legislature. But when we ran for this job, you know, my kids were younger, and I can say that I was still pleased that each—I had an opportunity to do campaigning with each one of my children. You cannot force them when they're 18 years old to come door knocking with you.

But, you know, to see each of them engage in the manner in which they're comfortable, coming to this enterprise differently, and you know, for those across the way and on this side who have children still in the household, you know, it's interesting to have conversations around policy and around ideas. You cannot impose ideas from the top down when they're your children. They will come to these ideas. They have strong understandings on issues, and we always promote that they should hold strong views, but then more than hold strong views, they should put their views to action. They should engage. And it, you know, it took too long for me to engage on

issues that were important to me, and I hope that they will come to that earlier in whatever manner and form they do. I hope they will engage sooner.

* (15:00)

So it was so special to me, as a returning member, to have family around with me on the 19th of April in that celebration. Truly, some moments we'll never forget: to have family around us at the swearing-in ceremony.

I do want to welcome all the new members to the Chamber. I recall, when I was first elected, I can recall the first time I sat in this Chamber and I was right there in the back row on the other side, and there's just something about being in this place for the first time when you're not in the upper gallery, and I can recall looking up and seeing that, the Latin inscription that's above, that—Madam Speaker, you cannot see from your vantage point, but you faced it many times: *Si quid patimini propter iustitiam beati*. Blessed be the one who does anything in the name of justice. That's a loose translation.

But it—I saw it the first day and I thought, you know, we should be here for the right reasons. We should all test our ideas. We should constantly test our conduct. We should test the degree of engagement we are doing against this. We are inspired by those works of art, those statements that we debate under every single day.

I used to face, from that vantage point, the sculpture of the horned Moses delivering the Ten Commandments. I now face the Greek philosopher Solon, who was a reformer and a philosopher who brought great changes in Ancient Greece. My niece brought me to a better understanding of these sculptures because she was an art major at the University of Manitoba, and the former Speaker of the House gave her access to the House to study these pieces and to present them for a work that she did.

But we should be inspired by our surroundings, and the reason I mention it is because I feel like we have an opportunity as legislators—yes, we are politicians, and yes, this will always be a place of disagreement and strong disagreement—but I believe that we have an opportunity, at this time and this place, at this juncture in Manitoba, we have so many members who are new, that we have the ability to modernize our conduct in this place.

I think too often we have allowed our disagreement to bleed over into interpersonal areas,

and I would challenge my colleagues to let us all go on a new course. I would challenge them to, when they believe that my conduct has not been in concert with those same values that I say today, that they come and remind me of the things I said on this day. I would invite that.

I've said often to the member for Tyndall Park (Mr. Marcelino), there exists in this place too few opportunities for members on opposite sides to find points of agreement.

I got my first good lesson in that when I brought my first private member's bill, and I needed buy-in on the other side of the benches. I needed that and I did not know how to get it. And the Chamber isn't well set up so that I can take another member aside. And only a year later, and I was pleased to say that that bill that was designed to increase safety around schools for pedestrians after the tragic loss of life at a new school that opened in Winkler, I was pleased to learn how some of those probably clumsy efforts of mine did actually bear fruit and there was agreement on the other side. There were advocates that I had, unbeknownst to me, who are working to say, you know what, this isn't the worst idea in the world. Actually, there's a lot of merit in here.

And, you know what, for all of those of you who were on the other side in any way promoting that idea on the basis only of it being a valuable idea, I thank you. And I would commit to you that I plan to do the same. A good idea is a good idea no matter where it's found. And we should constantly reflect that.

So this place is dedicated—the art in this Chamber is dedicated to religious and moral values, to inspiration and instruction. And it should set our deliberations in this place in context.

A little secret for you: I keep in my desk an interpretation that comes from the tour office of what the artworks mean. And, from time to time, I'll reflect on it and think about what the artist or the sculptor might have had in mind. And we should do the same.

This will always be a place, like I said, Madam Speaker, of opposing ideas and ideologies, but we can still decide what kinds of relationships we will have in this place. We are politicians, but we are legislators.

So I say to new members here: Seek to learn your role by asking your colleagues. You will be well serviced by that. I was well served by my

colleagues before who taught me many things. Seek opportunities to get to know your colleagues on all sides of the Legislature. Seek opportunities to improve your skills in opportunities like the Midwest legislative conference and the Canadian parliamentary groups. And there are places where you can go and learn more about your role.

Those of you who will end up on the Public Accounts committee, I encourage you to get special training to understand the scope and the role of that committee. That is arguably the most important committee in a Legislature, and there are so many improvements that could be made to assist that group. Those improvements were commenced and started into by the member of Concordia and the member for Brandon West (Mr. Helwer) on a key committee studying those rules, looking at other jurisdictions and seeking to improve the practice and the operation of that group.

Whoever inherits that trust, I challenge you to go down that road, see what other provinces are doing, adopt best practice, understand the watch-dog nature of that committee's mandate and get it done. And that will serve all Manitobans because we should all care about that—constantly looking at the way we deliver services, constantly looking at the big picture, constantly measuring performance. There are all these things that we want to do, and at the end of the day our ability to do them depends on getting it right. Fundamentally, structurally, getting these things right to ensure that these services will be there for us, for our children, for our children's children.

I'm honoured to have the role placed in me to join Cabinet. Not since Don Orchard was in this place would—has a member from the Morden-Winkler area had the opportunity to be in Cabinet. And I'll say this: I'll always remember, colleagues, I'll leave you with this: On the first day I ever spoke in the House and I had the opportunity to—you respond to the Speech from the Throne, and what is that first speech you do? You respond after the leader to the Speech from the Throne. It's a response. And in that response speech I had the pleasure and the honour of having my father here who was a good supporter of Don Orchard's. And so I gave my speech and I was overwhelmed by my surroundings and I don't know what I said—I've got the notes at my desk still somewhere, and I finished my speech and went into the hall and I said, well, Dad, how did that go? And he said, well, I'll tell you one thing: You're no Donny Orchard.

But I turned back to him. I said, you know, I said, you knew Donny Orchard at the end and perhaps not at the beginning. Of course, Don Orchard had—was, you know, a minister of Health and a minister of other portfolios as well, and he distinguished himself in his place as so many former members did.

So I will allow other members to speak, but Madam Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to put these comments on the record, certainly in respect of the Throne Speech. We are so delighted to be indicating that we believe in partnerships. We believe that partnerships will lead to prosperity. We believe that means partnerships with front-line workers, partnerships with public servants, with entrepreneurs, and with community leaders. We plan to get this done; we plan to make these investments in Manitoba. We look forward to the budget that'll be delivered in just less than a week's time, and we thank Her Honour for the path she set us on when she delivered her Throne Speech just a week ago.

Thank you.

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): Madam Speaker, it's my pleasure to stand in the Chamber today and offer a few thoughts on the government's Throne Speech and, like my fellow colleagues, do offer a few reflections and words of thanks on the election campaign, hard fought and just completed.

Mr. Doyle Pivniuk, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

It goes without saying that all of us rely on a lot of different people in order to be the ever-so-fortunate one of only 57 to sit in this Chamber and have a chance to do our very best for the people that sent us here, and in my own experience I'll offer these words of advice for the new MLAs on all sides of the House. You find that, I think, that the—your family members become more important rather than less as you go through.

This is the start of my fourth term here and I certainly want to begin by offering my very deep thanks and just indescribable gratitude to my partner Kim and to our children and our wonderful blended family: Caleb, Oliver, Molly, and our baby Freya, who separated—celebrated her first birthday a year and a day ago—or a week and a day ago—she's one year old.

* (15:10)

I was—it's tough to not be around as much as you're used to. It's tough on everybody, but they

were complete troopers and they made it possible for me to go out and make the case that Wolseley should remain progressive, that their MLA should be a New Democrat, and I was very, very grateful for all that they did to make that possible.

A huge thanks as well to all the kid's grandparents on both sides of the family, Bob and Jean, my parents, Bruce and Linda, my partner's folks, and our entire campaign team was just remarkable. It was a night—and this was fairly typical where I was looking at the group of us going out, and it was, you know, typical weather in Winnipeg this spring. It was below zero and it was snowing and it was windy and it was miserable, and we had, you know, well over half a dozen of us all working full time on the Wolseley campaign head out.

And the diversity of our team just really struck me, and at one particular moment I realized that we had—going out with me was a woman who three years ago was in Uganda; she is a refugee and came to Canada not many years ago. There was a woman who had immigrated, again not very many years ago from the Philippines. We had a member from the LGBTQ community. There was a woman, an indigenous woman in the community, coming out with us, and a young environmentalist, a fantastic young activist and a woman from the francophone community, and then me. So the diversity kind of stopped with me.

But, to just look at the amazing people that our campaign attracted, the folks that we were able to engage, it was just a really powerful moment because you realize that whatever questions came up on the doorstep we had a good chance of having someone with personal experience being able to speak to those issues.

The support that we received in the community was humbling. We knew this was going to be a very, very tough campaign, tougher than anything we had seen before and, of course, we weren't wrong in that. But it took all of the support from everybody, whether they were folks who were kind enough to make a financial donation or they were kind enough to give us some of their volunteer time, whether they were kind enough to let us put a sign on the lawn and, ultimately and most fundamentally of all, went into the ballot box and cast a ballot for a progressive vision for Manitoba.

We could not have accomplished what we did without all of that support, and one of the comments that I was particularly proud of is a number of people

remarked that the local campaign in Wolseley was very civil. And there were, of course, a number of public forums where some or all of the candidates attended, and in each one of these all of the candidates gave their point of view but did so in a really respectful manner, and we just left it for the audience to make their decisions and their evaluations on what we had said and how we had said it.

