

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

*Published under the  
authority of  
The Honourable Myrna Driedger  
Speaker*

**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Forty-First Legislature**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
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ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	NDP
BINDLE, Kelly	Thompson	PC
CLARKE, Eileen, Hon.	Agassiz	PC
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<i>Vacant</i>	St. Boniface	

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA**

**Thursday, April 12, 2018**

*The House met at 10 a.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. Good morning, everybody.

**ORDERS OF THE DAY**

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader):** Good morning, Madam Speaker. I ask leave to resume debate on Bill 213.

**Madam Speaker:** Is there leave to proceed with Bill 213 this morning? *[Agreed]*

**DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS—  
PUBLIC BILLS**

**Bill 213—The Allied Healthcare Professionals  
Recognition Week Act**

**Madam Speaker:** Bill 213, The Allied Healthcare Professionals Recognition Week Act, which is debate on second reading, standing in the name of the honourable member for Dauphin (Mr. Michaleski), who has nine minutes remaining.

Is there leave for it to remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Dauphin?

**An Honourable Member:** No.

**Madam Speaker:** No? The honourable member for—leave has been denied.

**Mr. Len Isleifson (Brandon East):** It's always a great pleasure and honour to stand in the House and speak on any bill or any legislation that comes forward. Today, I'm excited to stand before the House and talk about something that's dear to me that I spent a lot of time with and that's health care.

Bill 213, The Allied Healthcare Professionals Recognition Week Act, you know, it is something that I've always said when in health care,

we have professionals that work in some really trying situations. They work with people that are in situations themselves that they find very difficult, and to have professionals dealing in the manner that they do is something that we should always give credit to.

I know we have a lot of different opinions in this House at times, and again, when we talk about people who dedicate their lives to helping others, I think it's something that we can all come together on and realize that, you know, we do work hard for our residents. We work hard for our constituents, and it's no different in health care where they get in the profession for various reasons.

Of course, it also gives me an opportunity to just, you know, reaffirm that some things that our government is doing in the line of running our province the way it should be, which is looking out for the best interests of Manitobans. We certainly are focused on fixing the finances, rebuilding our services and rebuilding the economy. We know that under the previous NDP government, we did have long wait times in a lot of areas in health care, and we are certainly taking steps to implement improvements as we move forward.

**An Honourable Member:** How's that working out?

**Mr. Isleifson:** You know what, actually, that's a good question. How is it working out? It is working out great, Madam Speaker. Wait times in Winnipeg alone have gone down by 28 per cent, so if we look at—*[interjection]*

All we need to do, Madam Speaker, is look back at the opposition's record. Health care is the largest expenditure of government. When the opposition were in government, they spent some of the highest levels of money, but did not have better results. They argue to maintain the status quo, but that is not an option. We need to move forward, we need to provide better results.

Our government—we do have a plan to provide better care, and sooner is working fine for us. Again, I just mentioned the average wait time to access care in Winnipeg emergency rooms is down 28 per cent compared to the same time last year. Our government is committing to reducing ambulance fees and just recently—and I actually

wrote an article this morning that talks about the reduction of ambulance fees—went door to door during the campaign in 2016, and I heard loud and clear that it was almost cost-prohibitive for some folks to use ambulance service. And it's not right. It's not right that someone has to decide between paying a bill, paying their rent, purchasing food or, for heaven's sakes, walking to an ER because they cannot afford an ambulance.

Our focus is on health-care sustainability, and we'll continue to ensure health-care funding is put together for the best use. I know the members are not happy that they're not in government anymore, and I understand that. I mean, we've got folks like the member from Flin Flon—you know, he's got some high hopes that he wants to do—and, you know, I give him a lot of credit for running in Flin Flon and congratulate him on winning his seat. It's—I know—understand it's got to be tough in opposition. But, you know, as we said in health care—and the minister has spoken many times—the First Minister has spoken many times about the challenge that we have with the reduction in transfer payments. And they can certainly come on board and help us with that.

Madam Speaker, at hand again is health-care professionals recognition week. Again, I had the honour when I was in health care to be a certified instructor of the non-violent crisis intervention program. It was an opportunity to provide some services to this—front-line staff in health care to ensure that they had a safer, more reliable workplace so they wouldn't have to face the challenges outside of what they were meant to do, which was provide health care.

So, again, in helping physicians, nurses, front-line staff, physiotherapists and the like, it certainly provides an opportunity for them to have a safe workplace, free of harassment, free of violence so that they can do—again—what they went to school to do and what their passion is, which is helping those in need.

Just this morning, the Canadian Institute for Health Information report came out that reinforces what our government has been saying before taking power in 2016: the province's health-care system is not working as it should for Manitobans, and with that we will be and are implementing the necessary changes to improve it. I won't go into a lot of the report itself; it certainly is available for those to look at and go through at their leisure.

What I do want to put on record, too, though—when we talk about allied health-care professionals, our government does recognize that this is a diverse group of technical professionals in health regions across Manitoba. Again, I mentioned some physiotherapists, occupational therapists, respiratory therapists, and the list goes on and on of these folks that, again, put their education to good use in helping those in Manitoba.

\* (10:10)

I know it is the wish of this government—again, as I've said a couple of times now. I have lots of documentation here but, you know, this bill is important.

Whenever we can support health-care workers, I think that is something that we should do. And, again, Madam Speaker, recognizing health-care professionals for the week of May 14th of each year, again, I think it's a good choice to do. It is something that, you know, we can certainly get behind and support. And with that, I just want the House to join me in thanking all the health-care providers in Manitoba and across Canada that put patients before their families and do the work they do.

So, with that, Madam Speaker, again, with—I know I have a little bit of time left, but I think this resolution or this bill is important that we get to a point so we can vote on this today. So with that, I thank you for the opportunity.

