

Third Session – Forty-First Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
Official Report
(Hansard)

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Speaker*

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-First Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALLUM, James	Fort Garry-Riverview	NDP
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	NDP
BINDLE, Kelly	Thompson	PC
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	Ind.
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	Ind.
SCHULER, Ron, Hon.	St. Paul	PC
SELINGER, Greg	St. Boniface	NDP
SMITH, Andrew	Southdale	PC
SMITH, Bernadette	Point Douglas	NDP
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, Hon.	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, November 22, 2017

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

Please be seated. Welcome back, everybody.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Madam Speaker: Introduction of bills?

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs Twelfth Report

Mrs. Sarah Guillemard (Chairperson): Madam Speaker, I wish to present the twelfth report of the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs.

Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk): Your Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs—

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS presents the following as its Twelfth Report.

Meetings

Your Committee met on the following occasions in the Legislative Building:

- November 25, 2016 (2nd Session – 41st Legislature)
- November 16, 2017 (2nd Session – 41st Legislature)

Matters under Consideration

- Annual Report of Elections Manitoba for the year ending December 31, 2015 including the conduct of The Pas by-election
- Annual Report of Elections Manitoba for the year ending December 31, 2016 including the

conduct of the 41st Provincial General Election, April 19, 2016

Committee Membership

Committee membership for the November 25, 2016 meeting:

- Mr. ALLUM
- Hon. Mrs. COX
- Mrs. GUILLEMARD (Chairperson)
- Mr. JOHNSTON
- Mr. KINEW
- Ms. LAMOUREUX
- Ms. MORLEY-LECOMTE
- Hon. Mrs. STEFANSON
- Mr. SWAN
- Mr. TEITSMA (Vice-Chairperson)
- Mr. YAKIMOSKI

Committee membership for the November 16, 2017 meeting:

- Mr. ALLUM
- Hon. Mrs. COX
- Hon. Mr. CULLEN
- Hon. Mr. FIELDING
- Ms. FONTAINE
- Hon. Mr. GERRARD
- Mrs. GUILLEMARD (Chairperson)
- Mr. JOHNSTON
- Hon. Mrs. STEFANSON
- Mr. SWAN
- Mr. TEITSMA

Your Committee elected Mr. TEITSMA as the Vice-Chairperson

Officials speaking on the record at the November 25, 2016 meeting:

- Ms. Shipra Verma, Chief Electoral Officer

Officials speaking on the record at the November 16, 2017 meeting:

- Ms. Shipra Verma, Chief Electoral Officer

Report Considered and Passed

Your Committee considered and passed the following report as presented:

- Annual Report of Elections Manitoba for the

year ending December 31, 2015 including the conduct of The Pas by-election

Report Considered but not Passed

Your Committee considered the following report but did not pass it:

- *Annual Report of Elections Manitoba for the year ending December 31, 2016 including the conduct of the 41st Provincial General Election, April 19, 2016*

Mrs. Guillemard: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Reyes), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): Good afternoon, Madam Speaker. I wish to table the 2016-2017 Annual Report for the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba.

Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade): I am pleased to table the Communities Economic Development Fund second-quarter financial statement.

Madam Speaker, I—also pleased to table the 2016-17 Annual Report for the Cooperative Promotion Board.

And as well, Madam Speaker, I am pleased to table the 2016-2017 Annual Report for the Co-operative Loans and Loans Guarantee Board.

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Sustainable Development): Yes, Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to table the Manitoba Habitat Heritage Corporation Annual Report for 2016-2017.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Madam Speaker: The honourable Minister of Justice, and I would indicate that the required 90 minutes notice prior to routine proceedings was provided in accordance with our rule 26(2).

Would the honourable minister please proceed with her statement.

Restorative Justice Week

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Since forming government, our

team in Manitoba Justice has faced several challenges in our criminal justice system.

Incarceration rates nearly doubled over the last decades, with Manitoba recording the highest adult incarceration rate of any province in Canada in 2015-16. A disproportionate number of these inmates are indigenous Manitobans and approximately 70 per cent of them are sitting in remand awaiting trial without access to a host of community support programs that could benefit their lives. If they serve time as sentenced prisoners, the trends over the last decade show that between 30 and 35 per cent of them will be convicted of another offence and be readmitted to provincial custody within two years of leaving jail.

Madam Speaker, real action is required to address these trends, which is why our Throne Speech yesterday outlined a bold strategy to ensure safer communities for all Manitobans. It is also why I was proud to join so many organizations for a reception here at the Legislature this week to proclaim November 19th to the 26th Restorative Justice Week in Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, restorative justice is an integral part of our strategy to reduce crime in our communities. By diverting appropriate individuals to restorative justice programs, we are better able to hold offenders accountable for the harm they have caused their victims, their families and their communities. We are also able to help ensure that offenders get the support they need to avoid cycles of crime and self-destruction in their lives.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to say that we have increased the number of diversions to these programs significantly, from just over 3,000 total in 2016 to being on track to be approximately 5,000 by the end of fiscal year 2017-18. These programs work because they are run by dedicated and passionate community leaders who work very hard to make Manitoba a safer place for everyone.

Madam Speaker, our team in Manitoba Justice partners with several organizations to deliver this programming, and I would like to specifically thank the Salvation Army, Mediation Services, the Manitoba Metis Federation, Onashowewin, Southern Chiefs Organization, St. Theresa Point, Norway House, Fisher River, Hollow Water and MKO for all they do.

I would also like to recognize the Restorative Justice Association of Manitoba, which had its

second annual general meeting this week. They are working hard to foster a culture of open dialogue and collaboration among restorative justice organizations in our province.

Last week, I had the opportunity to visit Cross Lake First Nation, which is taking a leadership role in delivering restorative justice programming for its people. The great work being done in Cross Lake shows that there are opportunities to build further partnerships with indigenous communities to deliver restorative justice programming.

All of the organizations I have highlighted today will be engaging in many important discussions this week about how to work together to ensure our communities are safer for Manitobans.

Madam Speaker, I have said it many times in this House, and I will say it again: the status quo is no longer an option. Restorative justice breaks the status quo by offering innovative solutions to the problems of crime and incarceration in our province. I'm proud that we've made it an important pillar in our strategy to reduce crime and improve outcomes in our criminal justice system.

With that, I want to wish all of these organizations and all Manitobans a happy and productive Restorative Justice Week.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): Restorative justice is an effective and transformative approach in working with those that come into conflict with the law, victims and communities in an inclusive, respectful and meaningful way.

Madam Speaker, I've had the privilege and honour of working within restorative justice in a myriad of capacities, including teaching its origins, which most suggest derive themselves from within traditional approaches to dealing with conflict in a wholesome, safe, respectful and loving way. I'm blessed to see, first-hand, moments of pure healing and beauty. Restorative justice approaches intrinsically create a space for real healing and transformation from traditional punitive approaches to dealing with social problems. Investments in restorative justice approaches inevitably save the government hundreds of thousands of dollars by not having individuals incarcerated.

* (13:40)

Recently, the Pallister government cut the decades-old John Howard Society Restorative

Resolutions program that demonstrated time and time again successful program graduates and consistently produced low recidivism rates. This program was successful because it combined progressive principles with a what-works model to give Manitobans in conflict with the law an effective, supportive alternative to incarceration.

The Pallister government has made cuts across the board to organizations like the John Howard Society and the Elizabeth Fry Society, who are now struggling to maintain key services. Cuts to restorative justice programming disproportionately impact on indigenous peoples the most, leading to an ever increasing number of individuals incarcerated and growing exponentially the number—or the percentage of indigenous peoples incarcerated.

It should be well understood indigenous peoples' conflict with the law is predicated upon trauma, a cycle of poverty, homelessness, mental health issues, addictions, child welfare, the Indian residential school system and cultural dislocation. Restorative justice approaches fundamentally seek to understand these issues and facilitate a deeper understanding with participants on how to address or deal with these issues, fostering transformative, life-changing awareness. Instead of making short-term, irresponsible cuts that only benefit the bottom line, this Pallister government must look to the long-term value of restorative justice initiatives and approaches.

And with that, Madam Speaker, I say—I wish everyone a happy Restorative Justice Week.

Miigwech.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): Madam Speaker, I ask for leave to speak in response to the minister's statement.

Madam Speaker: Does the member have leave to respond to the statement? *[Agreed]*

Ms. Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, innovation in our criminal justice system has always been a passion of mine. This is why I'm honoured to rise today and speak to Restorative Justice Week.

Restorative justice is an approach that allows for poor decisions, including criminal activity, to be worked through to heal the relationships between people and communities. It emphasizes healing and accountability and the involvement of the community members to create a healthy and safe environment for all.

I was disappointed during yesterday's Throne Speech when we heard this government's plan for our justice system involved being tough on crime and tough on what causes crime. Because, Madam Speaker, this is not the answer. The government needs to be smart on crime. We need restorative programs such as youth justice committees, yet no action has been taken. We need programs like the John Howard Society and the Elizabeth Fry association, programs like residential bail programs and the seniors SafetyAid program, yet this government continues to cut funding to these justice programs that have consistently good outcomes.

Madam Speaker, we've waited a year and a half and we're still waiting for an addiction and mental health strategy, yet many people suffering from these issues still only find assistance within our justice system. I hope that the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Stefanson) realizes how imperative it is that we utilize and build the capacity for those organizations that are successfully diverting offenders.

Madam Speaker, in closing, I just also wanted to thank the Association of Manitoba Book Publishers for joining us today at the Legislative Building and for gifting us MLAs with books. I received one titled *Redemption*, and it's made up of stories of hope, resilience and life after gangs. I'm looking forward to reading it and learning even more about our justice system here in Manitoba.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Transcona Nationals Football Club

Mr. Blair Yakimoski (Transcona): I am pleased and honoured to rise here during Grey Cup week and what appears to be football day here in—the Manitoba Legislature and acknowledge the Transcona Nationals Football Club which has been a sport staple in Transcona for over 100 years.