And I want to thank all of the members, all the other candidates who participated in the Wolseley election. It takes a lot of courage to put your name on a ballot, as all of us in this Chamber know, and the other candidates and their teams certainly conducted themselves honourably throughout.

I want to say to all of the constituents of Wolseley that I have heard loud and clear before the election, during the election and after the election that our values in Wolseley have not changed. The government may have changed, but they do not want any attention diverted from the massive issues that are facing our planet and our society.

The environment is in very dire straits, in many ways. I'm exceptionally proud of the progress that our government made on a number of very, very important fronts. There are initiatives under way in this province right now, which I hope the new government honours and continues which nobody else in the world is doing, and these are making a very important difference. Of course, there is always more work to be done, and I will be standing side by side with my supporters and with my non-supporters in Wolseley, all of whom support the work for a cleaner planet and a better, healthier future, to do that work with them and for them to the best of my capacity here at the Legislature.

And very similarly, a singular focus has to remain on reducing poverty. Not everyone realizes the Wolseley constituency is as diverse as it actually is. The Wolseley neighbourhood is a key part of it, obviously. But the constituency includes the vibrant neighbourhoods of West Broadway, Armstrong's Point, a piece of Assiniboine and large pieces of the Spence and St. Matthews neighbourhoods as well.

The Neighbourhoods Alive! program which my predecessor, Jean Friesen, brought into effect as she was deputy premier in this government's first term in office, has made an incredible difference not just on the ground with specific projects that you can see have improved in all of these neighbourhoods, but in the empowerment of the community to be able to

make decisions for themselves. Again, I hope the new government learns from that very important lesson that we have established that that really lies at the heart of a lot of these challenges. And you need to be able to honourably and honestly work with people even when they come to you with ideas you haven't contemplated before or priorities that are not your own. They probably know what's best in their neighbourhood way better than you do. And when you learn that very important lesson, you've taken a very important and big step forward in making a difference for all people, vulnerable people in particular.

The focus on poverty, as well, Mr. Acting Speaker, I should mention that our government's track record on that from the year 2000 to 2008 was that child poverty was cut in half, and that's something that we should all be incredibly proud of. Of course, in 2008, we had a number of people on Wall Street and elsewhere conduct some quite appalling behaviour and the global economy went into a recession, the great recession as they called it, the single greatest economic collapse since before World War II. And, understandably, Manitoba was no different from any other place, and thousands and thousands of people and families were then, again, shoved below the poverty line.

When members opposite or anyone else quotes data starting in 2008 or starting in 2009, they are deliberately ignoring the progress that was made throughout all the years leading up to it and are deliberately painting a worse-case scenario. There were a lot of things that our government did to reduce poverty which made a fantastic difference. And, when you look at the most recent numbers available, 5,000 individuals were again able to climb out of poverty and the—last year that's available here in Manitoba.

So the new initiatives that we brought in, again, were helping people and families recover from the truly appalling behaviour of the 1 per cent. And it's that same 1 per cent that this new government seems to be completely beholden to and infatuated with based on the very early days of this government and the decisions that they have made.

So I again say to every single resident in Wolseley, I will be here with you and for you to fight for poverty reduction and social inclusion efforts from my new position here in opposition, and I very much look forward to working with all of the fantastic organizations our government was proud to

partner with over the years to help bring that case and those arguments forward.

I also want to say, Mr. Acting Speaker, that grateful though I am to be in this Chamber, I want to offer my words of condolence and deep thanks to all of my now-former colleagues, both those who chose not to run prior to this election and those who did run and were not successful. Every single one of them made so many sacrifices for the betterment of Manitobans and for their own constituents. They have an enormous amount to be proud of, and same also to the many people who worked for us and with us here at the Legislature as our political staff.

* (15:20)

We may have lost a lot of really great people in terms of titles or positions, but every single one of them, I know, is out there actively trying to find ways to continue to make the world a better place, because that's what New Democrats do no matter where we may happen to be at one particular point in time or another.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I also want to comment on just how incredibly proud I am and inspired I am by every single one of the MLAs in our new caucus. Special congratulations to our new interim leader, first woman of ethnic diversity to have led—from an elected position to have led a political party in Manitoba, a truly impressive life story. For those that have, you know, heard what she has already accomplished, the path that she was forced to take through no small amount of adversity to arrive at the place that she's been, and she knows full well the tens of thousands of people that she has directly helped already through her advocacy both inside her community and outside of it. It's an honour to serve with you, ma'am. Thank you for stepping up.

And, really, Mr. Acting Speaker, our diversity in this caucus, to which I contribute almost nothing, I acknowledge, but the diversity in our caucus is inspiring and it is a source of immense strength. When we have our meetings, we have so many valuable different perspectives available to us. And four years from now, after the next election, I look forward to having even more perspectives available around our table when we increase the number of MLAs sitting in the NDP caucus.

My own particular roles have changed a little bit, Mr. Acting Speaker. I want to thank all of my caucus colleagues for asking me to serve as caucus chair. It is a real honour and I'm very much enjoying that

process. I also want to thank the official acting—or interim leader of our party and our caucus for appointing me as our environment critic. We have some concerns about some of the titles and the reorganization of government that's happened on the other side, so my title officially is critic for the environment and green jobs. We think that's a much better reflection of the priorities of Manitobans and the direction that this government, new government, needs to be going in.

But I will be very glad and, in fact, I am extremely enthusiastic to be putting my 25 years of environmental activist work both inside and outside of this building, holding this government to account, raising awareness of the crucial issues of the day that need to be addressed and trying to get absolutely as much action from this new government as we possibly can because, quite simply, the way things are going, the Earth is not going to be able to withstand this level of damage for that many more years. We will all end up having some very, very difficult conversations with our grandchildren if we do not take far more serious action in this area than has been the case so far.

Mr. Acting Speaker, there's much more that I could say. We have a few more weeks and months and years ahead for me to do that. So I will close off here and just say once again, huge thanks to everyone who helped make it possible for me to be an MLA. I think of you every single day, whether you were heavily involved or not in the specifics of my campaign. Enormous thanks to my family and incredible inspiration from all of my colleagues. I'm looking forward to the years ahead with all the challenges that may come.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Blair Yakimoski (Transcona): Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and congratulations on your appointment and on the election of Madam Speaker on her new role, please pass that along.

I note that Madam Speaker and myself also have in common our predecessor. The former Speaker of the House was, as you know, the former member from Transcona. He has served this Chamber well and respectfully, and I know that both of us will do our best to fill those shoes honourably.

I also extend my congratulations to those here who have either returned or, like myself, are new. I ask patience and guidance during this time from the Speaker, clerks and veteran MLAs. We've been told

the learning curve is very steep. I will do my best to keep up.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the first week of this 41st session, I feel I've been very fortunate to have a great seat to some of the most inspiring speeches I have heard in quite some time. I look to some of the inaugural speeches, and I'm overwhelmed of the quality of people we have sitting in this Chamber. The new members impress me with their personal stories and commitment. The veteran members impress me with their amazing ability to talk at length with nary a note in front of them. I will do my best to fit in.

I am proud of my Ukrainian heritage. I am a proud Manitoban. I am a proud Canadian. And I now rise here proudly as the first-ever Progressive Conservative member of the Legislature to represent Transcona.

Growing up in Transcona, the thought of there ever being a Progressive Conservative-elected MLA was unthinkable. But here I stand in the Manitoba Legislature to respectfully represent the community that has given me so much.

I must give thanks to so many for this opportunity. Although it's my name on the signs and my face on the literature, it's a team effort that is able to bring together a plan of action and carry it out.

I was very fortunate to have an amazing team. They made sure that I focused on getting to the door, engaging in—with voters. My three-headed campaign manager, as it were, consisting of Shawn Nason, former Member of Parliament Lawrence Toet and his son, Travis, their attention to detail, organization and commitment came together to produce a campaign where I was able to do the one thing I've always been told to be: just be yourself.

Lawrence and I went to high school together, and although we followed our own paths into very different family enterprises, those paths converged when he became our Member of Parliament for our neighbourhood. He constantly encouraged me, guided me and mentored me, then walked with me through the streets we had just walked a mere four months earlier in his federal campaign. I am proud to call him my friend. And his mentorship helped me to this awesome job—no, not job, not career, this amazing opportunity to serve my community in some way to try and make it better. That's the reason we all do this.

To Mike Watson, who paid the bills; and Troy McLennan, who was the king of volunteer organization. And that team of volunteers: Taras Monastyrski; the Pats, Cairns, Kuzyk, Sinclair; my sister Cori Gnutel and her husband Tom; Gary Luby, the sign guy, the same kind of guy we all had, always ready with his truck, ready to go out and put a new list up, who would always come back and say, some signs are knocked down or the ground's frozen and you can't do it; Morgan Shipley, who was always smiling even though her fingers were frozen—thank you; the minister of Crown corporations; and yourself, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you came out and helped me; my cousins, Dave Jones and Debbie Jones Huntrods; and, of course, the Toet family, who seem to take campaigning kind of like a family picnic sort of thing—it's the thing they do. My thanks to Lawrence doesn't end with him but must extend to his wife Marilyn and the others who helped me, his children, Brittany, Megan, Shayna and brother John and his daughter-in-law, Jaisa. Thank you to all of them.