**Madam Speaker:** Is the House ready for the question?

**Some Honourable Members:** Question.

**Madam Speaker:** The question before the House is second reading of Bill 213, The Allied Healthcare Professionals Recognition Week Act.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

### House Business

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader):** Madam Speaker, on House business, pursuant to rule 33(8), I am announcing that the private member's resolution to be considered on the next Thursday of Private Members' Business will be one put forth by the honourable member for Flin Flon (Mr. Lindsey). The title of the resolution is Worker's Compensation Coverage for Work Related Stress.

**Madam Speaker:** It has been announced that the private member's resolution to be considered on the next Thursday of Private Members' Business will be one put forward by the honourable member for Flin Flon (Mr. Lindsey). The title of the resolution is Worker's Compensation Coverage for Work Related Stress.

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**Ms. Fontaine:** Miigwech, Madam Speaker. I ask for leave to call it 11 a.m. and proceed to resolutions.

**Madam Speaker:** Is there leave to call it 11 a.m.? [Agreed]

### RESOLUTIONS

#### **Res. 7—Provincial Government Cuts to Education Hurt Manitoba Students**

**Madam Speaker:** The hour now being 11 a.m. and time for private members' resolutions, the resolution before us is the resolution Provincial Government Cuts to Education Hurt Manitoba Students, brought forward by the honourable member for Concordia.

**Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia):** I move, seconded by the member for Fort Garry-Riverview (Mr. Allum),

*WHEREAS the Provincial Government has frozen K to 12 education funding below inflation, meaning schools have received a de facto cut to funding that does not keep up with enrollment and growth in the economy; and*

*WHEREAS in the school year 2017-18, twenty-three school divisions have seen an absolute reduction in their funding, representing more than \$7 million in cuts; and*

*WHEREAS the Provincial Government has made deep cuts to the Bureau de l'éducation française, including eliminating the Assistant Deputy Minister and leaving French language positions unfilled, putting the future of French language education at risk; and*

*WHEREAS these cuts mean greater pressure on teachers, fewer resources for schools, bigger class sizes and less one-on-one time between students and teachers; and*

*WHEREAS the Provincial Government has continued its attack on post-secondary education by hiking tuition fees by up to 7% a year and cutting supports for post-secondary students; and*

*WHEREAS on top of these tuition hikes, the Provincial Government cut millions in tax credits for students and recent grads while cutting back on capital funding for post-secondary education; and*

*WHEREAS the Provincial Government is now cutting health coverage for international students, increasing both the cost of living for future Manitobans and total tuition costs for domestic students; and*

*WHEREAS strong post-secondary education tied to labour market outcomes is one of the best ways to grow Manitoba's economy and ensure every person has a good, reliable job; and*

*WHEREAS the Premier and his Cabinet are attempting to balance their budget on the backs of students and families while they devise schemes to increase their salaries.*

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the provincial government to immediately reverse the cuts to K-to-12 and post-secondary education, which have failed Manitoba students, in order to ensure every student has access to affordable, quality education.

#### **Motion presented.**

**Mr. Wiebe:** I appreciate that the House is moving along so efficiently this morning, and I'll take that as a sign that everyone was so eager to debate and pass this resolution that folks were just so excited, they wanted to move right ahead into this. And I'm excited to see the consensus that we can build around the Chamber here this morning around the importance of education, the importance of investing in education, and the importance of maintaining and strengthening what we have in our education system, both at the K-to-12 level and, of course, with post-secondary education.

I wanted to begin this morning, Madam Speaker, by saying—by starting where I think I normally start when talking about education and that is with my own family and my two very young children, who are just getting their start in the education system, and my daughter's in grade 2 and my son is in kindergarten and they're just flourishing. And it's so exciting to see them interacting with other students and getting that incredible knowledge and care that the teachers are taking with them to ensure that their way of learning is being emphasized, that their attention is being paid to how they learn and how

they can both best thrive, and they're both doing fantastic. And it just makes me so proud as a father to see that the amazing educators that we have on our front lines are doing that work and doing it as a passion that they have and really developing the next generation of leaders in our province.

But that's—that kind of commitment that we see from our teachers is not something that we can take for granted, because while I—as I said, it is a passion, and it is something that they do, I think, out of a true sense of love to—of education and a love of passing along knowledge, they are increasingly feeling under attack. And they're feeling like this government isn't respecting the work that they're doing in the classrooms.

I, as many members have done recently, gone to many schools, whether it be for special events that they're having for I Love to Read, lots of opportunities to get into our elementary, our high schools, and what I'm finding in these schools, in a way that I've never seen before—and I've now been the MLA for Concordia for, well, a few years, and during that time, I've never had this experience where teachers would literally come out of their classroom, grab me as I'm walking down the hall to tell me how important it is to invest in education.

And so, when I can come to this House and I can bring forward a resolution like this that emphasizes that commitment that I have, that our caucus has, and that we see as a real focus for our caucus going forward, this is a great day for me to be able to bring that kind of resolution forward. And as I said, I do hope that members opposite will take the opportunity to talk about how important our education system is and that—investment in it, rather than the cuts that we're seeing year after year from this government.

So what will we hear from the members opposite? I can predict. I'll—maybe I'll start guessing what we're going to hear from members opposite. They're going to say, well, you know, look at us. We're ready to open some new schools in Manitoba and—*[interjection]*

It's almost like I could have predicted that, Madam Speaker.

And I'm sure they're going to stand up and talk about—and trumpet that, how important that is. Well, it's kind of ironic, I guess, that—maybe ironic's not the right word, but as the opposition caucus, we came out—one of the first things that we talked about as an opposition caucus was the importance of

meeting those obligations to make sure that the schools that are available are available in the communities that need them. And we said, let's get to work. In fact, why don't we get to work on the schools that we've been working on—we worked on as a government for a decade? Why don't we get to work on those schools? If this government thinks this is a priority, let's get to work.