Run by volunteer parents and community members, the club is home to football players aged seven to 22, cheerleaders aged seven to 14 and is committed in providing the Transcona youth an opportunity to participate in a sport they love.

Perseverance, commitment, tenacity, dedication: this is what you learn when you join the Nationals. Whether you are a player, coach or family member cheering, these are all traits that are instilled in you. I speak from experience, as I'm proud to say that

I was a member that played for that team back in '77 through '79.

Although the start of the year was uncertain for the club, due to declining registration over the last few years, it didn't stop them. And with the help from the board and the Transcona community they raised awareness and financial support and they were able to field five teams for this year's season.

And, oh, what a season. The atoms played first in their—placed first in their division where their continued fight in the playoffs took them to the championship game where they lost by a single point. The—*[interjection]*—I know—the intensity of the 9- and 10-year-old players was astounding and I was proud of them and their fight to the end was commendable.

The major team was undefeated all season and for the second year in a row made it to the championship game. And although it was a good game, the Nationals played as a cohesive unit and their belief in each other and determination allowed them to achieve what my team, alas, could not 40 years ago. They can now be referred to as champions. It was a great, memorable moment they will carry throughout their lives.

Nationals players learn the importance of respect, discipline and, along the way, create friendship and become a family. This year wasn't any different; you saw and felt that every time a National player entered the field.

I would like to congratulate—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave for the member to conclude his statement? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Yakimoski: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to congratulate the Nationals Football Club, its board of directors, players and their families for an outstanding 2017 series—season.

Madam Speaker, I would ask for leave to include names of the attendees and players from that 2017 championship team and, if so inclined, to include the names from my team of the Transcona Nationals some 40 years ago.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave of the House to include those names in Hansard? *[Agreed]*

Transcona Nationals Football Club, Attendees: Logan Anderson, Barry Berard, Solomon Bond, Tyler Bowering, Ange Briand, Darin Demchuk, Joshua Ducharme, Krista Ducharme, Nichole Forbes, Zane Forbes, Keiran Hamlin, Colin Horby, Liz Hurd, Sydney Hurd, Brad Klassen, Zach Klassen, Billie Kwaitek, Brighton Kwaitek, Brendan Okaley, Travis Paskaruk, Treasure Prodan, Steven Rawluk, Khayden Riberdy, Kyle Shaw, Kris Scoron, Austin Seymour, Charity Seymour, Dakota Spence, Christine Stanley, Tyler Stanley, Adam Swanson, Caleb Welling, Corbin Welling, Sherry Welling, Dalton Yerex.

Transcona Nationals, Manitoba Major Junior Football League Champions, 2017: Alex Adamopoulos, Braden Bordynuik, Tyler Bowering, Steven Boyle, Michael Brennan, Drenin Busch, Noel Davis, Darin Demchuk, Chris Giesbrecht, Zachary Goring, Bryson Hansey, Isaac Henry, Derrick Hrabarchuk, Ange-Briand Iradukunda, Dustin Jackson, Nolan Jackson, Sam Johnston, Bradley Klassen, Zach Klassen, Braden Kowalski, Jonathan Kreig, Bryson McNeil, Elvis Mingano, Taj Moryl, Nura Muhindu, Brendan Okaley, Chris Otsi, Joshua Pangman, TJ Prodon, Michael Rawluk, Steven Rawluk, William Reimer, Jordan Reynolds, Rajwinder Sarkaria, Kyle Shaw, Zak Sirak, Dakota Spence, Adam Swanson, Zach Thomson, Byron Van Diyk, Cody Van Diyk, Brady Welburn, Dalton Yerex. Coaches: Logan Anderson, Barry Berard, Kristin Berard, Shawna Crozier, Kelsey Lacroix, Hope Minsky, Brynn Hupe, Travis Paskaruk, Dale Paskaruk, Matthew Proskurnik, Kris Scoran, Tyler Waldbauer.

Transcona Nationals, 1978 Team: Maury Altomare, Dave Angus, Les Barrett, Glenn Bruce, Michael Bruenig, Rob Buck, Barry Campbell, Rob Clay, Dan Denesiuk, Steve Dolyniuk, Greg Helbren, Harvey Hirschfield, Tim Hunt, Roger Jameson, Olaf Juergensen, Mitch Kiesman, Lawrence Leibert, Don Lester, Doug McKay, Barry Rebeck, Jim Rybachuk, Don Sedor, Michael Schoofs, Scott Stevens, Dave Tesarski, Dave Wegner, Brad Wilgosh, Glen Yachison, Blair Yakimoski, Greg Yaremko. Coaches: Greg Cann, Ron Collins, Dennis Galbraith, Phil Rizzuto. President: Bert Angus.

Maroons Football

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): Madam Speaker, Daniel McIntyre Collegiate Institute—[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Swan: —has a long tradition of excellent academics, performing arts and athletics. No high school in Winnipeg has won more football championships than DMCI, although its football program had not had much success for four decades. In fact, the team folded in the late 1990s.

About 10 years ago, a group of alumni and local business owners got together to rejuvenate Maroons football. With the support of the school and the community and the creation of the Valour Patriots junior football program, the Maroons took the field once again.

The Maroons opened the 2017 season with a 42-16 victory over West End rival Tec Voc in the Minto Bowl. Then they ran the table by winning the next six games, including a tough 21-9 win over Kenora Beaver Brae to clinch first place.

The Maroons beat the scrappy St. John's Tigers 28-22 in the quarterfinals, and then hammered the Brandon Crocus Plains Plainsmen 45-9 to advance to the Canad Inns Bowl against the Kildonan-East Reivers.

It was -12° for the championship game at Investors Group Field. The Maroons held a narrow 1-0 lead late in the first half when quarterback Kieran Benson threw to Marcus Jordan for a 15-yard touchdown. After the defence forced a fumble early in the third quarter, Benson threw to Ethan Schnerch for a major and scored again on a one-yard sneak in the fourth. Rig Moulebou closed out a spectacular 225-yard night with a long run to make it a 30-0 final score.

The Maroons' perfect 10 and 0 season is a source of pride for the school and the community. Equally important, these young men have learned a lot about themselves and each other and the value of hard work: lessons that will serve them well in life. Some of their key players had a chance to play elsewhere but chose to stay with their friends in their community, and the faces of this team reflect the wonderful diversity of the West End.

So, colleagues, please join me in congratulating the 2017 Centennial Trophy champion DMCI Maroons.

And Madam Speaker, I would ask for leave to include the names of coaches, players and managers in the permanent legislative record of Manitoba.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave to include those names in Hansard? [Agreed]

Daniel McIntyre Collegiate Institute Maroons. Head Coach: John St. Cyr. Assistant Coaches: Mike Estrada, Ryan Finlay, Caley King, Darrell Mazur, Errol McKay. Managers: Akshay Adhar, Bella Catlin, Leannra Harper, Asia Weasel Head, Kiana Tahimic, Chris Walker. Players: Logan Arsenault, Mark Jordan Agustin, Jhon Carlos Alimario, Donovan Bateman, Kieran Benson, Jairo Buchting-Barrrios, Xander Cani, J.R. DeChavez, Lee Duong, Dee Eh, Cole Fontaine, L.J. Garcia, Rayden Hastings, Paw Hsaw, Aung Htoo, Marcus Jordan, Nathaniel King-Wilson, David Landicho, Trong Le, Josef Merete, Evan Mesfin, Rig Moulebou, Ryley Redsky, Jerzy Roddick, Rafiki Rungo, Samtra Samtra, Ethan Schnerch, Ethan Twovoice, Harold Zamora.

Alain Nadeau

Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye): I rise in this House today to congratulate Alain Nadeau who has been named the Volunteer Fire Chief of the Year by the Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs for his outstanding service in the Rural Municipality of La Broquerie.

In recognition of his exceptional work, Alain was flown to Vancouver, where he received the award. In addition to the award, \$3,000 was donated in his name to the Canadian Fallen Firefighters Foundation in Ottawa.

* (13:50)

Alain has been a firefighter for nearly 40 years, the last 12 of which he has served as fire chief of the La Broquerie fire department. In addition, he is also the Eastman Mutual Aid district fire co-ordinator, representing 17 fire halls in southeastern Manitoba.

As a lifelong farmer and firefighter, Alain knows the importance of access to emergency services in rural areas. STARS is one such service. He has seen it in action and knows the difference that STARS makes. In 2016, Alain accepted the STARS Rescue on the Island challenge, a fundraiser that drops community leaders on a remote island and tasks them with raising \$50,000 for STARS Manitoba before they can be rescued. Impressively, he raised more than \$72,000. This charitable and ambitious effort exemplifies the kindness and hard-working spirit Manitobans are 'proun' to be known for.

I have known Alain for several years and his dedication to public service is truly inspirational. Such compassion and desire to give back to one's community deserves recognition.

Madam Speaker, on behalf of all Manitobans, I would once again like to congratulate Alain Nadeau for being named Volunteer Fire Chief of the Year—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave for the member to conclude his statement? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Smook: —named Volunteer Fire Chief of the Year and for his outstanding contributions to La Broquerie and the province of Manitoba. I would ask all my colleagues in this Legislature to join me in congratulating Alain.

Thank you.

Disability Employment Awareness Month

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Logan): The current employment rate for citizens with disabilities is 17.9 per cent. However, once hired, employers have a 72 per cent retention rate for citizens with disabilities. Studies have shown that 90 per cent of people with disabilities can work just as productively or even more so than their colleagues.

In the month of October, we celebrated Disability Employment Awareness Month, and as part of the celebration, I was invited to Take Your MLA to Work Day.