Special thanks to my afternoon pair, my walking pair: Diane and Richard Turcan, who were there every single afternoon. Richard, who, in early February, we went to one door, slipped, fell and decided to take a nap right there on the sidewalk, only to wake up and say, which house next? Well, we got Richard to the hospital, and, after a few weeks of recovery, he was back at it. I'm thankful for their help and I'm glad to call them my friends.

The Rusalka Ukrainian Dance Ensemble was a major part of my life as a young man. I performed the world. I performed before Pope John Paul II and Castel Gandolfo. I performed before Queen Elizabeth at the Winnipeg Arena. I made many friends and met the love of my life there. So I was very proud to have Rusalka assist me with this campaign. I will represent them and the entire Ukrainian community with honour.

* (15:30)

And, finally, to thank a little spitfire of a man, Ray Buors, who I met while helping in last fall's federal campaign. He didn't know I had my nomination papers sitting at home on my—in my office, and I had them ready for a few months, but I knew this life that we've pursued is neither for the faint of heart nor for those who wish to take the easy road. But after a few weeks of—he was—as he would say, door banging, he mentioned that he thought I should be considering a run. His voice was one of

many who told me that they felt that I was someone they could trust and do them proud. He taught me very much about his Metis heritage and issues regarding First Nations, an education I very much intend to continue in this place.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, sincere thanks also to the people of Transcona who have put their trust and their faith in me. It truly was a special campaign for me, knocking on doors and being able to thank former customers who helped me earn a living and become—became my friends. They made me love working for Transcona. On so many days there would be a surprise package, is what I would call waiting at the doors, and they were good surprises. And by that I mean they're—I reconnected with old neighbours that I grew up near, co-workers, employees, high school friends, old dates and family. *[interjection]*

Honesty and openness.

The seniors teas and their very, very direct questions: They would ask about health care, taxes and promises that we're making, and those events proved to myself that I was ready to stand up for the party and the platform I believed in. We see in the Throne Speech those promises form the base of what we wish to do for all Manitobans. They were great fun and great discussions. It was wonderful to see my great aunt Lena, who kept telling me how proud she was of me, and that is special. My maternal grandmother's sister, as well as Cathy Schultz, or as I knew her, Mrs. Schultz, the mother of my childhood friend Richard whose life was cut short by a workplace accident. As the member from Flin Flon referenced in his speech, no family should have a loved one killed at work and not come home. I hadn't seen her since his funeral over 30 years earlier, and seeing her brought me to tears, as it does today. I was delighted to learn that although Richard had never met his own daughter, I hope that I will be able to and to tell her stories about her dad as a young boy.

I refer to myself as the reluctant candidate, as there were plenty of encouraging people who told me I should do this. I was very well aware that politicians are ranked somewhere between pond scum and root canal. I wondered aloud, do I want a job where even if I stay true to myself and work hard for the voters—*[interjection]* It's true. You know that. Perhaps half will consider me an idiot or a crook; it's the nature of this game, and I nor anyone in this House is either. We're here to improve the lives of all Manitobans.

Other members and friends who tried to persuade me or, in some cases, dissuade me, were many. Thanks to yourself, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for talking to me a little bit about it and the Minister of Crown Services (Mr. Schuler) who had a few conversations with me, and the member from Radisson who kept saying, let's go. They all encouraged me to jump in. My friend Belinda up there, Belinda Squance, who mentioned to me that I was like the kid on the diving board who was afraid to jump, well, I jumped, and perhaps my trepidation was due to the fact that I didn't know, really, what I was jumping into. The friends and family who were there to catch me when I jumped were right. This is what I should be doing.

Dear Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was born and raised in Transcona playing hockey at the old barn at East End, baseball and football at Transcona Stadium, attending liturgy at St. Michael's and graduating from Murdock MacKay.

My wife and I bought our first house in the neighbourhood, and I would ride my bike to work at my father's IGA store on Concordia. I passed through the lot where a new Penner Foods store was being built. I was fortunate to be able to become the owner of that store in 2001 and serve and give back to my community.

Perhaps it was providence, but two of the owners of that little store in Transcona have come to serve in this Chamber. I am honoured to follow in the footsteps of Mr. Jim Penner, who served as the MLA for Steinbach for a time.

My father, who, like Jim Penner, was felled by cancer, taught me much about service, hard work, giving back and respect. When I purchased the store, I would tell people it's your store I'll just take care of it for a while. And what did I want out of it? I wanted to earn a living, of course, but I wanted respect, respect of my customers, my employees, my family. In exchange, I respected the work they did for me and that they spent their hard-earned dollars in my store. I never took that for granted.

If people would ask me now why would I want to run, I would say the same reason, respect. I will respect the taxpayer dollars we are entrusted with. I will respect the members of the House opposite. I definitely may not agree with you sometimes but I will respect you to have that opinion, and I hope you respect my time my opinion and my efforts.

Transcona, the Park City, Flamingoville, whatever you call it, is a wonderful community. It has its own attitude from its humble origins back in 1912 when it was named for a combination of the Transcontinental Railway and Lord Strathcona. We all know that Transcona's history is tied to the railway. The CN shops and the employees who work there live and love their community.

But Transcona is changing. The young people who grew up there are also staying in the community, buying homes and sending their children to the schools they once attended. They are buying older homes and investing again in the community. There are new large employers in Transcona, such as New Flyer or Granny's Poultry that are major employers, and if you walk down the main strip in Transcona, which is still constantly transforming, it's a one-block area where you're sure to find a place for a haircut as there are three barbers within one block and they've all been there for quite some time.

The Hi Neighbour Festival, which is taking place next week, is an annual pilgrimage for those who have left to return and perhaps have a cone at the Dairy Queen or fries and chili at the Whistle Pig or share a beverage at one of our watering holes that are all within a couple of blocks of each other,

Transcona's been represented honourably by the former Speaker Daryl Reid in this House, and although we may have disagreed on—in issues I was always very proud when he shopped in my store. I was fortunate to chat with him before the House began one evening and I wish to publicly thank him for that evening of advice. Perhaps the most important was reiterated today by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen). He told me cultivate relationships here. You can learn a great deal from those who disagree with you, but you will also find much you agree on. He mentioned that, whether by osmosis or, as my daughter, Laryssa, said, diffusion is the proper thing, you will become more knowledgeable here by the issues and discussions around you.

My faith, which is a part of my essence as it is for all of us, I know will serve to guide me when dealing with issues in this House and in my constituency. This journey of mine has been quite a roller coaster. The biggest lesson perhaps has been that anything is possible, but the most impactful has been that mental health, specifically anxiety, can and is a real problem for many people around me, including myself, and can be very, very debilitating.

I know that the phrase just get over it doesn't work and is not the answer. We need in society to support and help. I know many friends and family who suffer and my hope is that we can all get to a better place.

* (15:40)

Finally, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and this is left for last for reasons apparent: Thank you to my mom, who taught me to care, love and respect, especially the women who will be in my life; her husband Johnny; and my mother-in-law, Julie, for the time, the food and the support. My children, who have inspired me to do this thing that terrifies me: Scott, my son, who is a better dancer and smarter than me—needs a haircut, for the record—my daughter, Michaela, who is studying at University of Victoria—I carry this rock to remind me of your journey; and Laryssa, my biggest cheerleader, you are my inspiration to do better for Manitoba. And, of course, the person who agreed to share my life with me through better or for worse, and this journey may have been a bit of both, my wife, Amy. Thank you, and I love you.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wish to end here by stating that I pledge to work hard for my constituency and for all Manitobans and to deliver on making Manitoba, as stated in the Throne Speech, the most improved province in Canada.

Thank you, merci beaucoup, miigwech, dyakoyu.

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's an honour to rise in the House once again to address the Speech from the Throne, and to do so in the 41st Legislature, which is a unique one. It's a unique one for a lot of reasons, but, of course, primarily because there's so many new members here, there's so many new folks and so many new roles that those people are taking on. So it's quite exciting to rise here and to stand.

I have to say that it's been an interesting experience having so many people listening so attentively in this Chamber and, you know, I guess maybe we're not supposed to comment on this, but in previous legislatures, I can just say that the level of attentiveness hasn't been quite as thorough as it has been lately, and so I've got an audience and this is unique. People are actually listening to my words and I'm getting applause, and it's quite a unique experience, I've got to say. But it is a pleasure to be here and to be returned to this Legislature and one

that I'm very humble—humbly appreciate and appreciate the opportunity to be here.

I wanted to take this opportunity to congratulate you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in your role. You look fantastic in that spot. You always look fantastic, but especially sitting in that chair. It just—it suits you. It fits you perfectly. So I think that's a great role for you. Congratulations.

I also did want to take the opportunity to thank our new Speaker, our Madam Speaker. And she is somebody that I've gotten to know over the years and she is somebody I think that suits this role very well. I think somebody had said in a previous debate that it's a thankless job. I'm not so sure that's the case, seeing as I think almost everybody in this Chamber has now thanked her for taking on the role. But I did want to put my words on the record, because when my first opportunity to rise in this House I neglected to honour her and to thank her for taking on the role. As I said, I think she's perfectly suited for this role in the sense that she is somebody who has—she understands this institution and appreciates it, I believe. But she's also somebody who has a national experience in her work with the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians and her work as chair of that organization. So I've met her at different conferences. I understand she's been a great chair. I can't say first-hand that I know that because they won't let me in to hear exactly what she's had to say, but I understand that she's—she does very well in that role and I know she'll do well in this role.

I also wanted to take this opportunity to thank the clerks and the table officers. Again, something that I know others have done, but I, on a personal level, just wanted to thank them for all the work that they do in the roles that I've taken on as former caucus chair, as the former vice-chair and now chairperson of Public Accounts.