But the government opposite, the Premier (Mr. Pallister) said, nope, hold up, hang on, wait a minute. Put on the brakes. Why don't we see if there's another way, if we can get the private sector to build those schools for us?

So they went out and they did a survey across Canada. I think we—in fact, we kept saying, it's not going to work. They went out and they looked at Saskatchewan. We said, it's not going to work. They went out and they looked at Nova Scotia. We said, it's not going to work. And then they did a study, and it took, you know, a year plus and back and forth, and we had questions in question period, we had resolutions, we had debate in this House over and over again. And the members opposite said, no, no, no, no; don't worry; the P3 model is the way to go; that's the way we're going. All of a sudden they get their consultant's report back and the consultant says, uh, that's not the way to go. Oops. A year and a half wasted.

And what happened in that year and a half? Did the communities that need these schools stop growing? No. Did the students that needed the education stop needing it? No. It continued on. The need was there. This government knew the need was there. But they were listening to their accountants rather than the educators that were telling them to build these schools.

And so now we hear them come, and they say, oh, don't worry, we're going to build these schools. Well—and in fact, they might say, we've built these schools. I've heard this over and over again in the House. I don't know where they're getting this, Madam Speaker. They have not built one of these schools when they could have had significant progress done on them. Shovels were ready to go. They put the brakes on. It is their responsibility that these schools aren't built, and they need to take responsibility for that.

So that's No. 1. What else are they going to say? Well, they're—we're going to talk about post-secondary education. We're going to say, look,

it's becoming less accessible for students. And the government members are probably going to stand up, and they're going to say, yes, but we are increasing the bursary program—[*interjection*]

\* (10:20)

Again, Madam Speaker, how did I know to pause at that exact moment to allow the applause to happen? I don't know. I guess it was just a coincidence.

Well, I knew that that's where they were—what they were going to say because they've come out and they've trumpeted that. They've trumpeted that at every turn.

However, they refuse to talk about the cuts to post-secondary institutions. They refuse to talk about their abdication and their responsibility for keeping tuition affordable at the front end here in Manitoba. They refuse to talk about the massive tax hike that they impose on every single post-secondary education student in this province by taking away the tuition rebate.

They refuse to talk about those factors, Madam Speaker, because when they do, it's very, very clear that the money that they're providing for the bursary program comes nowhere near meeting the needs that students are going to be facing over the next number of years. And because they've put this cap on what—on the funding to institutions, to our post-secondary institutions in this province, they knew—they knew what they were doing. They knew that they were committing those institutions to forcing them to raise their tuition on the backs of students.

And it's not just us saying this. It was even their own consultant's report, once again, that said, whoa, if you're going to take away the tuition tax rebate, maybe you should put that back into education. Did they do that? No, Madam Speaker. They took that money as they have in every other instance. They put it into general revenue and they say, look, we're doing such great work on the budget and on the deficit.

Well, Madam Speaker, the—and I heard the member for Radisson (Mr. Teitsma), who has been absolutely clear when he's talked to his constituents, when he's talked in this House, that he thinks it's a priority to cut, to lower the deficit on the backs of students and on the backs of his constituents who need health care in his community. He's willing to go out and say that publicly. He has no problem saying that. Oh, don't worry. We're cutting the deficit. Yes,

you're losing your emergency room in your community. Your tuition's going up. Yes, don't worry about that because we're going to cut the deficit for you.

Madam Speaker, these members opposite never campaigned on cutting tuition—or cutting funding to post-secondary education. They certainly didn't campaign on cutting tuition. They didn't campaign on cutting funding to K-to-12 education in this province. Not one of them went to the door and said we're going to make life harder for the teachers, the educators, for the students. Not one of them said that to their constituents.

As always, I invite them to stand up proudly in this House and to say, yes, we never said that but we're doing it. We're cutting. We're cutting at every turn. We're cutting to lower the deficit. That's our No. 1 priority. Oh, and guess what? If you get trampled along the way, if your education is worse, if your health care is worse, if your tuition is higher, we don't care because we're single-minded and we're single-focused on one thing.

Well, Madam Speaker, they can stand up proudly and do that today. What we're going to do in our caucus is what this resolution before us talks about and that is stand up for students, stand up for educators, stand up for real investments in the education system in our province and stand up for the future of this province.

### Questions

**Madam Speaker:** A question period of up to 10 minutes will be held, and questions may be addressed in the following sequence: the first question may be asked by a member from another party; any subsequent questions must follow a rotation between the parties; each independent member may ask one question; and no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

**Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet):** It's great to be here this morning. I've got a quick question for the member who brought forward this resolution.

Manitoba Education and Training has been advised of changes to the Manitoba Health Services Insurance Plan. International students, their spouses and dependents will no longer be eligible for provincial health insurance, effective Sept. 1st, 2018.

Does he not realize that this is absolutely the effects of the previous NDP government?

**Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia):** I must have misunderstood the question, Madam Speaker, because this government has cut the health care for international students. It was a decision of the Premier (Mr. Pallister). They stood very solidly behind that and I'm kind of confused about where the member's coming from.

**Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas):** My question is, how will we ensure that we do not lose talented Manitoba students to post-secondary institutions and other provinces due to the rising tuition?

**Mr. Wiebe:** Well, this is a good question. Thank you—by the member for—

**An Honourable Member:** The Pas.

**Mr. Wiebe:** —The Pas.

It's early. It was a great game last night, Madam Speaker. It was a little late night, but anyway.

This is a great question. The—this government, I've actually heard them stand up and say tuition in Manitoba is one of the most affordable in Canada. Well, it didn't just happen that way. In fact, in 1999, when an NDP government came in, it was a No. 1 priority to get that tuition down and then keep it down for the entire 17-year mandate that they had. And this government, in 17 months, has done more damage to our post-secondary education and our tuition in that amount of time.