We take this time to recognize the barriers that people with disabilities face in the workplace. Take Your MLA to Work Day celebrates the contributions that Manitobans with disabilities are making and are capable of making to healthy, productive and inclusive workforces in Manitoba.

In honour of Disability Employment Awareness Month, I have invited Scott Coates, rehabilitation case manager at Canada Pension Plan Disability. He was supported by the Canadian Paraplegic Association of Manitoba, an organization that works every day to ensure that people with disabilities are living a life that meets their potential and ensure that employers are providing inclusive workplaces. It was inspiring to hear Scott's story and learn about the remarkable recovery he has made after the accident and to witness the meaningful life he now lives.

This year alone the Paraplegic Association of Manitoba is providing services to 1,374 members whom, similarly to Scott, are facing—are being assisted with attaining employment opportunities and living a productive, meaningful life. The Canadian Paraplegic Association's employment

rate is twenty-three point–25.3 per cent, which 10.2 per cent than the national average of employed people with disabilities.

I invite my colleagues to welcoming Scott Coates and in–and please join me in thanking Ron Burky, Laurence Haien and the Canadian Paraplegic Association of Manitoba for their valuable commitment in promoting and enhancing support for employment in Manitoba with people–for people with disabilities. You are invaluable–

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

November

Mr. Brad Michaleski (Dauphin): Men face some very serious health issues. It's predicted that prostate cancer rates will double in the next 15 years, and testicular cancer rates have already doubled in the last 50 years. Three quarters of suicides are men, and more than 500,000 men take their own life every year, amounting to nearly one man every minute.

Our fathers, partners, brothers and friends are facing health issues that many cannot visibly see or are aware of. This is why, in the month of November, many Manitobans take part in a campaign known as Movember, or No-Shave November.

The campaign's major visible symbol is the growth of one's moustache to remind those around us of the health issues facing men while focusing on the three areas of prostate cancer, testicular cancer, as well as depression and high rates of suicide. Over 325,000 people in 21 countries have registered to raise money and create awareness this year by growing a moustache, as well as a newer initiative known as Move for Movember. Move for Movember logs activity and encourages people of all genders to pledge being active for a certain number of hours while raising funds. In 2016, over \$77 million was raised globally, and this year it is expected to be even higher.

For men in Manitoba, prostate cancer is the most frequently diagnosed type of cancer. According to the Canadian Cancer Society, in 2016 an estimated 710 Manitoba men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer.

I'd like to thank all Manitobans who donated to supporting those affected by prostate cancer, testicular cancer and mental health issues and I congratulate all those who are participating in this crucial campaign. Thank you.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: Prior to oral questions, we have some guests that I would like to introduce to you and they are in the public gallery.

We have with us Mr. Jim Scott, mayor for the town of The Pas, who is the guest of the honourable member for The Pas (Ms. Lathlin).

Also in the public gallery we have 11 grade K to 5 homeschool students under the direction of Erin Trudeau and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine).

And also in the public gallery from Marble Ridge and Broad Valley colony schools we have 11 grade 9 and 10 students under the direction of Tim Bayette and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for the Interlake.

On behalf of all members here, we welcome all of you to the Manitoba Legislature.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Changes to Health Care Request to Reverse

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): It's my first opportunity to do so in the House; I would like to acknowledge the loss of Corporal Nolan Caribou in this past week here in Manitoba. Thoughts go out to his family, and also to the people he served with both here in the city and in his training exercises in CFB Shilo. I want to say that people who serve in our country's, you know, defence and Armed Forces deserve the utmost respect, recognition and deference from us as public officials.

For the past 20 months we have seen a Premier (Mr. Pallister) who refuses to listen. People have been raising their voices and saying that the cuts to health care are not the direction that they want to see our province go on. We've heard that the reductions to municipal funding that will impact those who ride the bus in our province are going to hurt people, and people are speaking out against those things.

And yet, rather than taking the time to listen, the Premier continues to plow full stream–full steam ahead with his project of cutting essential public services and jobs that many people in our province rely on.

I would ask to the Premier (Mr. Pallister): When will he start listening to Manitobans and reverse these harmful cuts to the health care that Manitobans rely on?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): Certainly, on behalf of our caucus, and I think all members of this Legislature and all Manitobans, we also keep Mr. Caribou's family in our hearts.

* (14:00)

It's a tremendous sacrifice to serve one's country. It's a tremendous sacrifice to leave one's family, to know that you might be doing so in a way that could put you in harm.

We are all here because we have a democratic system that allows us to speak and to question and to voice our opinion and we are all here because people like that brave young man offered to serve our country.

Thank you Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Kinew: For the past year, all year, Manitobans have been objecting to the cuts to the health-care system in our province, whether it's people in Winnipeg saying they don't understand how they will be seen more quickly when they have to drive further or will be served by fewer emergency rooms or whether it's the people in constituencies like Arthur-Virden or Dauphin who are organizing to protest the planned closures of EMS stations in their constituencies.

Manitobans are fair-minded people. They gave this government a chance, but now they're starting to change their minds about that thing, and they disagree with the health-care cuts that are being proposed by this Premier.

What's more, the Premier doesn't appear able to collaborate with other levels of government. We only see the deteriorating relationship with the City of Winnipeg.

So I'd ask the Premier: When will he listen to Manitobans, who are asking for their health care to be protected and for a collaborative approach with municipalities, when will he reverse his plan for cuts?

Mr. Goertzen: Well, Madam Speaker, respectfully, the member opposite struggles with collaboration

within his own caucus. But beyond that this is an opposition party—the two opposition Health critics and now the new Leader of the Opposition—who continue to spread misinformation about the health-care system.

He continues to not tell Manitobans that there is a record investment in health care this year under this government. Four hundred and fifty new-million dollars have been added to the health-care budget.

Now, if it was all just about spending, things would've been corrected long ago. Of course, it's not just about that. We have to do things better. So we are investing, on one hand, a record level, but also listening to experts to do things better in the health-care system, ultimately to help patients, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Kinew: It appears that the Premier will not listen to those who say that the plan to close three emergency rooms in Winnipeg is wrong, that the plan to cut physiotherapy is wrong, that the plan to close the 18 rural EMS stations is wrong.

It appears that they're only willing to listen to the consultants like the, you know, Deloitte folks who were paid \$150,000 to write this Throne Speech, like the \$750,000 report—that was still kept secret at this point, actually, I would add—commissioned from KPMG on the health-care system.

Maybe this is why the head of the chamber of commerce, Loren Remillard, got up yesterday and said that this government's agenda is just an accounting exercise. That is no surprise to Manitobans who see a government that has lost their compassion. It only seems to care about the money and doesn't seem to care about the health care and services that Manitobans rely on.

So I'd ask again: Will the Premier finally start to listen to Manitobans and reverse his harmful plan for cuts?

Mr. Goertzen: Madam Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition only seems to be concerned about trying to falsely scare Manitobans.

He stood in this House more than a week ago and he talked about Deer Lodge, and he said that things were—going to be less service at Deer Lodge. Well, last week we were pleased to announce new behavioural-care beds at Deer Lodge, 11 new

behavioural-care beds at Deer Lodge, Madam Speaker.

Opposite to what the member opposite said, of course, the health-care wait times—I'll use HSC ER—continue to go down. On November 18th the wait-time average was 45 minutes; it was 50 minutes on November 19th; and 1.1 hours November 20. Those are the lowest wait times at the Health Sciences Centre emergency room in more than two years, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, on a new question.

Public Transit Services Municipal Funding Agreement

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Won't listen to Manitobans and only cherry-pick the statistics: that's the agenda laid out by this government.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: So, the harm that will be done to people who rely on the bus in our province will be deep. We know that as a result—a direct result—of this Premier's (Mr. Pallister) cuts to transit that those who ride the bus in Winnipeg will now pay 25 cents more per ride, that the bus pass—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: —on a monthly basis, will be in the area of \$100 a month and that, on top of that, 23 bus routes will be reduced in the city of Winnipeg.

This is at direct odds with any sort of interest in trying to alleviate poverty, to open up access to employment. This is at odds with any sort of health plan which would improve access to fresh, healthy food, at odds with a climate strategy.

When will this government get its act together and start to collaborate better with municipal leaders in our province?

Hon. Jeff Wharton (Minister of Municipal Relations): I'd like to thank the member opposite for the question.

I'd also like to extend a welcome to mayor from The Pas, Jim Scott, as well, for joining us in the House today. I'm looking forward to seeing Mr. Scott in AMM next week in Brandon, so welcome, look forward to seeing you there.

Madam Speaker, funding for Winnipeg Transit in Budget 2017 has maintained amongst the most generous levels of operating funding found anywhere in Canada since 2016. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order. Order.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, on a supplementary question.

Mr. Kinew: It's no surprise that this Premier and his government thinks that a \$10-million cut is generous. That is entirely in keeping with their approach to reducing services, laying people off and handing down cuts to other levels of government, whether that be municipalities or whether that be school boards in our province.

Again: 25 per cent increase—or 25-cent increase on fares for the low-income people who rely on bus service to go grocery shopping; \$100-a-month bus pass for the seniors in our communities who rely on the bus to stay active and to have rich, meaningful lives; reduction in 23 bus routes in the city for those who want to make the green choice and start to commute to work; it's clear that this government's agenda thus far has been a failure for municipalities in our province.

When will this government change course and come to the table with new investments for transit province-wide?

Mr. Wharton: Again, I'll reiterate the fact that funding levels provided in 2016, which is at the same amount that it was provided in 2017, Madam Speaker, through the new unconditional grant is nearly \$3 million more funding than the NDP provided in their term in 2015.