And, of course, in all of the opportunities that we have to travel to different jurisdictions to learn, I've gotten to know many of the table officers and the clerks, and it is an amazing role that they play in this place. And I've been very appreciative of their guidance and their wisdom, and I appreciate the fact that they're here doing this.

I also understand that they tend to switch up their roles and take on different responsibilities here in the Legislature, so I do hope that I'll get an opportunity to work with all of the table officers and get to know them a little bit better as well.

I didn't actually plan to have words of wisdom for the new members because I'm not so sure I'm the one to do that, but I did want to just say that I haven't had a chance to say hello to each and every person. I'm still using my handy seating chart here to figure out exactly who everybody is. Hello, hello, everyone—but, no, it is an opportunity for me to just welcome you here. Welcome to probably one of the most bizarre workplaces in the world, I would say, you know, and I say that because it was a shock to me that you can be in a place where you can put in so much work and it seems like nothing's getting done for days and days and days, and it seems like nothing is getting done. And then what you'll find, or I'm assuming will find at some point in this legislative session, is that all of a sudden a lot will happen very quickly, and so it's kind of—it takes a bit of getting used to.

As I said, you know, the work that we do here, I think, is important. I think it's important that we continue to work together. When I have schoolchildren come to this place, I often tell them—they'll come here, they'll watch question period, and I'll say to them, okay, so this is the show, this is the theatrics of this place. But I do try to assure them that, really, the work—a lot of the work that gets done in this place gets done behind the scenes, and it is done in a way that we can all work together. And so I am proud of that work, that non-partisan work that we can do together.

And I do—and you know, I don't want to editorialize here too much, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but, you know, I feel like we've had an opportunity now with a change in this House that the tone, even during question period, you know, can be improved, and I think others have spoken to this. You know, sometimes a well-thought-out heckle or a well-timed jab can be part of the discourse here, but, you know, if volume becomes the only metric—and it has in the past—and I think it's changed, not only because of the new Speaker, I would maybe say, but also because of the work that everybody else here is doing. I think we can have better success if we're working together and we're keeping that to a minimum.

I did want to make a special welcome to our new members on this side of the House, the member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Kinew), the member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine), the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Lindsey). They have, as others have said, added amazing perspective to our caucus and new energy, and it's been well appreciated. I actually—just as an aside, the member from Fort Rouge and I had known

each other in a past life when we were both students at the University of Manitoba. We took economics together, and he was always much—getting much better grades than I was, Mr. Speaker—I'll put that on the record, but we certainly had good discussions. I remember them clearly back when we were students and those continue today, and I appreciate his perspective. So it's great to have him in the House, and just a welcome to our new members.

And I just wanted to say a quick note about our members who did not return—so many amazing people that I had the pleasure to work with, so many amazing people that I had the chance to learn from, and they're not here anymore. So there's too many to name, but I will say that their legacy will live on here in this House. Their legislation and the policy work that they've done, sometimes, you know, isn't known to everybody, but certainly we've seen the work that they've done behind the scenes and I think it's important for us to acknowledge their hard work.

It's this kind of change in the House that I think highlights the fleeting nature of this place, and it's something that we all need to remember. Sometimes you can feel like the most important person in the world in this place, but it certainly can change and that's what we need to remember. We're here at the will of our constituents, and that's something we all need to remember at all times.

* (15:50)

I did want to be—I did want to mention how thankful I am to the people of Concordia for returning me here to this place. I often say that I believe Concordia is a bit of a microcosm of our province. We have all different socio-economic classes. We have a lot of newcomers. We have all different kinds of people, and it's been a real joy to get to know them and to work with them on a number of issues. We had a clean campaign, a hard-fought campaign in Concordia, and that was on all sides by all candidates. And so I appreciated that and the response that I got on the doorstep was also appreciative of that fact.

When I was out talking about the issues—not the personalities, but the issues—on the doorstep, I got a very positive response and there was a lot to talk about with my constituents. People responded well to that positive message at the doorstep. They often told me that they sort of felt there's a lot of static at the top, a lot of noise, but locally they saw our vision, they saw the positive outlook that we had for our neighbourhood. When I talked about health care,

when I talked about education in our community, when I talked about the good jobs that our young people were able to get through training and through investment in projects, they were excited about what we had done and they were excited to see those investments continue.

So, you know, I just wanted to say to the people of Concordia that I thank them for their support. I pledge to continue to do my best here to represent them and all their unique perspectives in this place to the best of my ability.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, the campaign was very hard fought; it took an amazing team to pull it off. Nothing in this place we—is—that we do is done on our own, and I think the clearest example of that is during an election campaign. There's too many people to name everybody, but I do wanted to mention a couple of folks. I wanted to start with my constituency assistant, Jim Still. Many folks in this building know Jim on both sides of the aisle because Jim is a—oh, I'm going to get emotional here—he's an amazing guy and he's somebody who's given his—all of his efforts to making this province a better place. I truly believe that. And he's had a tough go in the last number of years, which, again, I won't get into because I'll—I won't make it through it. But Jim's been through hell, and he gave it his all once again in this campaign, so I want to thank him too.

I want to, of course, wanted to thank my wife, who took on more than just an expanded role at home. And with two little ones, folks who've been through that experience or are living that now, understand the demands of a four-year-old and an almost six-year-old at home. And not only was she able to do that but, of course, very helpful in the campaign and in all ways, and so I wanted to thank her.

My—speaking of family, my moms stepped it up this year. Both my mother and my mother-in-law were both recently retired. I pulled them out of retirement and I said, we need you, and they stepped up. It was amazing to work side by side with my mom and my mother-in-law. They were amazing people and they gave it their all, so it was just an incredible experience.

My dad was on signs this time. Last campaign, he criticized the signs. He said that sign shouldn't be there; it should be there, and where's that sign? And why didn't—so I said, you're right, Dad, you know, you can help me out this year, and, well, show us how to do it. And sure enough, his first sign, he was

out putting up a sign with two people who had probably between them about 60 years of campaign experience, and on that first sign he was telling them how to do it. And that's fine; they listened; he was the sign chair. And we got them up and we had a great campaign.

A number of other people, again, as I said, I pulled some people out of retirement to help me out, and they stepped it out. Debbie and Harold, Ellen and Peter, Darlene and Mike just came out and gave it their all one more time. It was amazing. But we also had a lot of new people, young people: Allyssa, Mitch, Darlene, Naomi. People just came off the streets. We had people who were willing to give their time and hundreds of people from all walks of life. It was an incredible and humbling experience. As somebody, I think, previously said, it's inspiring. I wouldn't trade that experience during the campaign for the world.

So I am—I did want to get very quickly to my portfolio as a critic in this House, Mr. Speaker. I am happy to be back in session here and very, very excited and honoured to take on this role as the critic for health, active living and seniors. It's a role that requires a lot of work on my part to get up to speed and make sure that I understand the portfolio as best I can. And it's also a role that I feel a tremendous sense of responsibility to take on.

I feel that there are so many people now who are looking to us as the official opposition to continue to protect and improve their health-care system and, more importantly, Mr. Speaker, I think, to protect those people who provide the service that they count on in their communities.

I feel a special connection to health care, and it's not only because of the relationship that I've built with my own local hospital, Concordia Hospital, a hospital I was actually born at, that—my family hospital that I've sort of had all of life's ups and downs at, Mr. Speaker. And now, as the MLA for Concordia, I've developed a very strong relationship with the people there and given them all the kudos and tried to work with them, as they've really laid out a vision for our community hospital.

But it's not only because of that that I find a connection, Mr. Speaker, but because of the history of that hospital and the connection to the Mennonite community. And most people will know that Concordia Hospital was founded by Mennonite immigrants to Canada, that they, it was—it started as a maternity hospital, a very small facility started in a

home and then to a larger facility and then on to De Salaberry, and finally to the location that they are they currently are at now.

But it was started by a group of immigrants who came to Canada as refugees, as my family did, who came to Canada and were so appreciative of what they had received and what they—the community that they were able to build here in Canada, that their first thought was to give back—was to give back—to their community and to their country. And, by starting a small hospital, which, actually, had a form of socialized medicine before we had medicare in this country, where different families would pay a certain fee every year, first, and then every month, where they could be part of a small health collective and they could then receive services from that community. This was their way of giving back.

And I feel like that's our story, that's our Mennonite story, but it's actually the story of Manitoba, and that's the story of all immigrant communities that have come to this province. You know, they've come from different places in the world. They've come with different cultures and different backgrounds. But they've come here, and their first thought is how can we work together and how can we make this country a better place.

So, you know, it just—it really speaks to who we are as Manitobans and it makes me very proud, Mr. Speaker, to say that this is where I believe our health-care system needs to continue to evolve and to build, where we look after the most vulnerable in our society first, where we prioritize those people who need those health-care services and we protect those health-care services at all costs, that that is our absolute primary fundamental priority, is to protect those vulnerable people in our society.

So it's been an incredible connection for me to now serve as the critic for Health. And I pledge to all of those folks who are on the front lines, who are putting in that time and working to provide that excellent service in our province, I pledge to them to continue to hold this government to account, to make sure that they're protecting those services and protecting the people that deliver them.

So we recognize that health care is important; however, to get on topic here, Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech, I actually saw very little in the Throne Speech. There was very little of anything, but, particularly, there was very little about health care. And, as has been said, it's not what's in the

Throne Speech, but, in fact, what has been left out and who has been left out.