**Mr. Ewasko:** It was a great game last night, and it really showed a lot of team effort. And, again, the member who brought forward this resolution how lack of a team they are on their side for—without even knowing where his member is from.

After 17 years of inaction, why did the NDP fail to make meaningful reform to Manitoba's education system?

**Mr. Wiebe:** Well, I would call that a cheap shot.

That's—I apologize, that's unparliamentary language, I would imagine. But I do appreciate those members who give me a little bit of leeway in remembering every constituency name. The Speaker, of course, is good at doing that. I sometimes do forget, so I—anyway, I apologize about that.

No, I think the—I think the member touches on a great point. I think what is required in this province is a real investment in education, a real forward-looking plan working with educators at every single level. And instead of cutting and putting more pressures on it, working with those

organizations that are there representing students and the educators that support them.

**Ms. Lathlin:** As a mother raising children—four kids in school—I'm really concerned about the less one-on-one time with teachers. For the first time in memory, student-teacher ratio went up under this government.

Why is this government making class sizes larger, where students will have less one-on-one time with their teachers?

**Mr. Wiebe:** That is a great question, Madam Speaker, by the member from The Pas. And she comes to it from the exact same place I do, right: as a parent and wanting to see the best education.

We've seen the impact of those small class sizes. If the member wants—from Lac du Bonnet—wants to talk about the importance of a forward-looking plan, there exactly is it in practice. When the previous government said, we are going to make that decision with educators based on the best research available and we're going to then put the investment in on the backside to make sure that all of those classrooms are able to meet those standards. It's shown results, but—and even the members opposite agreed there was results. And yet they cut that program.

**Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River):** Can the NDP explain why the high school graduation rates of indigenous youth and children in care remained amongst the lower in Canada for their entire mandate?

**Mr. Wiebe:** I recognize that the member opposite is fairly new to the—this place, and it does require a lot of research.

I have to admit, as somebody who came to this place not in 1999, but quite a bit after that, it was quite a lesson that I undertook. And I would encourage the member opposite to do the same; to look exactly at what happened over those 17 years in the education system in Manitoba. And when you look at things like literacy—

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

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Wiebe:** —literacy in this province, which was a focus and an investment that was made, huge gains were made because of the work of the previous government. And yet this government thinks that they can cut their way to success.



Teachers don't believe that, students don't believe that, and we sure don't believe that.

**Ms. Lathlin:** Question is: Can we explain how we plan to improve the literacy and numeracy in Manitoba by freezing the funding formula?

**Mr. Wiebe:** Yes, bang on again, Madam Speaker. A great question.

A solid question, because this was again, one of the very few—I will add again, very few—promises that this government—that they campaigned on in the election. They had very few kind of, you know, first day kind of promises. We're going to come out, we're going to—we'll make a strategy.

\* (10:30)

They talked about literacy and numeracy, something that this caucus—our opposition caucus—has talked about as well. They talked about this. Did they get it done in 100 days? No. Did they get it done in their first year of their mandate? No. Have we seen any results from this work to date? No. In fact, we think that there does need to be an investment rather than cuts because you're not going to get anywhere by cutting and not talking to those educators that you need to.

**Mr. Ewasko:** Can the NDP—well-experienced NDP member please explain why under their watch, the Manitoba high school drop-out rate was the second highest of all provinces between 2007 and 2012?

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Wiebe:** Well, I mean, the member opposite, I believe, was the Education critic for a period of time when he was in opposition. He certainly—and, you know, I've gone back. I've looked at some of the work that he did in advocating on certain issues. You know, this was something that had been discussed in this House very frequently and it's something that we've talked about.

Manitoba does have some unique challenges and, you know, they talk a lot about the most improved as being some kind of measure. Well, I would argue that if you look back during that period, we could certainly be ranked among the top in the most improved and we're going to meet those challenges if we are able to move forward on this particular resolution.

**Ms. Lathlin:** How are we going to ensure that tuition for domestic students does not go up by removing health-care coverage for international

students and making Manitoba less appealing for international students coming to study here in Canada?

**Mr. Wiebe:** That's—now, that is a really good question because I've had a chance to talk to international students and we've certainly heard them here in this Chamber and we've heard them in the media talking about how this will be—this will impact the numbers of students that would come here.

But the member actually connects this back to the wider student population and this is key because here in Manitoba, we've had a lot of success in bringing international students here, helping them to access the education system here. The economic spinoffs are huge on the back end of that particular investment, but just on the day-to-day operational side, you're getting good high tuition from certain students that could be then amplified and used to help everybody get a good education in Manitoba.

**Mr. Wowchuk:** Our government is happy to announce the building of a new school in Brandon. What I'd like to ask the member is why did the NDP neglect the educational needs of the growing population in Brandon during their mandate?

**Mr. Wiebe:** Well, I—this is really curious, Madam Speaker, because if it were not for this Premier (Mr. Pallister) saying stop, hold up, no, don't move any—forward anymore. Let's hold up this project. Let's not go forward on it. This school would have been built, and I ask him why, why did he stop the construction of it? Why did he stand in front of that bulldozer? Why did he stop the shovels? I ask him. Maybe he can answer for the House.

**Mr. Ewasko:** Thank you, Madam Speaker, and—

**Madam Speaker:** Order. Order.

**Mr. Ewasko:** I tell you, it's going to be a fired-up debate this morning, but I've got one last question from the—for the member from Concordia. I know, you know, many of the people's constituencies throughout the whole House, both opposition, independent and, of course, our side.

So the question to the member from Concordia: Why was Manitoba's university graduation rate the lowest of all provinces under the previous NDP government?