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

Mr. Kinew: You know, we have guests in the gallery today who are very concerned with transit, who have taken to advocating under the banner of Functional Transit. They're echoing the same thing that the mayor of Winnipeg says, which is that the 50-50 transit arrangement should be restored. There's members in the gallery who are of the transit union, those who drive the buses that people in our city rely on. They're all here to call on this government to reverse course and come to the table with real investments in transit services so that we can have healthier Manitobans, we could have easier access to employment and that people can have access to fresh, healthy food in our city.

When will this government change course, stop the cuts, stop downloading on municipalities and start to make real investments beginning with the restoration of the 50-50 funding agreement for transit in our province?

Mr. Wharton: Madam Speaker, our government is a massive supporter of public transit. The members opposite know that. They just refuse to understand it.

We are continuing to make investments not only in transit, but the operating budget for the City of Winnipeg and all municipalities, where they have fair say, fair say to ensure that that money is spent to the best, best and reasonable fact for Winnipeggers and municipalities throughout Manitoba.

*(14:10)

And I just have a quote here that I'd like to get on the record from the member from Elmwood. Two weeks ago he said in this House, and I quote: We'll just off-load a half a million dollars' worth of expenditures of provincial government off to a city who, and I quote, can't even run a city well, Madam Speaker.

Why doesn't the member from Elmwood and the NDP get on board, support the City of Winnipeg?

Manitoba Nurses American Recruitment

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): I think all members of this House can be proud of many things we produce in Manitoba that we're very pleased to export to the United States. We're very proud of exporting things like clean hydro power, the best buses in the world—manufactured right here in Winnipeg, agricultural products including livestock, farm machinery and grain-handling equipment, and pharmaceuticals.

But is the Minister of Health proud that his government is now exporting nurses?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): Well, Madam Speaker, I am very proud that this government is doing the things that the former government, the NDP, the very government that the member opposite sat in Cabinet— it is was doing the sort of things to make the health-care system better.

There have been reports, legions of reports by experts who said that things in Manitoba had to change. There have been many, many experts who pleaded with the former government—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Goertzen: —to change the system, including health-care professionals who said the health-care system was broken and it needed to change.

This government has the courage to make that change happen. He can sit on the sidelines and throw rocks at every change all he wants. I'm proud we're making the changes happen.

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

Mr. Swan: Last week, Madam Speaker, recruiters from Sanford Health, an American health-care corporation, set up a career fair in Winnipeg looking to hire nurses. In an interview, Sanford Health representative Tyler Steinward *[phonetic]* says his team has never before come to Canada, let alone Winnipeg, to hire nurses. But after learning about the changes to Manitoba's health-care system, they brought their career fair north looking to fill at least 300 jobs.

Just how many Manitoba nurses does this minister plan to export to the United States?

Mr. Goertzen: And I wonder how many people the member for Minto, when he was in Cabinet, was satisfied having languishing in an emergency room. Well, we know the answer was hundreds of thousands and not only hundreds of thousands of people, but they waited hundreds of thousands of hours, more than 600,000 hours a year they would wait in an emergency room for service. Nobody in the NDP ever said anything about that then. They were quiet in the land, well, until the rebellion, then they spoke out about a bunch—a whole bunch of things, Madam Speaker.

But up until that point they didn't say anything. Even during the rebellion the issue wasn't about trying to help patients. It wasn't about making the health-care system better. It was all about their own desire to hang onto government. He's speaking up a little bit too late now, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Swan: You know, Madam Speaker, I thought this minister would actually take it very seriously that an American health-care corporation's looking to hire away Manitoba nurses.

Mr. Steinward *[phonetic]* of Sanford Health said, we've heard there's some difficulties here with

the nursing, and that's why his company's come up here for the first time ever to hire nurses away from Manitoba.

We've heard from nurses across this province. They're worried about their future here. We've also heard from nurses across Manitoba who've not forgotten a generation ago that hundreds of nurses had to leave this province to find work in the US.

How many nurses does this Minister of Health plan to send out of their province to the United States?

Mr. Goertzen: And how many people had to leave an emergency room because they couldn't get service when the former government was in power, Madam Speaker? They'd walk in. They'd sit there. The TV would be on. They'd watch TV, one show, another show, *Desperate Housewives*, another show. Hours would go by and they never got called for service.

Now that there are changes that are happening, happening because an expert has said that it needed to happen, we've had the courage to make those changes. As a result, wait times are going down—early days, more work to do. But we're satisfied that at least change is happening and we're going to make things better, Madam Speaker.

He can sit up all night trying to find ways to scare people; I'll sit up all night trying to find a way to better the system, Madam Speaker.

Public Service Workers Employment Loss Concerns

Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview): Listen, if that's the Health Minister's solution, we'd like him to get a lot more sleep, to be honest with you.

The government's Throne Speech was long on rhetoric and short on details, but one thing was made—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Allum: —crystal clear yesterday, and that's simply that there are more cuts on the horizon for public services and the public servants who deliver them. This is a Premier (Mr. Pallister) who sits in the—in his office and orders job losses for public servants. He's already frozen their wages and then he pockets a 20 per cent raise for himself.

The families of public servants deserve some answers: How many more job losses will there be and when will those families know the bad news?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance): Well one thing's for sure, Madam Speaker, we know that the theme over there today is on fear. The theme today remains on building a better Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, I would like to disabuse that member of the notion; he constantly refers to some kind of a pay hike which his party gave themselves.

But we have been clear; we've led by example. We've taken a voluntary pay cut for the remainder of this term.

If the member is not taking that pay cut, if members of his caucus are not taking it, they should disclose that to Manitobans.

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

Mr. Allum: We'd like some clarity from the Finance Minister, because this is a very serious question.

In the Throne Speech yesterday and then in comments made by the Premier at his press conference earlier that morning, he said quite clearly that there are going to be more job losses in the public servants. Some of that will come through retirements, some will come through attrition, others will simply—people will lose their jobs and they'll be fired.

So what we're asking today is for the Finance Minister to come clean with the people of Manitoba: Will he tell us now how many people are going to lose their jobs and when will he announce it?

Mr. Friesen: I thank the member for the question. Every time he lands on fear, we still land on hope.

The member's referring to this government's transformation strategy which we outlined yesterday in the Throne Speech. Now, that member should not confuse that initiative with the overall goal that we disclosed to Manitobans some time ago about shaping the civil service over time, using the natural attrition that occurs within our system already through retirements and through resignations. But we are clearly committed to a professional and autonomous civil service, revitalizing our civil service in Manitoba to attract the best and the brightest and to retain them here for the service of Manitobans.

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

Mr. Allum: The Finance Minister wants to call it a transformation strategy; it's actually a Transylvania

strategy, because what he's attempting to do is bleed the public service dry here in Manitoba. So I want to be crystal clear on this point, and the Finance Minister, I want him to get up and simply answer the question.

How many more job losses will there be in Manitoba and when will he let the families know—of public servants—when mom or dad is going to be out of a job here in Manitoba? *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Friesen: Well, Madam Speaker, we reject the politics of doom and gloom of the member for Fort Garry-Riverview.

We're talking about a transformation strategy that is both transforming the work that public sector servants do and the culture of the public service. It relies on three things, as was outlined yesterday: the first is a renewed focus on citizens, the second is harnessing the talent that exists within our civil service and the third is on fostering innovation.

Where that member sees all doom and gloom, we see hope and optimism for a better day for all Manitobans.

* (14:20)

Indigenous Children in Care Culturally Appropriate Placements

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): Yesterday the government announced they would be changing how foster parents can transition to guardianship of children in care.

We know there are an unacceptable number of children in care and that an overwhelming percentage of them are indigenous. The TRC has called for meaningful change in child welfare and that the placement of indigenous children into culturally appropriate and safe care, whether temporary or permanent, must be a priority.

How will the minister ensure that indigenous children have access to culturally appropriate and safe permanent guardianship?

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Families): Ensuring that children in care are taken care of really is a priority for this government. We outlined a reform plan that was well overdue. We know that there was over 85 per cent increase in the amount of children in care and over 73 per cent increase in the days in care under the former NDP administration.

Where they failed, we're going to get it right. We're going to work with indigenous communities to develop a system where we have permanence, where you have lifelong connections with individuals when you can't reunite parents with their children in a way that's safe. We want to work with indigenous communities to address this issue.

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

Indigenous Child Welfare Agencies

Ms. Fontaine: This government and the former government heard from indigenous communities that partnerships with indigenous agencies, families and community members are needed to ensure that children in care are protected.

The TRC affirmed indigenous governments have the right to establish and maintain their own child care—welfare agencies. The government has committed to customary care models, supporting communities to find solutions for families and use traditional tools to support children.

Will the minister commit today to keep guardianship the responsibility of indigenous agencies and their communities?

Mr. Fielding: We want and we introduced a reform package here in the Province of Manitoba, and I'll say that's leading the nation, I think, in terms of reform for individuals because we want to build a capacity. We want parents, we want caregivers to provide a meaningful care place for individuals. We know that having 60 per cent of the wards of Child and Family Services where the government is the mom and dad is unacceptable trend.

We want to work with indigenous communities. We want to make sure that cultural appropriate language and experience and traditions are a part of that, and that's why part of our plan is to introduce customary care arrangements. We're working with indigenous communities to make sure we get it right.

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

Consent for Permanent Guardianships

Ms. Fontaine: To move forward in reconciliation, Manitoba must definitively ensure indigenous communities have autonomy to protect their children and preserve their cultural values, traditional—traditions and languages. This means more than just consultation with communities, but rather total

consent of communities and their governments to guardianship applications. Permanent guardianships cannot be a step backwards for our children.

Will the minister commit to receiving consent of indigenous communities before permanent guardianships are legislated or authorized?