We hear lots of language, once again, coming from this government talking about striking committees, looking for efficiencies. This is all very familiar territory for many Manitobans, and I think they're not ready to forget that. We have seen this movie before, Mr. Speaker, and, in fact, it was with the same actors. And here we go again.

So we don't know what's coming. We still haven't heard where these efficiencies will come from, where these savings will come from. You know, I think the Free Press today said that 57 per cent of people don't even know what the government's legislative priorities are. And I would venture to say that probably 50 per cent of the caucus doesn't even know what the priorities are.

*(16:00)

But we know where they're headed. We know what these words mean. We know that this is code for hacking and slashing and cuts, and we're not going to let it—we're not going to stand by and let it happen.

So people in my neighbourhood have said over and over again that they see where the investment has gone, they see the hip in the institute. They see the new emergency room at Concordia Hospital. They see the new housing at Concordia Village. They understand that if you want to innovate and improve in the health-care system, that means investment and they've seen that right in their own backyard.

And I'll just simply end today by talking about what wasn't said in question period today when I gave the minister the opportunity to stand up to simply say that he understood the value of working with an amazing organization like the Concordia Foundation, and there are a number of them across the province who are coming to us with good ideas about preventative health, about wellness and moving health care to the next level, and they're coming with dollars. They're coming with plans. They're ready to go, and when our government stepped up and said you're absolutely on the right track and we are with you, we are going to stand with you and make sure that this vision comes to fruition.

It took a lot of work to get to this point where we could be committed and working with the Concordia Foundation. There is more work to do. But by

equivocating in this House and not standing with the people of the Concordia Foundation the whole project is put at risk and we risk losing this project for the people of Concordia.

I won't let that happen. We can't let that happen.

Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River): Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I would like to extend congratulations to you in being selected Deputy Speaker of the House.

I'd also like to congratulate all of my fellow MLAs on their election.

I'm both honoured and humbled that the people of the Swan River constituency have given me the opportunity to serve them and be their voice in the Manitoba Legislature alongside everyone here today.

I'd like to thank our campaign team for their countless hours that they gave to help our team achieve success in the election. Every member of our team was instrumental in our success contributing to our recorded net change of over 2,800 votes from the 2011 election. Without them I would not be here today. My campaign manager Norm was indispensable and supportive, offering words of encouragement every hour of every day. He was relentless, quick to motivate the team in downtime. He'd say no votes here, his way of saying let's get back out there on the streets.

Many thanks also need to go to Stan, Jason, Lance, Duane, Ron, Mary, Leone and Gale and the countless others who contributed what they could throughout the campaign.

The numerous phone calls and emails I received from former students throughout western Canada was incredible. I had such a great support group and our team really came together. I'll keep many fond memories from the collaboration and teamwork during the campaign.

One specifically that I'd like to share is the volunteer efforts of two young men I used to teach, their names were Jeremy and Dene from the special ed program in the Swan Valley Regional school. Jeremy was such a big help in getting the signs out into the community and Dene would go to the post office and pick up the discarded drop cards. They worked as a team and taught me how important many volunteers were and how valuable their contributions regardless big or small.

I would also like to thank our student team including Eddie, Chloe, Megan, Breanne and Clyde

whose social media skills proved to be invaluable. I was reminded that teams that work together can achieve amazing results constantly fueling my excitement to be part of the PC team.

I would also like to take the opportunity to thank the most important people in my life, my lovely wife of 37 years, Lori, and my two sons, Derek and Brennan. They encouraged me through the ups and downs in the campaign. Their unconditional support and inspiration gave me those bursts of energy to persevere when they were needed most. For that, I thank them from the bottom of my heart.

Lastly, I'd like to thank my parents: my mom, my dad, who passed away 33 years ago when he was 57. They both taught me the values that I share every day.

Let me tell you a little bit about myself. I graduated from the Swan Valley regional school in 1973, attended U of M, where I received a bachelor of science degree majoring in zoology, certificate in education as well as a vocational certificate. I was fortunate enough to have the opportunity to be a student athlete as part of the varsity football team at U of M.

I was an educator for 35 years. The first two, I was in Camperville, Manitoba, followed by eight years in Birch River, and then the final 25 years at the Swan Valley Regional Secondary School as the environmental management instructor. As an educator, engaging youth, encouraging them to pursue excellence and preparing them for challenges of life ahead is very rewarding for everyone involved. Manitoba's new government is looking forward to partnering with teachers and educators, school boards, communities, to develop a long-term strategy for Manitoba youth. I am enthusiastic and 'cited' about the—excited about the programs for youth and educational opportunities mentioned in the Throne Speech and the effects they'll have on our constituency. A comprehensive literacy strategy as well as better access to post-secondary education will play a vital role in ensuring that Manitoba's youth are best equipped to gain the skills they need to make the difference in their communities and in our province.

Personal highlights from my teaching career include the opportunity to coach sport teams and student groups from the Swan Valley regional school. Especially dear to me is the Envirothon program. There were so many great memories and proud moments with many students and their successes. One in particular that stands out is when

we placed first at the North American championship in Sackville, New Brunswick, in 2011, involving 46 US state champions, the nine Canadian provinces as well as the Northwest Territories champion. Being able to share my passion for environment and conservation is one of the greatest gifts of being an educator. Inspired by my passion for conservation, been a hunter safety instructor for 35 years and served many local and provincial boards including the Swan Valley sport fish enhancement, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Moose for Tomorrow, the provincial moose advisory board, the Swan Lake watershed conservation board, Ducks Unlimited, Lake Winnipegosis Advisory Board, Duck Mountain Interpretive Centre, Louisiana-Pacific Stakeholders Advisory Committee and the west region elk management board.

When we think of Swan, we think of the annual Northwest Roundup. Every last weekend in July, this event has been a major tourist attraction in the valley since 1901. Even tried sheep riding one year. What we maybe don't associate Swan River with immediately is the other facets of its rich history. We have a diverse culture and history in the valley, including the Tent Town at Minitonas, a World War II prisoner-of-war camp near Sapotaweyak along Lake Winnipegosis, the Burrows logging company at Bowsman, and the many stone artifacts that can be found amongst the fields in the valley, the trading posts in the old fort area and the legends of Thunder Hill, to name a few.

The Swan Valley and Swan River constituency has diverse economic opportunities. The valley itself has two major logging industries: Louisiana-Pacific, which produces siding building material, and Spruce Products, which produces softwood lumber. In addition to this, agriculture plays a huge role in economic input. Furthermore, communities within my constituency such as Easterville, Grand Rapids, Duck Bay, Sapotaweyak, Wuskwi Sipihk, Camperville, Winnipegosis, Dawson Bay, Waterhen, Skownan and Crane River all border lakes where commercial fishing has huge economic impact and many employment opportunities.

*(16:10)

I'm confident and optimistic in the course of the— that the Throne Speech has set out for our economy. Our natural resources are so important to our constituency, and, under the previous government, the development of these resources has dropped drastically. Our government is looking forward to

working with all stakeholders to ensure that there is sustainable development of our province's natural resources and the balanced growth and job creation help to benefit all Manitobans.

This government's Throne Speech has put great emphasis on partnerships. It's important that our province partners with other provinces in the area of trade. Much of the Swan River constituency shares a border with Saskatchewan. Joining New West Partnership and forming more co-operative relationships with our neighbours to the west is a great first step in getting our province back on track. The new PC government's committed to building better relationships with other provinces, communities and, most importantly, all Manitobans.

During the campaign, I had the pleasure to meet and develop relationships with many people who inspired me so much. Alex from Winnipegosis has cerebral palsy, and he wanted very much to be here with us today if he could have found a ride in. When I spoke to him, he shared the dreams—his dreams with me. He said that he wanted to work towards a higher education in business admin but found the financial challenges difficult to surpass. Recently, I received an email from him indicating that he shared his story on YouTube. A short time later, he was so excited because he was named chairman of a fundraising committee for the Mossey River days this summer.

I'd like to share a paragraph from an article he wrote in the Dauphin Herald. Actually, last night he gave me a call and he said, so how did your Throne Speech go? And I said, well, I didn't get a chance yet. So I'm sure he's going to be emailing me tonight. But, as Alex said—and I said, Alex, do you mind if I quote you? And he said, you know, sure, go ahead. Anything you want, he said.

And so he put: In my younger days, people didn't expect much of me because of my small frame. My speech did not help matters. When I talked to people, they would think that my disability was more of a mental fashion than a physical. It took me a while to wake up and see the fog that was over me. Enough was enough, even from a constant sitting position.

Showing everyone that I could do more in life because a main goal of mine—became a main goal of mine. Simple things can have the greatest impact. The day I opened the door using a regular door knob sparked my mind with endless opportunities. Remember, you're the mayor of your reality. You

make all the decisions; reality does not. Knowing yourself and living your own life is the greatest strength of all. And I thought that was just pretty touching.

I've been so grateful to meet so many amazing people living with—in my constituency. Manitobans are very special people, making every effort they can to contribute to their communities day in and day out. I'm continuously being inspired by stories and hope to be their steadfast voice in this House.

Throughout the election campaign, we heard time and time again that Manitoba families were waiting too long for health-care services they need. My friend Elmer is someone who contributed greatly to building this province and now is a senior. He depends on a reliable health-care service. He's a dialysis patient. In his first month, he was commuting to Brandon three times a week. After that, it was Russell, and now he's been commuting to Dauphin. My friend has been bounced around in order to access the health-care services that he desperately needs. Why?—because Swan River doesn't have the staff to facilitate more than eight patients weekly. He was told that he would not get the treatment he needs in Swan River until someone either leaves or passes on.