**Mr. Wiebe:** Well, I think, Madam Speaker, keeping university accessible and affordable is—was an absolute No. 1 priority for us. It remains a No. 1

priority for us, and we want to make sure that every student in Manitoba has that opportunity to get into post-secondary education, to make their lives better, to find that path that allows them to participate in Manitoba in an economic sense, in a social sense, that they feel a part of this great future that we have in this province.

What I'm hearing from the members opposite is they don't agree that students should have that access. I think that's the difference right there, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** The time for questions has expired.

### Debate

**Madam Speaker:** Debate is open.

**Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet):** It's great to have this opportunity to stand up this morning to speak towards this—the resolution brought forward by the member from Concordia.

You know, it's very near and dear to my heart when we start to talk about education, and I appreciate the member from Concordia bringing forward this resolution because it gives us on the government side an opportunity to say all the good things that we are doing for education for not only K to 12 but also post-secondary in this great province of ours, Madam Speaker

It—I must first start off by congratulating yourself and all members of the House on participating in the tribute of the hockey jerseys this morning. The picture we took on the Grand Staircase, it was nice to see us all come together and take that photo to show respect and solidarity in the thoughts and prayers that go out to the families of Humboldt. You know, many of us in this House have either children of our own or relatives that play not only sports but extracurricular activities that they have to participate on through their education and travel on various buses throughout this province of ours. And I know it's hit everybody not only in our small communities but in this province, in this country and around the world, the effects of that crash. And I think it will definitely help to bring everybody that much closer together on that.

Madam Speaker, as I said earlier, it gives me great pleasure to stand up and be able to put a few words on the record in regards to our education system here in Manitoba. I appreciate my colleague from Swan River who—unfortunately, the member

from Concordia obviously didn't do his homework on the fact that my colleague from Swan River is a retired teacher of 30-plus years—matter of fact, probably closer to 35 years. And, you know, I hold that colleague of mine in quite a high esteem because I know that he put countless, countless efforts and hours into helping with students, and not only during the class time, of course, extracurricular time, he put a lot of time in with the Envirothon and, matter of fact, were provincial champions as well. So I encourage the member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe), if he's going to take his role as Education critic seriously, he should do some of that research and actually look some of that up, in addition to finding out exactly where his colleagues represent which constituencies.

But, Madam Speaker, the member from Concordia stood up and spoke about how the shovels were ready to go on the schools. And I've heard that in this House on more than one occasion in regards to, whether it would be personal-care homes or schools and all those types of things, the shovels are ready to go. Matter of fact, I know that the previous NDP government, no doubt they have garages full of shovels ready to go because they would show up to various sod turning and they would promise all these communities, the City of Winnipeg, the City of Brandon, all these grandiose plans that never saw any actual construction, no construction whatsoever.

I know that our government is encouraged—a lot of our communities are encouraged by the progress that our government is already making in the commitments to building schools, whereas the previous NDP government was working very hard at closing schools.

The—over the next two years, we are looking at building the five new schools. We're talking Brandon School Division, Seven Oaks School Division, Winnipeg School Division and two in Pembina Trails, Madam Speaker, to just list those five.

\* (10:40)

I know that the member from Concordia, he decided to start talking about how he was proud of his government and their initiatives towards increasing literacy skills, Madam Speaker, in—and I'm sorry, I just had to laugh there for a few seconds because it was under that previous NDP government, and I know that the member from Fort Garry-Riverview, former Education minister, one of the five Education ministers that they had under the—from when I was elected in 2011 'til their—til they—

'til we defeated the NDP in 2016, I believe they had five different Education ministers. They basically, well and—one of my great colleagues in the House asked me to name them and I believe he's the only one standing, actually, the only one remaining that's still in the House that was a former NDP Education minister. The rest of them either retired, or quit, or something along those lines, or rebelled.

And that happens and I know that they're in dysfunction and I know that the member from Concordia, he wanted some grace because he couldn't remember his colleague's constituency name. But, that being said, I mean, they're reducing in numbers, so you would think that would be a little bit easier. But, at the same time, he was probably a member of the NDP education system as well, so that doesn't necessarily surprise me too much.

When he gets back to the—when he mentioned the literacy plans and the encouraging, trying to get those numbers up, I know, Madam Speaker, when—many people in this House know, that by profession, I'm an educator, a teacher. And I hold, you know, many coffee parties and discussions with a lot of my colleagues, and not only back in my home community, but throughout the province.

And many of them are encouraged by the change in government as far as some of the changes that we are making because it was a fact that in 2002 in literacy and numeracy, we were sitting at about third in Canada. Manitoba was sitting about third in Canada, and that's when those tests started to happen—in about 2002. And then between 2002 and 2012–2014, we had dropped to ninth and 10th, and in some case—and then they also started testing, Madam Speaker, in science as well.

And what ended up happening, is—was we dropped from third all the way to ninth and 10th, and matter of fact, we ended up getting even worse than that. We were falling further and further and further behind 10th in this great country of ours. So something has to—had to change because according to the member from Concordia, you just have to continue to throw money at it, Madam Speaker. Well, if that was the case, we would—we should've been either first or second in the entire country if it equated to the amount of money you would spend on education.

What we're trying to do on this side of the House, in this government, is to—*[interjection]* Oh, the member from Fort Garry-Riverview, he's fired

up. I'm almost assuming he's getting up to speak right away.

But, on our side of the House, we believe in results, Madam Speaker. We absolutely believe in results, and that's what we're going to get. I've got all the faith in the world in our Minister of Education, the member from Portage la Prairie. He's—he absolutely is passionate about what he's doing. He's a hard-working member of his community, and I know that he's got the thoughts of all Manitoba students in mind when he's going and making those tough, difficult decisions each and every day on behalf of our government and on behalf of all Manitobans.