Mr. Fielding: After 17 years, the NDP, where the numbers skyrocketed of the amount of children in care—gone up by over 85 per cent—we needed a reform package that's in place. We took our time. We worked in indigenous communities. Our work is not yet done.

We will continue to work with indigenous communities to make sure children are appropriately taken care of or, if that's not possible, with reunification with parents through things like family group conferencing that the evidence suggests will reunite parents upwards of 70 per cent of the time. We're going to get things right whether through customary care and other avenues.

That's something the former government didn't do or, in fact, didn't get to in their last administration.

We've introduced legislation, a part of our essence, where over 65 per cent of the Phoenix Sinclair recommendations are answered.

Rural ER Services Government Intention

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Health care is important to Manitobans.

High-functioning emergency services in rural Manitoba face closure because the PCs are following a failed NDP strategy.

I table today 1,000 signatures on a petition asking for the government to reverse its decision to close emergency medical services in Grandview, Rosburn and many other communities are also affected. These decisions are based on bad data, old data, and break the government's promise to spare front-line services.

Will the Premier (Mr. Pallister) keep his promise, or will he betray rural Manitobans by taking away critical health services from communities like Grandview and Rosburn?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): Madam Speaker, certainly we know that the EMS system throughout Manitoba, but particularly in rural Manitoba, is a lifeline for those who live in rural Manitoba. The

recommendations of the Toews report, which was commissioned by the NDP government, set out a standard that there should be service within 30 minutes from those who are getting called.

We, of course, would like it to be even better than that, Madam Speaker, but that requires full-time paramedics. It's one of the reasons why we were pleased to announce 29 new full-time paramedics. That was also again discussed yesterday in the Throne Speech, things that the member opposite voted against.

You need paramedics to get that service. We're investing in paramedics, we're hiring paramedics, and we're employing paramedics for exactly that reason, Madam Speaker.

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

Mental Health Services Suicide Prevention Treatment

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Yes, health care is important, yet for at least a decade under NDP and PC governments Manitobans who are suicidal and who are going to emergency rooms or crisis centres, but not getting the help they need, end up taking their own lives.

Three days ago, Dr. James Bolton, medical director of the WRHA Crisis Response Centre, talked of the situation under the Premier's watch, and he said the treatment we have for suicidal people is abysmal. There is no suicide-specific treatment in Manitoba.

Why does the Premier always make excuses and blame others instead of acting, himself, as a top priority to deliver suicide-specific prevention—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): Well, Madam Speaker, we know that any suicide, regardless of where it happens in Manitoba, is a tragedy, is a lost life. It is lost hope. It is a lost loved one for that family.

Yesterday, in the Throne Speech we committed to look at peer support for mental health in emergency rooms. It's something that's been looked at in other jurisdictions with some success. We're reviewing proposals when it comes to peer support for mental health in emergency rooms.

We also have the ASIST program for suicide prevention, which is offered through Klinik for—

Klinic with a K—and last week, I was pleased to provide additional support for that suicide intervention program for Youth for Christ on Main Street.

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

Poverty Reduction Government Plan

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Health is important, and poverty is a root cause of many health issues. Yesterday, Campaign 2000 reported that Manitoba has the highest provincial rate of child poverty. In 1992, the PC government rolled back the social assistance levels to 1986 rates, and PC and NDP governments in the years since have essentially left it there.

Since being elected, the Premier (Mr. Pallister) and his Cabinet changed the balanced budget law to give themselves a 20 per cent raise. Their changes to the basic exemption meant top earners got the biggest breaks.

Why has this government delayed, delayed and delayed some more in introducing a poverty reduction plan? Is this yet another broken promise?

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Families): Addressing poverty is an issue this government takes very seriously. We know that the previous NDP government got it all wrong. In fact, they were leading the nation in terms of child poverty for many, many years, and that's why we've taken some concrete action in terms of the amount of people that have access to the Rent Assist program. Over 2,200 more people are supported under the Rent Assist program.

We've also reduced the basic—we've also changed things in terms of the basic personal exemption, where over 2,100 individuals are off the tax rolls altogether.

These are some of the items that we think will help address people and put more money in people's pockets.

*(14:30)

Agriculture Conference Manitoba Attends Agritechnica

Mr. Alan Lagimodiere (Selkirk): What a team. Madam Speaker, our government is proud to work proactively on fostering trade relationships and

exploring opportunities to grow business between Manitoba and the European market.

Can the Minister of Agriculture update this House on Manitoba's recent involvement at Agritechnica and how he was working hard to expand markets for Manitoba's agricultural producers?

Hon. Ralph Eichler (Minister of Agriculture): It was a privilege to represent Manitoba at 'agritechca.' Over 2,830 agribusinesses from 60 countries from around the world exhibited their products to the world. There's over 400,000 people that attended 'agritechca.' They learn about technology, about the latest new innovation. They also learn from one another and how competitive we are on the world market.

I'm pleased to announce that MacDon, one of our local companies, a champion for not only all of Manitoba but on the world, made an announcement about their new office that they're open up in Frankfurt. We're certainly 'plad' to stand with our agribusiness and proud to be part of a government that listens to business.

Churchill Manitoba Need for Strategic Plan

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): Yesterday the nearly 5,000-word Throne Speech failed to mention Churchill, not even once.

According to the government website, the Speech from the Throne summarizes what the government expects to achieve during the session.

Will the Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade acknowledge that yesterday's Throne Speech was just another confirmation when this government looks north, they just don't see Churchill's 900 or so residents or the thousands of people who depend on the northern rail line?

Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade): Well, Madam Speaker, I'm certainly glad the member from Flin Flon wants to talk about the North and our Look North strategy that consulted widely across the North.

There is renewed optimism in the mining industry, and I think the first sign of that came when the NDP were booted out of government.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Pedersen: This government will continue to work with all the communities across the North,

including Churchill, to renew the optimism that should—that is there and that was never there with the NDP government.

We will work with all people across the North.

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

Mr. Lindsey: The federal government has taken at least some kind of action against OmniTRAX, filing an \$18.8-million lawsuit. When pressed on the matter, the Minister for Infrastructure refused to answer in kind.

According to the Free Press, he repeatedly refused to say whether the Province considers Churchill a strategic asset. We do, Madam Speaker. Churchill is a strategic asset for Manitoba and for all of Canada.

Will this government at least file its own lawsuit to recover the \$20 million given to OmniTRAX under the 2008 agreement? *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pedersen: Well, Madam Speaker, that would be the \$20 million that the NDP gave to OmniTRAX. Look where that investment got them.

Madam Speaker, we'll continue to work with all communities, including Churchill, across the North. Our Look North strategy task force report very 'sustinctly' reminded everyone that there is true potential all across the North.

We will work in partnership with our northern communities to rebuild the North where the NDP failed.

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

Mr. Lindsey: Last week 100 Churchill residents gathered to share concerns about rising food costs and gasoline prices, as well as unemployment. According to Mayor Mike Spence, and I quote: This is the largest challenge we've ever faced. Unquote.

Madam Speaker, when Churchill is in its greatest time of need, will this government put aside politics and do what must be done: establish a fuel subsidy to offset northern gas and food prices, develop a jobs plan for all of northern Manitoba and join with northern communities to quickly transfer ownership of the rail line and re-open the Port of Churchill?

Mr. Pedersen: Madam Speaker, when the rail line went down towards Churchill in the spring we were the—this government was the first ones on the scene in the community. We helped establish fuel supplies, whether that be propane, whether that be fuel, gasoline, diesel fuel and aviation fuel. We've worked with the community of Churchill to make sure there was food supplies in there when the federal government sat back and did absolutely nothing.

The Port of Churchill and the rail line is a federally constituted duty, and we continue to ask the federal government to step up to the plate and do what they should be doing.

Funding for Child-Care Spaces Federal Bilateral Agreement

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): Manitoba was set to gain \$50 million this year to immediately put shovels in the ground and increase the number of available child-care spaces. Instead, the minister has done absolutely nothing to advance a bilateral agreement with the federal government that would be the first time our province received target child-care funding in 10 years.

A Throne Speech has come and gone without any announcement that this minister has finally signed on. Instead we got a flimsy strategy that had no real commitments, zero funding. He's put Manitobans almost a year behind. It might cost us millions of dollars.

Why hasn't this minister signed the agreement yet?

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Families): And we know what the NDP's record when it comes to child care is: thousands of families left on the child-care 'withs'.

We know the ideology they take into consideration. They lost over 2,700 spots in terms of a home-based child-care system because they're just all about ideology and not results.

This government has a balanced approach towards child care. We're working the federal government. Our plan is the federal minister—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Fielding: —for approval, and once that is approved then we'll be producing lots of child-care spaces here in the province of Manitoba. We encourage them to join our plan. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

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

Mrs. Smith: The white elephant in the Throne Speech was the Minister of Families' weak child-care announcement. A 40-minute speech failed to specify how many new spots or centres would be built, when, or any plans to increase the number of early childhood educators working in the system.

Under this government over 5,000 new families have been added to that registry, but no new spots.

Why hasn't this government signed the agreement? Why is he wasting time bickering with the federal government, or is he just sitting on his hands?

Mr. Fielding: This government is spending over \$170 million on child care, over \$12 million more investment than the former NDP government did.

As the opposition member obviously doesn't like the answer, our plan is with the federal government right now for a decision. I can tell you that we're making investments every day. I can tell you just two or three investments, in fact, that I was at fairly recently.

The YM-YCA at Great-West Life, building blocks in Balmoral: over 100 spots; we were out fairly recently. We were with the member from—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Fielding: —St. Vital fairly recently in terms of Little Saints Learning Centre, where we opened up 48 different spots. And we're also going to be University of Manitoba on a groundbreaking for the university 'manhood' daycare centre for over 32 spots, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

The time for oral questions has expired.