These are the types of issues that plague my constituency as long—or along with many small rural centres. Our government's Throne Speech has made it a priority to address these issues. Building more PCH beds and establishing a task force to address the staggeringly long wait times for treatment in our province is a start to what needs to be done to get our seniors the care they desperately need and deserve. Our seniors have contributed so much to our great province. They must—we must show our gratitude for their efforts.

Good friend and constituent Stu Harris, who's 102 years old, told me during the campaign that he'd love to be out there but just slowing down a bit.

Many young families are challenged with decision to live in Swan. It's such a beautiful part of our province and a wonderful place to raise a family. Nevertheless, many young families with expecting mothers are forced to move due to the absence of a maternity ward and a lack of services in our brand new hospital. These challenges are shared all over our constituency, and I know constituencies all over the province are empathetic of this as well.

These challenges have been recognized and are to be faced head-on by our new PC government. There is an enormous sense of pride involved in being part of a team, and our government will ensure that we work collaboratively with all Manitobans. Our common goal will bring us together, and our diversity will make our team stronger.

Mr. Speaker, our new Progressive Conservative government is prepared, motivated and committed to making Manitoba the most improved province in Canada. We believe that relationships, community building, teamwork will lead to prosperity. Manitoba's new PC government will reflect values of integrity, caring, inclusion, common sense and teamwork in everything we do.

Mr. Speaker, I'm so excited at what lies ahead and very honoured to be part of this team and the voice for the constituency of Swan River.

Thank you.

Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas): First, I would like to thank the people of The Pas constituency for placing their faith in me to continue representing them in the Legislature. Over the past year I've learned a tremendous amount about how to be an effective member of this Assembly and I look forward to putting this knowledge to use for the benefit of our communities across The Pas constituency.

I'd also like to thank the many volunteers that came out and helped, worked 15-hour shifts. In particular, I want to recognize one particular volunteer named Susan Jobb. She was probably the most shiest, shiest Cree woman from the North I have ever met, residential school survivor. We had many stories to share about our past. And I just wanted to say she was a hardest working volunteer that I had who worked seven days a week, 15 hours a day, and she was the one who encouraged me, especially when we had that snowstorm in The Pas for a weekend.

I'm excited to be working with our returning NDP MLAs who bring tremendous experience back to the Legislature and working with our new NDP MLAs who bring—our new NDP members who will bring fresh energy to an old building. A colleague actually joked with me that technically that makes me the most senior MLA in northern Manitoba. So, with that, I'm looking forward to working with everyone to reach our common goals.

Madam Speaker in the Chair

Mr. Deputy Speaker—Madam Speaker, I have many concerns with the Conservative government's Throne Speech and ministerial mandate letters. They fail to signal any action on many important issues.

As we all know, the central purpose of the Throne Speech and mandate letters are to tell the public what the government's priorities are. And we all know, as well, that actions speak louder than words. When an issue is not mentioned in the Throne Speech or mandate letters, this inaction speaks louder than any general unspecific things the government may speak about the importance of issues they left out.

As I went through the mandate letters, I just wanted to in particular highlight some issues that were left out in these letters—the particulars, if you will.

In reading the mandate letter to the Minister of Indigenous and Municipal Relations (Ms. Clarke), these particulars in those letters, do they include indigenous people? In fact, do they include—it did not even mention honouring Aboriginal and treaty rights within these mandate letters. In fact, I had to flip over a couple of pages to see if there was a section that was accidentally entirely left out on indigenous issues within the minister of indigenous and municipal affairs department.

* (16:20)

Also, too, the minister—the letter written to the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Stefanson), I was alarmed that the mention of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry, which was eventually turned over to a very important initiative called restorative justice. I would like to recommend that I learned about the important initiative at restorative justice when I was in—a student at University of Manitoba, a book written by Rupert Ross, I believe. I strongly recommend that members read that book. It really changed my view on how the justice system treats our indigenous people in Manitoba and across our country.

Third, the letter written to the Minister of Education and Training (Mr. Wishart)—it was alarming that it did not mention the recommendations to be followed through in regarding increasing Aboriginal graduation rates. It also didn't mention the—improving the working relationship between the provincial and federal governments in addressing the lack of, if you will, in our education system on reserve. For example, in Cross Lake, the Otter Nelson school—Otter Nelson River school—

the enumerated—the actual student population is 1,850 students. Now, the federal government only enumerated 1,500, so that makes a shortfall of 350. So that's the lack of funding that's going to our children on reserve compared to children going to school off reserve.

So, Madam Speaker, with that, a fourth—the minister—the letter written to the Minister of Infrastructure (Mr. Pedersen), does these vestments—will they include northern Manitoba, in particular, the highways that we all drive in in our constituency to address concerns of our people in the North.

Also, too, the Minister of Families (Mr. Fielding), a letter written to the Minister of Families—does it include Manitoba housing in the North? It's quite the different situation in northern Manitoba compared to here in southern Manitoba. I know I've met with many different families who had to consider moving from their community or even just giving up employment so their rental rates don't raise up along with their income.

So, with that, also, too, the letter written to the Minister responsible for Status of Women—again, I'm alarmed as an indigenous woman that it did not even mention the missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. I just wanted to share with my new colleagues here of my background that I'm currently raising my younger sister's three young children. She's currently living a high-risk lifestyle in downtown Winnipeg. With the assistance of the Bear Clan Patrol, I have made wellness checks to ensure that she's still doing okay, if you will. Whenever I turn on the TV or read the newspaper and read about a body being pulled from the river, somebody being assaulted, I always—I automatically think, is it my sister? How am I going to tell her daughters? So that's very important to me.

And I also tried to report her missing one time to the Winnipeg Police Service. As soon as I mentioned that she was Aboriginal and lived a high-risk lifestyle, the concern in that operator's voice disappeared. In fact, she told me: She's 20 years old; she can do whatever she wants. So, obviously, angry words were exchanged and ask them—this is why it's so concerning as to how Winnipeg's police service treat our Aboriginal population.

Also, too, I am concerned about the mandate letter written to the Minister of Crown Services (Mr. Schuler). How will they honour our Aboriginal and treaty rights while they're within our traditional lands? How will they honour and work with our First

Nation governments, First Nations fishermen and trappers affected by projects and honouring land agreements such as the Northern Flood Agreement as well?

So, with that, the government says it merged Indigenous and Municipal Relations into one department because of the similarities between indigenous communities and municipalities. But there are very substantial differences between how indigenous communities and municipalities operate and what they need.

I hope the Premier (Mr. Pallister) and the minister responsible understand these differences, and I hope that indigenous priorities are not 'overshaded'—overshadowed by other matters as I see in the mandate letter.

In regards to customary care, the Throne Speech does not signal any efforts to specifically introduce a customary care model into the child welfare system. For children who enter into the child welfare system, customary care can provide a way for them to grow and thrive safely in their community, strengthening their connection to language, culture, and family.

This importance was demonstrated in my community May 9th and 10th when they all gathered with their elders and community members and people who work within our system at the Kikiwak Inn in Opaskwayak Cree Nation. They gathered together to talk about the importance of customary care for our communities.

As a foster parent, I think it's extremely important that children have every chance possible to stay in their home communities where they have strong ties to family and friends. Unfortunately, the Throne Speech, if any indication, customary care is not a priority for the Conservative government.

Reconciliation: The Throne Speech fails to commit to implementing the calls to action of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Again I want to share with our new members that this is very important to me, whereas I come from three generations who come from—attended residential schools. So, therefore, that makes me an intergenerational survivor. In fact, the Throne Speech says nothing at all about fostering reconciliation between Manitoba's indigenous and non-indigenous peoples.

Let's look at one example of what reconciliation can look like. The NDP believes that all Manitoba students should have a chance to learn about the histories, languages, cultures, and traditional

knowledge of indigenous people, but the Conservative Throne Speech makes no mention of this. As an Aboriginal person learning about my own history as an indigenous person, I felt, as a young woman, shame. In fact, when I learned about my own history in high school, we learned about the voyageurs, the fur trade, and didn't quite represent of who we are.

It wasn't until I went to the University of Manitoba, majored in Native studies and political studies, that I truly learned about residential schools. I always wondered why my mom, grandmother, my great-grandmother never talked about it with me; now I understand why.

And it wasn't until university that the shame started slowly disappearing as I started learning about our Aboriginal political movement regarding of teaching us about residential schools, the real history, teaching us about our political movement that's finally recognizing Aboriginal and treaty rights in Canada.

So that is very important to me that this curriculum is in place within our Manitoba school systems because that shame that I felt as a young woman will disappear with that education that's going to be there and thrive from it and make us proud.

Not only is reconciliation a high priority among Manitobans, the Manitoba government is also required by law to create an action plan for implementing the calls to the action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. I urge the Conservative government to tell us whether their plan is to follow this law, break this this law, or repeal it and back away from its moral duty.

In regards to child care, the NDP believes that every family should have access to affordable, high quality child care. Fortunately, child care's not mentioned anywhere in the Conservatives' Throne Speech. Child care is very important in order to build that foundation to access education, to access training, to access employment. Without child care I wouldn't be here today with you fine folks today. However, it does not say how the government will make sure all child care is high quality and affordable or whether there is any plan to expand Manitoba's workforce of early childhood educators.

* (16:30)

While—was child care not mentioned because costs might rise for families and protections might be

stripped away, or was child care not mentioned because there's no plan at all? If speeches from the throne are nothing else, they are signals of a government's priorities. However important child care is to this government, it was apparently not important enough to include in the Throne Speech.