We have actually invested in the 2018 budget, \$2.8 billion in education and training. And I know that the members opposite, the NDP members, they ridicule that often, but it is a total of \$13.7-million increase from Budget 2017, Madam Speaker. And so the numbers are going up. We are increasing funding, but, at the same time, we are expecting results all the way from kindergarten to career. And that's where we're going to put—start putting our emphasis.

We know that the teachers are on board. Many of my colleagues are excited for the focus and for the direction that they're being given all the way from the department. And, I know that there's other colleagues of mine that would love to put a few words on the record. I would like to give a shout-out to my old school where I used to teach, École Edward Schreyer School, Berens and wish them all the best and safe travels on all of their journeys throughout their extracurricular activities and thank you, Madam Speaker for this opportunity.

**Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview):** Madam Speaker, I know that I just want to say that I was pleased to join with all our colleagues and with you this morning for a photo in tribute to those who lost their lives in Humboldt. And I just wanted to say it was great to stand with everyone and stand shoulder to shoulder as Manitobans and as Canadians, as we share our condolences with those who have suffered terrible, terrible loss.

I was also extremely pleased that we were able to pass the resolution today from my friend from Minto on allied health-care workers. That's such an important element of our health-care system and so I want to thank him for bringing that forward and to thank all members of the House, as well, for supporting it.

And I know this will be 'unanimity' morning here in the Chamber as we vote to support the very good resolution brought forward by my friend from Concordia, who showed that he was well versed on the subject, passionate about the issue and I have no doubt, although he could fill many roles, that he will be a first-rate Education minister in the not-too-distant future.

I want to say that I'm pleased to follow my friend from Lac du Bonnet. We spent some time talking to one another when we were in government and he was the Education critic and I had the great honour and privilege to be minister of Education and Advanced Learning. And I couldn't help but think of the glorious time we spent together at a school in St. Georges in Lac du Bonnet where we had just opened a new gym and community hall that our government had built for him. And I remember vividly how excited and how pleased he was and how grateful he was for our government for coming through on building a very important educational and community asset in his constituency.

And it reminds me of the time that I was at—I was with the Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen), then Finance critic, when we opened a new school in Morden-Winkler that was by any stretch a state-of-the-art school. And it was a difficult day because a young student had lost their life just recently prior to the opening of that school and, of course, so the school community, the community writ large, was grieving, Madam Speaker. But I think that that occasion helped to—helped in some way. And I certainly remember the Finance Minister, the member for Morden-Winkler (Mr. Friesen), being so utterly and completely happy when we opened that new school.

And then that reminds me of the brand new school—high school that we built in Steinbach, and I remember the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen), now the Health Minister, being very—no, wait, he didn't bother to come to the opening of that school. Such was his gratitude to our government that he didn't feel the need to come to a state-of-the-art opening of a brand new high school which, again, was state of the art and provides 21st-century classrooms for students who need not to just operate in schools that were built some time ago but need new institutional settings in order to make sure that they're provide a proper learning environment for students going forward.

All that to say, Madam Speaker, that, in fact, our government built 35 new schools during our time in government, and so it always makes me laugh when I hear the government now crowing about some amount of schools they're intending to build at some time.

And the fact of the matter is, and my friend from Concordia was right; Brandon would have had a new school was it not for the delays by this government, by the member for Brandon West (Mr. Helwer), who did nothing, obviously, didn't care to do it, and the member for Brandon East (Mr. Isleifson). *[interjection]* I'm sorry that he wasn't around at that time but I know he would have been—would have enjoyed that. I'm sure the member for Brandon West will get up at some time and have his opportunity. I don't know—really know why he's heckling, except, I guess, out of embarrassment, to say the least.

\* (10:50)

I'm sure, though, the members—both members for Brandon will now drive by the North Hill in Brandon and go, wow, what a spectacular thing that's happening in that community with the transfer of ACC up to the North Hill, the culinary arts school that's already been built there, the engineering facilities that have been built there. I know that he would be very pleased to take the next step in what is obviously a long-term project. Oh no, wait, Madam Speaker—

**An Honourable Member:** Len Evans Centre.

**Mr. Allum:** —they've—yes, the Len Evans Centre, that's right, named after an iconic figure in this Chamber and in our party and in western Manitoba and, frankly, across all of Manitoba and across Canada—but no, wait, Madam Speaker, they've put no money forward to actually continue the process of moving ACC to the North Hill. And what a terrible shame it is.

And then my friend from Swan River gets up and he asks a great question—well, not so great—I'm pleased to see any member of the Conservative backbench get up and ask a question, Madam Speaker. It's just, it delights me to hear them be able to participate because we see so many ministers giving member statements every day, they hardly get a chance to speak, so I'm always happy when they get a chance to get on the floor.

But, of course, the member from Swan River will know about the great big shop that exists at the school in his community, and I remember the

premier—former premier trying to drive this great, big, gigantic tractor into this great, big, huge shop—this vocational, wonderful place that provide young people with the skills and knowledge they have, not only to get a good education but to go on and get a good job as well.

I'm sorry that they don't recognize these things. The member from Thompson, I'm sure, would appreciate the amazing work that's being done at UCN and in The Pas, the amazing works that's been created, done there to build up the campuses to make sure that northern Manitobans have access to education that is second to none.

You know, the government likes to talk about results. Of course, they never talk about the fact that in our term in government graduation rates went from 71 per cent to 88 per cent by the time we were done. And they were only going to continue to go up, Madam Speaker. We not only built new schools across Manitoba, we built new gyms, new shops, new science labs that I was just reminiscing with my friend from Concordia about a science experiment we did at a school in Elmwood that kind of literally blew up on me—made for good entertainment and also a good educational lesson at the same time.