PETITIONS

Rural EMS Services

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Manitoba Legislature.

The background to this petition is as follows:

The provincial government announced a plan to close 18 EMS stations in Manitoba.

The recommendation for the closures was based on a report titled Manitoba EMS System Report, issued in March 2013, that used data from 2011 that's no longer relevant.

* (14:40)

The standard for care for EMS services in Manitoba is a 30-minute response time for 90 per cent of the population, 90 per cent of the time.

The information entitled Information Pack for Rural Municipalities stated in 2012 that the 30-minute standard was reached 95.81 per cent of the time, and 95.52 per cent in 2015-2016.

The statistics show that, by moving to the proposed system, Manitobans will be receiving worse care.

The proposed plan includes the closure of a Grandview EMS station and the building of two new stand-alone EMS stations in Cowan and Gilbert Plains with no provision of a cost estimate.

There is a vacant Manitoba Hydro building in Grandview that was previously used to store large 'equipment,' which could allow for the deployment of ambulances.

In addition to the 39-bed personal-care home in Grandview, the hospital is fully staffed with 18 beds, three full-time doctors, two nurse practitioners and a full complement of support staff including 24-hour diagnostic services.

The Grandview EMS station employs four full-time primary care or intermediate-care paramedics who routinely provide community education, primary and/or intermediate-care support to emergency medical responders and other paramedicine services to assist the staff of Grandview hospital.

The Grandview EMS services 1,500 people within the municipal boundary: Tootinaowaziibeeng First Nation, the southern half of the Duck Mountain Provincial Park and other outlying areas, including the communities of Gilbert Plains and Ashville.

The Grandview ambulance responded to 680 calls in 2014, 571 calls in 2015 and 673 calls in 2016.

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

To urge the Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living to provide an additional

12 primary-care or intermediate-care paramedics to facilitate 24-7 coverage at the Grandview ambulance station.

To urge the Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living to provide a second ambulance vehicle at the Grandview station to allow for deployment to designated geo-positions.

To urge that the Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living make use of the vacant Manitoba Hydro building as a garage for the two ambulance vehicles.

To urge that the Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living install a computer-based system in the ambulance vehicles to facilitate geo-positioning and dynamic and flexible deployment to any area covered in the proposed plan in this region.

Signed by Tannis Lobert, Gerard Belisle, Anne-Marie Belisle and many, many others.

Madam Speaker: In accordance with our rule 133(6), when petitions are read, they are deemed to be received by the House.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Government House Leader): Would you proceed with the address and reply today?

Madam Speaker: It has been announced that the House will consider the reply to the Throne Speech.

THRONE SPEECH (First Day of Debate)

Ms. Janice Morley-Lecomte (Seine River): I move, and seconded by the member for Rossmere (Mr. Micklefield), that the following address be presented to Her Honour The Lieutenant Governor: We, the members of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, thank Your Honour for the gracious speech addressed to us at this Third Session of the 41st Legislature of Manitoba.

Motion presented.

Ms. Morley-Lecomte: I want to begin by quoting the words our Lieutenant Governor spoke yesterday. This is an exciting time marked by a powerful vision of the future and a shared desire to realize our potential. We are part of change and growth which will see our province set the tone for future development and inclusion of all the people who call Manitoba home.

Reconciliation, commitment, change and transparency: words which hold strong meaning and were the underlying theme in the Throne Speech, which was delivered by the Lieutenant Governor yesterday.

Our province has the honour of welcoming newcomers from all corners of the globe and embracing the many cultures of people who have always called Manitoba home. This is what unifies and makes Manitoba strong. The mosaic background has strengthened our province and set the stage for future families and communities to unify and become stronger together. The building of community is the framework for our children and their future.

Manitobans voted in a new government which was handed a tremendous challenge: a huge debt to reduce, finances which needed to be repaired and an economy which needed to be injected with innovation and insight into the future. Madam Speaker, this government had to address a growing debt that was taking over \$1 billion a year from Manitobans' wallets to cover interest on past debt.

Our government had to be diligent on how to address the challenges handed to us. First, our government began by reducing the size of the Cabinet and reducing political staff. Further to keeping our promise, our government has reduced senior management in core government by 15 per cent. This has all been done while keeping true to our word of protecting front-line services.

Through seeking the engagement of our private, public and business sectors, our government began to reach out to the people of Manitoba and seek support and input into how our province can be strong again. Reducing costs to everyone while achieving maximum value for our dollar was important. Being a responsible government requires balance, insight, creativity and the ability to develop the long-term plans which renew and transform our strategic infrastructure.

Our government re-evaluated our failing education system and began the necessary steps to improve math, science and literacy levels of students. Investing in Manitoba's future is investing in the education of our youth; that is why our government evaluated how grants and bursaries are awarded. Expanding the grants and bursaries program and offering them to students when they need it most was one step. Students need money when they are struggling to pay their tuition, cover their basic needs and to alleviate the financial stress which comes with

working various jobs to earn money for school. Students need our support most when they are in school, not when they are earning their income after graduating.

Our government is supporting and encouraging Manitobans to invest in Manitoba. By reducing the number of rules and regulations which can hinder growth and streamlining the process for existing agencies and businesses to get the information and direction they need, employees and employers should not have to struggle through a multitude of paperwork to be able to do their job. Their success is our success as a province.

Madam Speaker, as we look forward into the future, we see the change that is taking hold of Manitoba. Change is the catalyst by which we are able to strengthen our assets, invest in our resources and bolster our future through investment with and in all sectors of our economy. We encourage Manitobans to take advantage of the many opportunities our province offers.

Our government has begun the work of repairing our services. Manitoba is rebuilding in many sectors of our province. This investment into our future and our children's future will ensure that Manitoba families stay in our province and not seek work in other provinces. It will also see family farms and businesses continue to operate as younger generations see the potential for growth and economic viability.

There is growth in agriculture, the backbone of our economy. Canadian agriculture partnership will work to see a \$176-million investment in our agriculture sector, which, along with private investment through the Roquette pea plant, investment in processing jobs and investing in the beef industry, will strengthen Manitoba's existing agriculture base.

*(14:50)

As my colleague the member from Lakeside, the honourable Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Eichler), says, If you had a meal today, you can thank a farmer.

In the very near future the legalization of cannabis will be implemented, and the safety, respect for individuals and health of everyone is our priority. Our government puts Manitobans first and we will utilize best-practice measures for all Manitobans.

Manitoba's own made-in-Manitoba green plan will reduce carbon emissions. Our environment is in need of attention, and while our province has been blessed with rich hydroelectric resources which result in a smaller carbon footprint than other sources of energy, our government believes and understands that we can still do more to ensure that our children, grandchildren and future generations enjoy life in a clean, healthy environment.

Reconciliation will see an understanding between our government and the indigenous people and their communities. Through education, collaboration and engagement with all Manitobans our government will help develop a framework which will begin work to support everyone. Strength comes from working together, and it is this understanding and this collective working environment which will set the path for future generations of Manitobans.

Our government has a history of implementing social programs to help the people of Manitoba. In the 1990s the member from River East helped initiate a work fair program aimed at breaking the cycle of poverty by helping get unemployed people into paid work, which helped to empower the individuals and reduce or eliminate social assistant payments.

Manitobans are generous and compassionate, and Winnipeg is one of the most giving cities when it comes to supporting charities. Even with this dedication and commitment from Manitobans there are needs. Our government recognizes the multi-layered social problems: poverty, housing, addictions, mental health and crime are closely interwoven, and the systemic problems can be chronic.

My years working in the social service sector all too easily remind me of the struggle staff and clients faced with the disconnected, duplicated and disjointed service sector. Manitobans deserve to be supported and to receive answers. Addressing the needs of individuals and removing the barriers so people are less isolated and more likely to seek and find the support needed to address these long-standing concerns is important. Reviewing the services and working together to find a resolution or to offer a way out for many who are struggling is key. Our objective is to create a system which is global and integrated. Collaboration and networking of resources will help build a stronger support system, a system which will support families as they learn and reconnect, a system which will assist and

connect you to community resources and a support system which will see efficient and effective use of the many services available to Manitobans.

Madam Speaker, we are working at developing a system which supports those who need it and will seek to provide the answers to questions as they are asked. Our government will make it easier for people and support agencies to find and get the answers they need. These answers will be given in a timely fashion. This will be accomplished by reducing the amount of red tape. Reducing the red tape will simplify how businesses and individuals get answers. No longer will there be multiple departments for individuals to have to navigate, nor will there be multiple individuals who are working in different departments who will repeat a task and have conflicting responses to offer for those wanting simple solutions.

Children are our most valuable asset, yet we have struggled to offer supports and services to help families grow together and face the challenges that so many face. Children want to be a part of their families, have roots and grow and learn from their parents and grandparents. I worked with many families while I was a counsellor at Osborne House. I witnessed first-hand the bond between a mother and her children, even the bond between siblings. Bonds are nurtured through the support of family and community working together to strengthen the family unit. This community responsibility has been removed for far too long from too many of the children and their families. Children are not learning their culture and identifying with who they are and where they fit with respect to the community. Identity and ownership of one's heritage was replaced with agencies, workers and mandates.

Our government will work with the CFS agencies and amend The Child and Family Services Act to provide programming and networking, to remove the barriers and to place the children in care of guardians, not the social state that some currently call home.

In line with supporting families, our government has invested in creating initiatives to support families needing child-care spaces. Consulting with many child-care providers, visiting centres in both rural and urban areas, talking with educators in the child-care field and other stakeholders was invaluable. Insight into the struggles of child-care centres and the child-care providers was revealing.

It revealed a system that has not been working as efficiently as it should have been.