Jobs for northerners: The government is talking about its Yes! North strategy as if it is a comprehensive economic plan for the North. That remains to be seen, since we only have—since we have only seen few details on this plan. The few details that we have seen and talked about was about tourism and natural resources, which are important economic sectors for the North, but they are far from the only sectors. The government has very little to say about northern jobs, training and specifically what its plan is—regarding the University College of the North and other northern training and education centres. Aside from promising to abolish the East Side Road Authority, something the NDP caucus completely disagrees with, this government is saying very little about the northern roads and other infrastructure.

And in regards to Yes! North, I just find that it fails to address the foundation in order to lead to economic development. It fails to address housing. It fails to address child care. It fails to address training, education and health care as well. This foundation is needed to improve our communities in order to build healthy communities and will lead to economic development.

I just wanted to quickly share with you something that's very dear to me, to explain to my colleagues my absence on Thursday and Friday and Monday in regards to mental health services in the North. My daughter twice has been flown out from The Pas to Winnipeg to—on suicide watch. So those two—those couple of days I sat with her at the psych health ward here at the Health Sciences Centre, addressing her concerns, and all I could think about was our families who were flown out as well from Cross Lake and imagine what they went through. And I certainly didn't feel the honour of being an MLA in that room that we spent the night on—night in, sleeping on a couch. All I felt was the role of a struggling mother, took the blame. And with that, when we were finally let out of the waiting room into the ward, I was holding my daughter's hand, but I started realizing that she was holding my hand. You know, I wasn't holding her. She was holding mine. And this brave young soul basically said, you've got to let me go. I've got to do what I've got to do. I need

to heal myself. And with that, I just want to say, I just admired her courage, you know, that role that she took.

So, with that, I just—I know I'm running out of time here, but I just wanted to share with you that I've taken on new roles within our NDP team to share with everyone here. In these roles, I can serve people throughout The Pas constituency and throughout Manitoba in new ways. As deputy interim leader of the opposition, I will work with Flor—with the member of Logan, our new interim leader, to hold Premier Pallister accountable for the promises—*[interjection]*—oh, Premier (Mr. Pallister), sorry, yes, member of Fort Whyte accountable for the promises he made in the election and to hold the new government accountable to serving all Manitobans. As caucus whip, I will make sure our NDP team puts forward a clear, unified voice for Manitobans. Our team has hit the ground running, and we've been working closely together every day to prepare for the upcoming legislative session in order to serve as an effective opposition.

As the critic for indigenous and municipal affairs, I will work to hold the new Conservative provincial government to account for the promises they made to northerners and indigenous peoples. I will listen to the priorities and concerns held by Metis communities, First Nations, non-status indigenous people and northern Manitobans, and I will bring these priorities and concerns to the attention of the government.

Since many people in The Pas constituency are indigenous, and all of us are northerners, this new critic role fits very well with my duties as the MLA for The Pas. It will allow me to stay focused on the issues and lead the NDP's efforts to make sure the government knows about these priorities.

Though I wish my late father Oscar Lathlin was still here to give me guidance, he taught me unforgettable lessons about public service. I will continue to put those lessons to use. I will show our young people there are many ways to help improve their communities, whether it be through public service or other paths.

To the communities throughout The Pas constituency, thank you for placing your faith in me to continue representing you in the Legislature. Regardless of who you voted for, I'm here to represent everyone. We will have much to discuss over the next four years, as we hold the government accountable and to work to improve our province.

I want to dedicate this speech to my daughter Elyse Jane Lathlin, my nieces, families in Cross Lake and to all the families in Manitoba struggling and dealing with mental-health issues.

Cree spoken. Translation unavailable.

Ms. Janice Morley-Lecomte (Seine River): Good afternoon, Madam Speaker.

I would like to extend congratulations to my colleagues. I thank everyone for their patience as I settle into my new job, and thank you for your support.

I stand here today before you humbled by the trust and support the constituents in Seine River have placed in front of me. The families in Seine River have spoken and they wanted a change; April 19, 2016, was a day of change.

I want to thank—to start by thanking my family for their ongoing support. My husband, Henry, would assist in driving and door knocking on cold evenings even though he would rather have been doing other things. My daughter, Alexa, was a huge support. She would educate me on the finer points of social media and was my go-to person when I was struggling with my computer.

I knew when I was frustrated and questioning the time commitment, my family was there to offer encouragement and a gentle shove forward. Family formed the basis of my volunteer team in the beginning. It is this team which allowed me to door knock, meet individuals and learn about the constituency I now represent. Giving of time and never showing frustrations with the process—I was truly blessed with their ongoing support and dedication. As the campaign progressed, I knew I could call on family to fill the spaces, gaps, when canvassing. Family formed the base of my volunteer team, a platform which would never have been possible without their encouragement.

My parents, Myles and Georgette Morley, committed to driving into Winnipeg from Ste. Rose du Lac near Dauphin to assist me at every possible moment. I would be questioned how my parents were doing or where they were if they had not been in for a while. They were a valued part of my campaign team. Their presence throughout the campaign was constant and never wavering in commitment.

Many family members helped with the campaign: Haley Vandepoele, Bonnie, Mitchell,

John, Lorna and Sarah Crupi. I am forever indebted to my family.

The campaign team was simply outstanding. I was fortunate to be surrounded by a group of highly talented, focused and dedicated individuals. Their combined qualities created a very cohesive, supportive and encouraging team environment. As the election drew near, I can proudly say the cohesion of those on the team strengthened along with their commitment.

The focus for the constituency campaign evolved into a way of being. Never was there a more—or a moment when I doubted their commitment to the success of winning our constituency. We became one with a single goal, a team.

I thank the individuals who volunteered their time and talent to be a part of the team which joined together with a common goal and worked to ensure the success of the goal. Bruce Sloane wore many hats and was very efficient. Bruce was the office manager, go-to guy and the person who organized the volunteer schedule and team.

* (16:40)

Ken Lee was the campaign manager. Ken's expertise in running a successful campaign and seeking guidance from experienced party members was invaluable to Seine River. Ken's wealth of knowledge greatly contributed to the success of the Seine River campaign.

John Tropak was a rock whose wisdom and insight was valued. John offered his expertise to ensure the success of our campaign.

Don and Tara Bourasseau-Snyder were dedicated and always ready to assist. They organized walk sheets and group door knocking events.

Blair Kestevan was the get-out-the-vote individual. Blair brought a wealth of knowledge to our campaign and worked tirelessly to ensure the success of our campaign.

The front office was professionally covered by a group of individuals who volunteered their time to answer phones, take messages and offer invaluable advice.

Many volunteers donated countless hours of their time to assist with door knocking, mailers, flyers and phone calls. I name a few of the many volunteers who made the campaign a success:

Tom Resch, Tom Gurica, Jane Ng, Brent Bottomley, Gord Giesbrecht, Ashton Poudrette, Carol Delorme, Yvonne Rideout and Alexander MacKenzie and Pat Hiebert.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to represent the constituency of Seine River. A long-time resident of Seine River, I bring both a rural and urban blend to the riding. I grew up on a ranch in central Manitoba in a place called Cayer. I am the oldest of three girls. After graduating from high school in Ste. Rose du Lac, I moved to Winnipeg. I attended and graduated from the University of Manitoba. Focus, determination, respect for others, ability to work independently were essential to living in the country. It is these characteristics that I brought with myself to the campaign and will continue to follow as I represent the constituents in Seine River.

I have been involved in community-based activities, volunteered for local boards and actively promoted and supported my children's school through volunteering. My knowledge as a small-business owner and community volunteering has enabled me to have a broader, more inclusive understanding of the Seine River constituency. This in-depth knowledge is invaluable to the community as a whole.

I bring with myself many years of social service experience: understanding and appreciating the challenges people face and respecting individuals as they teach me what they know while seeking guidance for areas they are unfamiliar with. The knowledge I gained from working with individuals from all backgrounds was, and continues to be, invaluable. It is in this knowledge that I have acquired that I saw struggles women and children are challenged with. I realized I needed to do more, be part of change, an effective, supportive, forward-focused change. Women need support and resources to succeed, and the children need a safe place so they can be heard. Children are unable to speak as openly as adults, yet they are directly impacted by the home environment. Children see and hear everything, yet they have little insight into the reasons which determine the underlying choices by the adults in their lives. Children need to be heard and supported, so they can move forward in the healing process. It is for these reasons I wanted to be a part of change, a change for the better.

Seine River is a very diverse and active constituency. It encompasses both the past and the future in its landscape. Seine River continues to

develop and expand as families move into the area. Families encompass all ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Through the community and school participation, families are staking ownership of their home and offering a stable environment for future generations to own.

Seine River embraces the past by honouring the families who invested in the community and set the blueprint in place to secure positive growth. I reference one family, the Johnstone family, and the contributions they made to develop a vital and forward-focused area. Mr. William Johnstone was an active member in the community. He was a school trustee, member of the St. Vital council and acted as deputy mayor. As families continue to move in and call Seine River home, more families who pioneered the development of Seine River are honoured.

Equally important are the seniors who are actively living in Seine River and contributing to the makeup of the population. The knowledge and insight they have to offer is invaluable as they contribute to a growing community.

Seine River is a community which is divided into a rural and urban landscape. The combination adds to the appeal and uniqueness of the community while still supporting a number of businesses to flourish. Seine River embraces and supports the 'divulse'-diverse culture and population within its boundaries.