But these were the kinds of things that our government was concerned about, and yet we see—and that comes proof positive in this resolution today that the government has really put the brakes on building the educational system here in Manitoba. Whether it's in the K-to-8 system or in the high school or in the post-secondary system—all across the board, we were concerned to ensure that there were no wrong doors, no dead ends, but multiple pathways to a good education and a good job here in Manitoba. That's what we set out to do in 1999, that's what we continued right up until the time that the new government came into power. And what we've seen since then is a veritable assault on the educational community.

Was just talking to my daughter last night, teaches grade 1 at General Byng. Teachers are being moved in Pembina Trails as a result of budget cuts there. Teachers are being moved all around all across the educational system. No capital construction is happening on any of our campuses. No capital construction is happening at any of our schools. There's plans, vaguely, that someday that will happen, but we know the record from the Tories in the 1990s is they didn't do these kind of things.

In fact, their record was to lay off as many as 700 teachers here in this province. That was a mistake then, it's a mistake now. We owe it to our children to ensure that they get a good, solid, affordable education that's accessible to everyone where no one gets left behind and that all Manitobans are proud of their education system.

What bothers me about the Tory government is, it's how—is how they constantly insult educators in our system, how they insult teachers. I know my friend from Lac du Bonnet was a teacher. His job was solidified during their—during our time in government when it was in doubt in the 1990s. The same is true for the Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen), who was a music teacher. That was all but ruled out of the curriculum in the 1990s. We brought it back to ensure that there was not only vocational skills but arts and culture as well in our educational system.

I was only supposed to speak for a few minutes. We have so much to say on education on this side of the House. I'm proud of our education system; I'm proud of our students, proud of our teachers. I'm impressed with the way in which they go to do the work—do their work every single day. An education system: accessible, affordable, there for everyone. That's our vision for education in Manitoba. That's not their vision, Madam Speaker.

#### Point of Order

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for Concordia, on a point of order.

**Mr. Wiebe:** I heard members opposite asking for leave to allow the member to continue his—so I'm just going to ask leave. Is there—is there leave of the House that the member for Fort Garry-Riverview (Mr. Allum) could continue his comments for as—I guess as long as he sees fit?

**Madam Speaker:** I—the member does not have a point of order.

\* \* \*

**Madam Speaker:** And I would turn the floor over to the member from Swan River.

**Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River):** I just would like to also take the time to echo the comments by our fellow colleagues and that our hearts go out to the people affected by that horrific tragedy last Friday. And, you know, all of us as coaches, myself as a coach for 35 years, and the number of lives that we touch, we would never want to take that

opportunity away from our children. And our hearts truly go out. And I commend you, Madam Speaker, on your role today to show that unity across all the legislative assemblies across the country.

And, with that, Madam Speaker, the NDP had 17 years to improve educational outcome for students, and they only made it worse. They failed to provide quality education to school-aged children. Our government is working hard to improve this dismal record left by the previous government, and we're carefully steering Manitoba's educational system on a path forward to ensure quality education for all students. We're taking a balanced approach to repair the provincial educational system in—Manitoba families rely on, while creating efficiency and controlling costs within the system. We're providing better use of resources and better results for students in our great province.

Budget 2018 was a good-news budget for Manitoba, with a plan to repair the educational system left in disarray by this previous government. Budget two—'18 invested \$2.8 billion in Education and Training. It's the highest amount spent on education in Manitoba history.

Of this, the K-to-12 education will see 13.7 million increase from the budget of 2017 to a record investment of \$1.32 billion. Five new schools will be constructed, and we're proceeding with public tenders with the capacity for 3,300 students and 392 new child-care spaces. Just last week, our Minister of Families (Mr. Fielding) made a number of great announcements across the province for child-care spaces, a total investment of well over \$100 million. And, over the course of the next two years, construction will begin in Brandon, Seven Oaks, Winnipeg, Pembina Trails, including the K to 8 and 9 to 12 in Waverley.

As a result of our commitment to shop smarter on behalf of the taxpayer, we identified at least \$18 million in savings over conventional tendering, resulting in construction of one more new school. Poor planning by the NDP led to more than 480 portable classrooms in Manitoba and over \$485 million in deferred maintenance on schools, and we were left with this mess to clean up.

Budget two eight—or, 2018 made significant changes to student aid to adopt a fixed contribution model and focus on students who need it most. We increased investment in Manitoba bursary programs by \$2.7 million, including \$1 million for low-income indigenous students and \$1.7 million to expand

eligibility to students studying at private religious institutions in Manitoba.

Our government is focused on improving literacy and numeracy outcomes for all students in Manitoba, and this includes rethinking the way the Department of Education is aligned. Our government remains committed to French language education, francophone culture, virtually throughout the entire province. There has been no funding reduction to BEF and no BEF positions have been transferred to the English language side of the department. The current movement within this ensures a more integrated approach and provides opportunity to broaden its forces.

\*(11:00)

Madam Speaker, having a strong educational program throughout the province requires us to repair the system at all levels, from early years on. We replaced the smaller classes with—or Smaller Classes Initiative that tied division's hands with early years enhancement initiative. This empowers school divisions to decide how to use the allocated funding to improve outcomes with their unique student populations.

This new initiative will include an evaluation component to measure province-wide educational outcomes, including literacy and numeracy. Our government launched the first college review in 10 years with a goal of improved outcomes for students and a stronger system. These will create a better alignment with labour market needs.

Madam Speaker, yesterday the member from Flin Flon introduced students from his constituency who are attending the trades competition at Red River community college. These students are our future workforce and we must ensure they have the tools to be successful.

I know at our school in Swan River, our trades program is awesome. We have heavy-duty mechanics where students and adults can work toward their Red Seal. We have electrical, power mechanics, culinary arts and a new trade building with carpentry integrating with plumbing and electrical.

Students will be able to integrate these skills to construct homes. The mini-partnerships formed will enable indigenous and non-indigenous students to acquire skills and take these needed skills into the workforce and back into their communities.