Madam Speaker, a new Early Learning and Child Care strategy will focus on partnerships with government, home-based providers, schools, business and rural and northern communities. Our government will focus on achieving better education-based outcomes for our children. Investing in our early childhood educators will help with retaining the talented individuals who work in the early years programs. Following the cradles-to-careers philosophy is pivotal in the early learning years of children. Strengthening literacy and numeracy in children will prepare them for the first day they enter kindergarten right through to their completion of high school.

Housing is a basic need which some families struggle to obtain. Investments in affordable housing will create more options for individuals who need assistance in obtaining housing for themselves and their families. Investing in the framework and creating housing options opens a world of other possibilities to families. Individuals can focus on personal growth, parenting and education, knowing that their housing needs are met. A secure and stable home gives individuals peace of mind. This is of great importance as our government looks to amend The Child and Family Services Act.

Our government acknowledges, respects and values diversity. We will continue to be inclusive and encourage more women to join boards and share their talents. Madam Speaker, half of the population is women. It is with this in mind that our government looks to bolster the voice of women on our boards. Women bring valuable insight and perspective which will enrich work, education and the service sectors. Our province is made up of many talented and accomplished female educators, entrepreneurs and philanthropists, whose insight and perspective will not only educate others, but inspire other women and young girls. The power of inclusion will raise awareness to the endless possibilities and opportunities which may not have been a possibility years ago.

Madam Speaker, our government takes domestic violence seriously. My many years working at a domestic violence shelter has taught me that violence against women can take many forms: physical, emotional, financial, psychological or religious. Women must be respected and valued. Women are the primary caregivers, life givers and teachers of

our children, our future. We need to honour their role in the home and in the community. Women and children should not have to fear for their safety, nor should they have to leave their homes. Our government will work to build a stronger network of resources and supports which will support all the women in our lives.

* (15:00)

Madam Speaker, good, quality health care in any society is fundamental. Our government has carefully assessed how we deliver our health services. It has accepted the advice of experts in the field and begun the necessary steps to bring the needed changes to correct the problems that had afflicted Manitobans for 15 years. We have done this so that every Manitoban can benefit from better health care.

Streamlining services so people can access more efficient and timely health care is critical in transforming the broken health care that Manitobans have lived with for too long. Manitobans are looking forward to seeing a doctor when they enter a hospital, not waiting hours in a crowded room. Rural families now have more doctors to tend to their medical needs and don't have to spend hours traveling to see a doctor. Families throughout the province will benefit from the improved ambulance service. My family in St. Rose will greatly benefit from this streamlining.

Madam Speaker, our government has begun the work of rebuilding, repairing and fixing our province. We will leave our children with a legacy to be proud of.

En terminant, pendant que je suis ici aujourd'hui et que je réfléchis aux paroles prononcées hier par le Lieutenant-gouverneur, je suis fière de représenter des électeurs de Seine River, une collectivité diversifiée, éclectique et culturellement riche. Je tiens à remercier ma famille, mes bénévoles et mes amis qui définissent vraiment ce qu'est une équipe et une communauté.

Translation

In closing, as I stand here today and reflect on the speech delivered yesterday by the Lieutenant Governor, I am proud to represent the constituents of Seine River, a diverse, eclectic, and culturally rich community. I want to thank my family, volunteers and friends, who truly define what a team and a community are.

English

In closing, as I stand here today and reflect on the words that the Lieutenant Governor spoke yesterday, I am filled with great pride to represent the constituents in Seine River, a diverse, eclectic and culturally rich community. I want to thank my family, volunteers and friends who truly define what a team and a community are.

Manitoba represents many opportunities in the future for all innovators, cultures and ages. Growth only stops when one stops believing in themselves and the possibilities that are ahead. Manitoba is a province filled with possibilities, Madam Speaker. The path going forward will be filled with many challenges and opportunities. We will prepare our province to overcome the challenges and benefit from the opportunities so that our needs and the needs of our children are met and exceeded for generations to come.

Thank you. Merci.

Mr. Andrew Micklefield (Rossmere): Good afternoon, Madam Speaker, colleagues of the Legislative Assembly, guests in the gallery.

And I appreciate members opposite choosing to come out this afternoon to hear us talk about the Throne Speech. I'm sure their interest was piqued yesterday at such a great speech, such a good-news story and, you know, what a treat it is for me to stand here and reiterate so much of this great news that we were only tantalized with yesterday.

You know, the speech started out with a refrain which we're hearing more and more of here in our province, and that is that Manitoba is the home of hope. We heard recognition and appreciation for our indigenous peoples. *[interjection]* I hear a member opposite saying Manitoba can do better, and I couldn't agree more. That's why I ran for office. That's why we ran for office and that's why we're on this side of the House.

So with those themes at the head of Her Honour's speech, the theme that our province can be a home of hope, I would like to put some words on the record and talk about hope in our province, talk about progress, talk about improvements.

You know, progress is not a downgraded credit rating. Progress is not school buildings left with leaky roofs, with air conditioners that don't work and furnaces that need repairing. You know, progress is not growing debt. Progress is not spending a billion

dollars a year on servicing that growing debt. That's not progress. Progress is not a ballooning civil service that taxpayers must sustain. Progress is not more and more and more red tape—that's not progress.

Progress requires a plan. It doesn't happen by itself. It means keeping your word and following through to see positive results. That's exactly what our government is doing, and we're already seeing the signs come in. Our province is on the path to progress. We are on the path to being the most improved province in Canada, and that's why, when we talk about being the home of hope, we're not just parroting some made-up storyline. There are real results. There are real things which bring people hope, and that's what I'm going to talk about this afternoon.

You know, when a business, when a small business has to fill out more and more forms just to get qualified to do something, just to do some simple maneuver, that is a discouraging thing for that small business. That is an impediment to that small business, but as our government dismantles unnecessary red tape, not necessary red tape, but the unnecessary red tape, then we see that small business optimism begins to rise. And you know what? It is rising. I'm not making this up. The numbers are headed in a positive direction. These aren't my own thoughts. This is what we see and hear from Manitobans, and I'm sure that the members opposite would say: You hear from Manitobans? How in the world would you do that?

Well, I'm glad they would probably ask such a question because I can tell them how in the world we do that. We do that through online consultation, where tens of thousands of people came and gave us their feedback. We did that through town halls in many, many constituencies. In fact, I believe every constituency held by a government member had such a consultation, had such a town hall.

An Honourable Member: And we invited the opposition.

Mr. Micklefield: I did, too. I invited everybody. And guess what? Even members of the NDP came out to my town hall, and I was more than happy to give them coffee and doughnuts and sit down and say, well, you're allowed to share as well. This is a democracy and this is what consultation looks like.

Well, it looks like we have had about 60,000 Manitobans through a variety of means, consulting

with us, giving us feedback, talking with us, and I'm not including everything. I'm not including all the emails and side conversations. I'm including things we've chronicled that we're able to point to. I think that's good news, Madam Speaker.

I want to acknowledge my own constituents who attended my town hall, who come to my office, who give me phone calls and emails, who've invited me into their homes. In fact, just the other day, my wife and I and our children went into the home of somebody that we didn't know very well and we had supper with them and we had a great meal. It was a meal from another culture, not our own culture. That was fun. That was interesting and we had a great time. And our kids played together in the basement and they had a great time, as well. That's the kind of interaction that I'm talking about, Madam Speaker.

I also want to acknowledge 14,000 people who took the time to write letters. That number, by the way, I don't believe is included in the 60,000 I just mentioned—this is on top of that—who took the time to write letters in support of Bill 34, which granted a conscience protection for doctors and medical professionals. I think it's notable that all parties supported this, but I just wanted to take the opportunity and say thank you to those 14,000 Manitobans who allowed their voices to be heard. That's an important part of the process and it's not unnoticed.

Well, speaking of—let me get back to my notes here—*[interjection]*—I know. Well, thanks.

You know, I have good notes here. I appreciate that members are offering me some of their own notes, but I actually have more than enough to say here in my own hand.

I want to talk about families a little bit because there's been quite a discussion. This did come up yesterday in the Throne Speech. Some of the reforms regarding how families are cared for, and I'm thinking particularly of those adjustments for the— from the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Stefanson) who is focusing on putting families first, making changes to family law in Manitoba, which will make the system more accessible, more friendly, less adversarial for those who interact with it.

* (15:10)

You know, we—everybody benefits from these kinds of reforms, and we want to ensure the long-term wellness of Manitoba families.

There's more to say on families, Madam Speaker, because the Minister of Families (Mr. Fielding), which I think is a wonderful name for his portfolio, has faced some gigantic challenges unfortunately left by the previous government. But I can say that he is a man of compassion and genuine desire to see things improved. In fact, I think there's a measure of that all across this House.

But what we're looking at is adjustments—which are being praised, by the way, from people who work inside the system—adjustments that create lifelong connections for children through reunification and permanence, rather than an old system that created incentives for larger caseloads and longer stays in care. You know, kids need homes, they don't need hotels. And we are moving in the right direction on that one, Madam Speaker. We are seeing that children can be put more in homes with people that they know and less in hotel rooms with revolving-door workers, who, one might tuck them into bed and another might wake them up the next morning.

I'd be remiss if I didn't also highlight the outstanding work of our Minister of Indigenous and Northern Relations (Ms. Clarke), Madam Speaker. Her commitment to the well-being of our indigenous brothers and sisters is remarkable. And it's shown by the achievements in her department. It's reported that indigenous leaders do feel honoured and respected by our government, and that is a tone that we endeavour to take forward as we work together, we work with them to improve not only their own lives, not only their own situations, but truly that for all of Manitobans.

So an example of this is that our province—our government recently transferred over 53,000 acres for the creation of new reserve land as part of the Treaty Land Entitlement and land claims processes. These land transfers represent an important part of the reconciliation process. Again, that's 53,000 acres. And this is part of our attempts to build a better Manitoba together for everybody who calls this place home.