Madam Speaker, Manitoba's new government is committed to providing a clean, open government, which will include the integrity, caring, inclusion, common sense and teamwork in everything we do.

We look forward to working with all levels of government, collaborating with Manitoba indigenous leaders and people as we move forward to build a better province. Wisdom, appreciation for struggles within diverse communities and embracing individuals with diverse ethnic backgrounds will build to the mosaic and strengthen Manitoba as we move forward in an inclusive and economic-strengthening manner.

New West Partnership will offer a cost-effective way to provide government services as the New West Partnership provides economic benefits to our province. Investing in Manitoba growth and employment opportunity benefits everyone and stops the exodus of our valued resources, children and skilled individuals.

Speaking to our valued resources, we are committed to establishing a task force which addresses current lengthy wait times for treatment; lowering the cost of ambulances so health care is affordable for everyone; seniors, the stakeholders which have invested in Manitoba and whose knowledge and investment of time has helped form the base for each of us, need to be taken care of. Investing in personal-care facilities to ensure our valued family members and friends have proper care and are safe in their later years is important.

Poverty affects our future through our children. Children are among the most vulnerable in our society and need to be protected. Children living in poverty are taxed with having to struggle to be able to have basic needs met. All children are entitled to have education, a safe home and a standard of living which ensures no one goes hungry.

The protecting children act is an important step in protecting vulnerable children in our province. Collaboration between government, Child and Family Services, service providers and law enforcement will ensure our children are a priority. Children are our future and need our support and guidance to ensure a strong Manitoba for future generations.

Throughout our mandate, we look forward to Manitoba becoming the most improved province. Reducing our wait times, balancing a budget, investing in infrastructure in an open and transparent manner will start the process towards rebuilding confidence in a stronger, brighter Manitoba.

Reducing the amount of taxes families pay will give families back the money they work hard to earn, money families can invest in their home and towards their family future.

Madam Speaker, success begins with a common goal and a team which is dedicated to ensuring the welfare of all. As we move forward, we will be respectful, honest and transparent, inclusive, so everyone is able to voice their concerns and know their concerns are heard.

Thank you.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Madam Speaker, this is my first opportunity to speak since the April 19th provincial election, and I'd like to begin by thanking the voters of Elmwood who once again placed their trust in me to represent them here in the Manitoba Legislature. I'm very honoured and humbled by their support.

The election campaign marks for each of us an intense process and an integral part of our democratic system. We meet with many—as many voters as possible, listen to their concerns and often hearing of their frustrations. In democracies, governments change, and no doubt these things have cyclical characteristics, and we're all aware of that. When the public wants change, generally speaking, it will get it. And I know the voters of Elmwood expect me to be constructive in my approach, critical of things that need criticism and mindful of the importance of fighting for things that matter to people.

There's much attention given to deficits, Madam Speaker, and I simply make note here that we have a democratic deficit in Manitoba where only 55 per cent of the eligible voters vote. We need to find solutions to this deficit in a non-partisan way. And, certainly, I've spoken about this before, and I'm sure the topic will be coming up again over the next four years.

*(16:50)

Madam Speaker, I'd like to congratulate you on your election as Speaker and give you my best wishes as you assume your new duties. I know you'll be fair to all members, and, because of that, I'm sure we'll be in very good hands as we debate the issues that come before us. And I wanted to note at this point that the Premier (Mr. Pallister) sent me a note on day one, and I'm going to read it. He said: Congratulations and welcome back. It's nice not to be the MLA who was elected the longest time ago, he said. I believe you hold that honour and the title.

And the fact of the matter is that I was elected here in 1986, and if I thought back in those days I would be looking ahead 30 years, I wouldn't have believed that I'd be standing here 30 years later. In those days, we wouldn't even be thinking about necessarily even the next election.

And I remember being here with Harry Enns, and I remember Harry Enns, you know, growing up and knowing who Harry Enns was, and he was like, the—one of the longest serving. He was here 20 years when I got here. And Harry used to sit back here, and he'd wait for the new MLAs, you know. He wanted to hear everybody's speech. And I guess we could still do it today, but what he had—what he used to do is he would stand up and ask a question. You know, and MLAs are not supposed to be reading notes. It's only your first speech you're allowed to do that. But Harry would watch, and people would be reading the

notes, and he would stand up and try to ask a question. And that was really unnerving for anybody who was here for the first time.

But, just to show you how great a parliamentarian he was—and he was an old cold warrior; we all knew that—but one day in the—two years later, in '88, when Jim McCrae was the House leader for the Filmon Conservatives, we were having an issue on procedure, and Harry sent me a little note, citing me all the Speakers, you know, the sections that I needed to be able to defend myself, against his own government, I might add. So—but those were days when we had a different set of rules, and we would sit here in the evening, what, three days a week, I think it is, 'til midnight. We had evening sessions. And, you know—and, by the way, and no constituency allowance, none whatsoever. The only constituency allowance came about during the Sterling Lyon government when Len Domino was able to get the Sterling Lyon government to agree to; it was a \$400 or \$4,000 constituency allowance. And it wasn't until '86 that we started with a constituency allowance program, and it was like \$10,000 in the beginning, and it's, you know, progressed to where it is right now.

The evening sessions disappeared. I mean, today, the job of an MLA is just nothing like it was back in those days, so you've come—you've all arrived here at the right time. And I would invite you to enjoy every minute that you're here, because, you know, it won't last. Just like you came here and you're here now, well, some day there will be similar changes. And I remember in '88, Clayton Manness, you remember—most of you remember who Clayton Manness was. But we were just amazed at how out of nowhere, 20 Liberals appeared, you know, because it looked like the Conservatives were going to sweep most of the seats in that election. And Gary Doer was our new leader, and we ended up with 12 seats, and the Conservatives had 24, I think it was, just a minority government, but the Liberals came out of nowhere, 20 of them, and Clayton was just amazed. Like, it was an amazing thing to walk around here and see all these people that we've—not only have never seen before but we never heard of them before.

So, in any event, Madam Speaker, I'm sure that many of you here are aware of the Louise Bridge, and you're going to be hearing a lot more about it over the next four years. But, certainly, the replacement of this bridge is a big issue in my constituency, and one that the former premier

recognized and actually included it in the Throne Speech last November. And, of course, I see that it's not in the Throne Speech this year, so I'm assuming that it's kind of been dropped off the priority list here as well as the city. In fact, during the election, the leadership of the Conservative campaign called it a pet project. And I'm not sure why they would want to do that.

But, as I'd indicated, the bridge is 100 years old. The city engineers and the planners know it needs to be replaced, and it's got like 25,000 vehicles using the bridge every day. It's a vital link to the downtown area and from the northeast quadrant.

And, in fact, just the other day, the City gave out an RFP to deal with that issue in conjunction with the rapid transit route to the east. And so that, the bridge that was a pet project just, you know, a month ago now is kind of back on the city priority list, right, so.

But I noted, with some amusement, some of the reporting during the campaign were mentioning that my eight-inch-by-24-inch signs were covering the NDP logo. And, for the record, I want to say that all my leaflets, all my advertising, including two front-page Canstar Herald wraps had my party logo on it, and, of course, about 200 of the—my big black-and-orange signs—actually, probably more signs, more of those than a lot of Conservative candidates had up during the entire election.

And the wrap, the Canstar wrap, for those of you that know what it is—I mean, anybody in our area knows what it is, it's a like a \$4,000 advertising supplement; it takes the front page, the second page, the third page and the back page—and we had bought that whole thing. And we certainly had our logo on every page. And not only that, but we decided to buy it a second week too. So just, we took the whole—both of the wraps for the entire election.

So, in any event, the Conservatives were quite riled up about this stickering business. And it was very good because we got huge amount of publicity that money can't buy. And so every couple of days I opened the Free Press and there's this big sign up there saying, you know, Time to Build a New Louise Bridge. So, and the fact that it figures so prominently in the RFP actually makes us happy as well, because I don't know why, whether that would be the reason, but, certainly, it's a quite an involved RFP and it does talk a lot about the Louise Bridge.

So, now, the City of Winnipeg, as I'd indicated, after the election, announced their request for proposal for consulting for the Eastern Corridor Study. And I know that, although this is tied up with rapid transit, the City doesn't even use the term bus anymore, but I note that there will be attention paid to the Louise Bridge-Stadacona extension project, which is another extension of this that we're interested in, and the City uses the words, the City uses functionally obsolete when its engineers and planners describe the Louise Bridge—once again, not the type of description that you would expect when you—what's been referred to as a pet project during the election campaign.

And, you know, I haven't been out there to take a look at these cracks, but I will be out there shortly, but I'm told by one of my voters that they are there. You can see the water through the bridge.

Now, you know, I do want to speak about the issues coming out of the Throne Speech, which, by the way, was only like a 15-minute Throne Speech. I just got settled in my reserved seat over here, and it

was over. You know, I'm waiting for this really exciting things to happen and there was nothing there.

But you know, the—but what I see that makes a lot of sense to me is an indicator of where the government is headed is not necessarily to watch their Throne Speech so much as it is to see the cheerleading that the Premier (Mr. Pallister) is doing on essentially what is a bad business deal. And that doesn't bode well for the future, because if he is so excited about the business deal where Bell is going to buy MTS and he thinks that that is a good deal, then God help us all, because we are going to have like four years, minimum, at least four years before, four years of this, and I wouldn't want to see what kind of—

Madam Speaker: Order. When this matter is again before the House, the member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) will have nine minutes remaining.

And the hour being 5 p.m., the House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow.

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