Madam Speaker, our government will make improvements to the college system as a whole. We will see the team approach as students move up the ladder to become successful.

Next week, Madam Speaker, a bunch of our students will be participating in the regionals in Envirothon. This year the provincials is going to be held up at Churchill. These students need the skills to be successful, and some of the things that are going to be taken, each one—the problematic in addition to the aquatics, wildlife, soils and forestry—they're given a question where they've got to come up with a green plan on climate change that's applicable to their community. And students are not able to do this if we don't equip them with skills. And the previous government has not—they've been failing on that.

Yes, Madam Speaker, the long-term action plan reflects the broader scope of the report of partnerships with post-secondary institutions, industry, communities across Manitoba.

The Manitoba Scholarship and Bursary Initiative aimed to have post-secondary schools raise \$1.3 million in private donations by the end of the 2017 fiscal year.

Madam Speaker, when you're able to have a student graduate with commendable skills and knowledge, many community organizations also step up to the plate with bursaries and scholarships in local communities to reward students for their efforts.

Madam Speaker, our government has enabled more than \$35 million in direct support to Manitoba students in 2017 and '18 through the Manitoba Scholarship Bursary Initiative, a new program called the Manitoba Bursary and other government grants.

We are committed to high-quality, affordable and accessible post-secondary education, Madam Speaker. The legislation allows universities flexibility to set tuition rates, and the legislation ensures Manitoba average university tuition will remain the lowest in western provinces. This will ensure long-term sustainability and provides students with high-quality education.

Madam Speaker, as a result of the NDP's failure to provide quality education for school-age children, we're roughly one year behind in reading and science, and more than a half-year behind in math, compared to our neighbour provinces. Since 2001, Manitoba's led the nation in highest school drop-out rates, or came in second. Since 2001, Stats Canada

shows Manitoba has consistently had the lowest high school graduation rate in Canada.

Manitoba had the lowest scores in science, reading, math, as released by the Pan-Canadian Assessment Program, two-'13. In 2012, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development showed eighth in math, ninth in reading and science. The grade 12 applied math slipped from 79.5 per cent passing to 69.

Madam Speaker, the NDP failed to deliver. Our government is going to repair our educational system. We're going to provide our children with the skills to be successful. These skills will lead to a confident generation that will be proud of our province, our country and our educational opportunities.

Thank you.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Madam Speaker, let me say a few comments on this resolution.

First of all, we had a government which talked about aiming higher when they came in, and they appear to be, if anything, aiming lower. There is no evidence at this point that there is really a plan to address the problems which have been mentioned in terms of the lower graduation rates, in terms of the skills that the member for Swan River (Mr. Wowchuk) was talking about, the skills deficit. Where are the plans to actually address and improve these areas? I see no vision, no plans; it's sad.

Instead of developing plans, this government picked an argument with the Manitoba Teachers' Society. Instead of working with teachers to find ways to improve education in Manitoba, the government members are resorting to rhetoric over substance, and we are not seeing the improvements that we should see.

This government has cut support for French-language education in Manitoba at a time when it is increasing. We await for the plans to address the educational issues in indigenous communities. I'm glad that the federal government is making some progress here, but I don't see the province paying much attention to this.

In post-secondary education, we have been seeing cutbacks in funding to our post-secondary education institutions. We're seeing increases in tuition fees. We've seen the elimination of the tuition rebate. We've seen the health coverage for

international students being taken away. And I should add that these are students who have come here—I've been hearing from graduate students—they came here to make a contribution, to add to the body of knowledge and research on scientific and social science as well as physical sciences. And, certainly, there is an opportunity to welcome these students instead of to say, oh, we're just going to make you pay more if you come here. I think there would have been a much better way, a much better understanding of the importance that these students are playing in research and innovation, if they're grad students, bringing ideas and bringing their knowledge and their expertise from around the world to contribute here in Manitoba. And this is a government which is saying, no, no, we're not so interested in you. We're just going to cut back on the support for your health care while we're here. It's sending the wrong message, Madam Speaker.

I do appreciate the government's recent attention to talking more about addressing bullying and harassment and sexual harassment. This is a remarkable change from a government which many members who were in opposition not very long ago fought tooth and nail against a bill to bring in measures to reduce bullying in schools. And I'm glad that there's a more focused awareness, a—I'm—there is a need to, as we well know and as the—we have heard from both sides, of all sides of the Chamber in recent years of the need to do more. And I'm glad that the government members are at least moving in the right direction in this area.

\* (11:10)

I will conclude my remarks, Madam Speaker—thank you, merci—so that there can be a vote on this

resolution. And I hope all members will support it. Thank you.

**Mr. Mohinder Saran (The Maples):** Normally, I don't get that much time to speak, but I think I will get leave so that I can speak 10 minutes at least because normally this—all the members are not equal in this House and I'm not allowed to ask any questions.

So I don't know this is a conspiracy, discrimination, racism—all three of them. Therefore, I don't get that kind of a chance—sorry about that, when I say racism, it may not be the proper word. So I am—ask forgiveness in advance.

And—but I—first off, my—I was worried about when the—in The Maples constituency, some schools were put on hold, but I appreciate the minister for putting them back on the priority list. And those schools will be built, and The Maples people will be happy. And—although my own party's people there tried to bring me down, I'll go very hardily. But those people, Maples people, are helping me, and also I appreciate minister's help in that matter. And we will be working hard to make sure The Maples people get their—

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. Order, please.

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member will have 9 minutes remaining. The one hour for private members' resolutions has expired.

The hour being 11:12 a.m., this House is recessed—[interjection]—oh.

The hour being 12 noon, then, this House is recessed and stands recessed until 1:30 p.m.



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA**

**Thursday, April 12, 2018**

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