With our tireless Minister of Infrastructure (Mr. Schuler) at the helm, we've made significant progress towards the completion of the Shoal Lake road, or Freedom Road, as it was often called. This is a project which gained no small amount of attention in the media: Freedom Road, Shoal Lake road. And thankfully, after years of delay, shovels are in the ground, construction is under way, the community will benefit from job opportunities created, as well as

the economic and social opportunities that are going to stem from this long overdue transportation link.

I started off by saying we're the home of hope, we have reasons to be optimistic, and this here is a concrete reason to be optimistic. Freedom Road is no longer just something that people write to the newspaper about, it's something that we're getting done, the work is happening as we speak, and, Madam Speaker, I'm very excited to be able to talk about that this afternoon.

Since I'm talking about the North, Madam Speaker, I do want to mention Churchill. There's been, obviously, no small situation in Churchill, and we continue to press the federal government to take responsibility for their constitutional obligations, but that hasn't stopped us from rolling up our sleeves and delivering needed support to the community. You know, our primary concern has been safety and security of Churchill residents. That's why we worked tirelessly: we supplied food, we supplied fuel, we supplied propane for heating, and we delivered those things to the community in preparation for the winter months ahead.

So, while our government is doing everything in its power to assist the people of Churchill, we continue to call on the owner of the rail line, we continue to press the federal government, who hold sole responsibility for regulating rail transportation, to expedite those repairs to the line so that Churchill can re-establish its vital link to the rest of Canada.

Now, no Throne Speech would be complete without mentioning that one department which takes up almost 40 per cent of the provincial budget: the Department of Health. And I can say I believe our Minister of Health is well respected by members all across this House. And I can tell you, he is a hard worker. He is a man who is indefatigable in his ability to continue going on and on and on. He is the proverbial battle tank of politics, Madam Speaker. And he's getting the work done.

Change is not easy, but change in the area of health is sadly often long overdue.

Madam Speaker, our rural and northern health regions, which were frequently ignored by the former government, have seen 89 new primary-care physicians coming to practice in communities across Manitoba thanks to our government's recruitment efforts. Eighty-nine new primary-care physicians in rural places. That's something to celebrate.

When we talk about the home of hope, this is what we're talking about. We're talking about good news stories peppered all across the province, not just in Winnipeg, not just in certain places, but everywhere. That's what we can point at, and that's what I'm drawing our attention to.

But I do want to talk about Winnipeg because many people know that we've had for many years the poorest emergency room wait times in the country. Well, Madam Speaker, it's—I don't need to recount the story again about the report that the NDP handpicked their expert for, and that report was written. And we inherited that report because the NDP were duly booted out of government. But you know what? There were some good things in that report, and we're beginning to implement it. And as was said today, it's early days, but we have seen a 28 per cent improvement in emergency room wait times. I repeat: 28 per cent improvement. This isn't 2 or 3 per cent or 4 or 5 per cent. No. This is significant. We're improving the wait times by a significant number, and, unfortunately, I must confess I had to—I've had some experiences with my own family recently, but I can say the care was not as bad as it might have been a few years ago where numbers of wait times were in hours like seven, eight, nine hours.

Yet another area where we're seeing some good improvements, Madam Speaker, is in the area of education, and the minister has set aside all kinds of old ideological nostrums of the NDP, and he's sought to find out how we can best build new schools that serve the needs of our growing student population while providing maximum value for Manitoba taxpayers. So this is a pragmatic approach, and we're looking into public-private partnerships in order to build not one school, not even two schools, actually, not even three schools. I'd like to point out that our pragmatic plan to allow public-private partnerships is the engine that is enabling this government to see four new schools built in the province of Manitoba.

You know, Madam Speaker, when we speak about the home of hope, four new schools is a sign of hope. And I think that's something worth celebrating.

Minister of Education and Training (Mr. Wishart) has also shepherded desperately needed changes to the Provincial Nominee Program. You know, when we took office, Madam Speaker, the backlog of applications wasn't measured in months to be processed; no, it was measured in years. And some people were waiting up to four years to have

their application processed. This is crazy. Moms waiting for their husbands to come. Dads waiting to see their children. Four years. In the life of a child, that's a huge chunk of time, and, frankly, when you're separated from your kids or your spouse, in the life of anybody, that's a big chunk of time.

I am pleased to say, Madam Speaker, that we have reduced that wait time to about six months. Four years to six months: That's another sign of hope.

There was a press release just last week talking about the Provincial Nominee Program. I won't go into details, but I will say that it has been improved in—even in recent days. There are new ways to access that program which has been expanded, making it better and easier for everybody.

Madam Speaker, I think I have more notes than minutes left in my speech. So I'm going to have to speed things up a little here. But I do want to say that we are very pleased to talk about our Made-in-Manitoba Climate and Green Plan.

* (15:20)

Now, the federal government has unfortunately forced the situation on the provinces where they essentially are leaving us with no choice. And some people would say, well, you know, we're not so sure about this. Well, we can be sure about one thing, and I think that the minister said it right: if we say no to what Ottawa's proposing—or forcing on us, if we say no, we get Trudeau. *[interjection]* And I hear people chiming in here from all sides of the House. That's the unfortunate situation.

So we were not shy to tackle this. We came up with a made-in-Manitoba plan—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Micklefield: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I know this is incredibly exciting stuff, but I appreciate you allowing me the floor.

Our made-in-Manitoba plan really does create a best case scenario for Manitobans and leads the way in the country in terms of innovative approaches to these kinds of challenges.

There's so much that I would like to talk about, but certainly the \$400-million pea processing plant in Portage la Prairie is one such thing. Madam Speaker, \$400 million; that is a lot of money. That is a significant investment. That is jobs. That is opportunity. That is tax revenue. That is a good-news

story. When we talk about the home of hope, that's the kind of thing we're talking about; \$400 million, that's something worth celebrating, and that's something that's happened under our government.

Well, Madam Speaker, our time is drawing to a close. And while I could speak about so many of the large-scale things, I'd like to wind down by thanking my own constituents, those people, many of them who didn't know me personally not all that long ago, but who have reached out, who have come on board, who have made friends. I think of the seniors that I regularly spend time with; Rossmere has not a few seniors. I think of the children whom I regularly spend time with. I think of the newcomers I frequently spend time with. I think of the kids that play basketball on our driveway in the summer and I feel like our home is the place where the neighbourhood kids tend to hang out. We tend to feed them and entertain them and so on.

I'm grateful for my interactions with these people, Madam Speaker. It's one thing to talk about big picture stuff, and that's so necessary, but, you know, without the people on the ground in our constituencies saying, we believe in what you're doing, we're coming alongside you, none of this happens.

So, Madam Speaker, I want to thank those people, and I want to say to everybody who has waited for so long to live in a province of hope, welcome home.

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): I move, seconded by the member of St. Johns, that debate be adjourned.

Madam Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable member for Point Douglas, seconded by the honourable member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine), that debate be adjourned. Agreed?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

An Honourable Member: No, no, no.

Madam Speaker: Oh, I'm hearing a no.

Voice Vote

Madam Speaker: All those in favour of the motion, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Madam Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Madam Speaker: In my opinion, the Ayes have it.

The motion has been carried.

Recorded Vote

Mr. Mohinder Saran (The Maples): Yes, I'm telling the—what—a recorded vote, please.

Madam Speaker: Does the member have support of four others to challenge the ruling—oh, to 'request' a recorded vote?

The member has support. Call in the members.

Order. The question before the House is shall debate be adjourned.

* (15:40)

Division

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

Yeas

Allum, Bindle, Clarke, Cox, Cullen, Curry, Fielding, Fontaine, Graydon, Guillemard, Helwer, Isleifson, Johnson, Johnston, Kinew, Lagassé, Lagimodiere, Lathlin, Lindsey, Maloway, Marcelino (Logan), Marcelino (Tyndall Park), Mayer, Michaleski, Micklefield, Morley-Lecomte, Nesbitt, Pedersen, Piwniuk, Reyes, Schuler, Selinger, Smith (Point Douglas), Smith (Southdale), Smook, Squires, Swan, Teitsma, Wharton, Wiebe, Wishart, Wowchuk, Yakimoski.

Nays

Fletcher, Gerrard, Lamoureux, Saran.

Deputy Clerk (Mr. Rick Yarish): Yeas 43, Nays 4.

Madam Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Minto (Mr. Swan), that this House now adjourn.

Motion presented.

Madam Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Madam Speaker: I hear a no.

Voice Vote

Madam Speaker: All those in favour of the motion, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Madam Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Madam Speaker: In my opinion, the Yeas have it.

I declare the motion carried.

Recorded Vote

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Assiniboia. On division?

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): Yes, a recorded vote, please.

Madam Speaker: A recorded vote having been called, call in the members—oh, does the member have support of three other members? A recorded vote having been called, call in the members.

The question before the House is shall the House adjourn.

Division

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

Yeas

Allum, Bindle, Clarke, Cox, Cullen, Fielding, Fontaine, Graydon, Guillemard, Helwer, Isleifson, Johnson, Johnston, Kinew, Lagassé, Lagimodiere, Lathlin, Lindsey, Maloway, Marcelino (Logan), Marcelino (Tyndall Park), Mayer, Michaleski, Micklefield, Morley-Lecomte, Nesbitt, Pedersen, Piwniuk, Reyes, Schuler, Selinger, Smith (Point Douglas), Smith (Southdale), Smook, Swan, Teitsma, Wharton, Wiebe, Wishart, Wowchuk, Yakimoski.

Nays

Fletcher, Gerrard, Lamoureux, Saran.

Deputy Clerk (Mr. Rick Yarish): Yeas 41, Nays 4.

Madam Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

* * *

Madam Speaker: The House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, November 22, 2017

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