

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

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-Second Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ADAMS, Danielle	Thompson	NDP
ALTOMARE, Nello	Transcona	NDP
ASAGWARA, Uzoma	Union Station	NDP
BRAR, Diljeet	Burrows	NDP
BUSHIE, Ian	Keewatinook	NDP
CLARKE, Eileen, Hon.	Agassiz	PC
COX, Cathy, Hon.	Kildonan-River East	PC
CULLEN, Cliff, Hon.	Spruce Woods	PC
DRIEDGER, Myrna, Hon.	Roblin	PC
EICHLER, Ralph, Hon.	Lakeside	PC
EWASKO, Wayne	Lac du Bonnet	PC
FIELDING, Scott, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
FONTAINE, Nahanni	St. Johns	NDP
FRIESEN, Cameron, Hon.	Morden-Winkler	PC
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GOERTZEN, Kelvin, Hon.	Steinbach	PC
GORDON, Audrey	Southdale	PC
GUENTER, Josh	Borderland	PC
GUILLEMARD, Sarah, Hon.	Fort Richmond	PC
HELWER, Reg, Hon.	Brandon West	PC
ISLEIFSON, Len	Brandon East	PC
JOHNSON, Derek	Interlake-Gimli	PC
JOHNSTON, Scott	Assiniboia	PC
KINEW, Wab	Fort Rouge	NDP
LAGASSÉ, Bob	Dawson Trail	PC
LAGIMODIERE, Alan	Selkirk	PC
LAMONT, Dougald	St. Boniface	Lib.
LAMOUREUX, Cindy	Tyndall Park	Lib.
LATHLIN, Amanda	The Pas-Kameesak	NDP
LINDSEY, Tom	Flin Flon	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Malaya	Notre Dame	NDP
MARTIN, Shannon	McPhillips	PC
MOSES, Jamie	St. Vital	NDP
MICHALESKI, Brad	Dauphin	PC
MICKLEFIELD, Andrew	Rossmere	PC
MORLEY-LECOMTE, Janice	Seine River	PC
NAYLOR, Lisa	Woleseley	NDP
NESBITT, Greg	Riding Mountain	PC
PALLISTER, Brian, Hon.	Fort Whyte	PC
PEDERSEN, Blaine, Hon.	Midland	PC
PIWNIUK, Doyle	Turtle Mountain	PC
REYES, Jon	Waverley	PC
SALA, Adrien	St. James	NDP
SANDHU, Mintu	The Maples	NDP
SCHULER, Ron, Hon.	Springfield-Ritchot	PC
SMITH, Andrew	Lagimodière	PC
SMITH, Bernadette	Point Douglas	NDP
SMOOK, Dennis	La Vérendrye	PC
SQUIRES, Rochelle, Hon.	Riel	PC
STEFANSON, Heather, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
TEITSMA, James	Radisson	PC
WASYLIW, Mark	Fort Garry	NDP
WHARTON, Jeff, Hon.	Red River North	PC
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
WISHART, Ian	Portage la Prairie	PC
WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, November 21, 2019

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk): It is my duty to inform the House that the Speaker is unavoidably absent. Therefore, in accordance with the statutes, I would ask the Deputy Speaker to please take the Chair.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Doyle Pivniuk): 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 which is in accordance with Thy will, that we seek it with wisdom, know it with certainty and accomplish it perfectly for the glory and honour of Thy name, for the welfare of all our people. Amen.

Please be seated.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 6—The Planning Amendment Act

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Municipal Relations): I move, seconded by the Minister of Central Services, (Mr. Helwer), that Bill 6, The Planning Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'aménagement du territoire, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Ms. Squires: This bill will amend The Planning Act to extend subdivision-approving authority for the City of Brandon. This amendment will also give the Province authority to make regulations designating a municipal council as an approving authority and to establish eligibility requirements and conditions for when a council can approve subdivisions.

I am pleased to present this bill to the House for consideration.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Any other bills? *[interjection]*

The question before the House is the reading of bill—the first reading of Bill 6, The Planning Amendment Act.

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

Bill 4—The Manitoba Hydro Amendment Act

Hon. Jeff Wharton (Minister of Crown Services): I move, seconded by the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Relations (Ms. Clarke), that Bill 4, The Manitoba Hydro Amendment Act, be now read for a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Wharton: Bill 4 amends The Manitoba Hydro Act and enables Manitoba Hydro to perform more efficient cash management within existing credit frameworks. The amendment will increase the short-term borrowing authority and bring Manitoba Hydro into greater alignment with other similar public utilities across Canada.

The amendment seeks to increase the short-term borrowing authority from \$500 million to \$1.5 billion. The current limit was established in 1992 prior to Centra Gas and Manitoba Hydro—or, Winnipeg Hydro acquisitions. The amendment will allow Manitoba Hydro to mitigate potential risks due to unanticipated events, which performs favourably with credit rating agencies and allows Manitoba Hydro to borrow more efficiently from fiscal institutions.

The amendments to the short-term borrowing limit will bring annual savings to Manitoba Hydro and ratepayers of approximately 8 to 15 million dollars, depending on financial markets and cash balances. Manitoba Hydro secures funds up to three months in advance, with requirements with the vast majority of prefunding currently secured with long-term financial—financing through the Province, resulting in additional costs to Manitobans. Under the amendment, Manitoba Hydro will be able to reinvest to reduce financial costs.

The initiative shows our government's priority, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and our commitment to fixing our finances to help save Manitobans money by shopping smarter. By changing Manitoba Hydro's short-term borrowing limit, the cost of ratepayers to service Manitoba Hydro's debt will be reduced.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is it a pleasure of the— is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the first reading of

Bill 4, The Manitoba Hydro Amendment Act?
[Agreed]

Any other further bills?

**Bill 201—The Legislative Assembly Amendment
and Legislative Assembly
Management Commission Amendment Act**

Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface): I move, seconded by the member for Tyndall Park (Ms. Lamoureux), that Bill 201, The Legislative Assembly Amendment and Legislative Assembly Management Commission Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Assemblée législative et la Loi sur la Commission de régie de l'Assemblée législative, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Lamont: This is a bill designed to amend and modernize Manitoba's laws surrounding the definition of official parties. We do believe that in the interests of democracy that this should—this is a bill that should be considered to reflect and modernize the act and make it match representation of official parties in other provinces.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the first reading of Bill 201, The Legislative Assembly Amendment and the Legislative Assembly Management Commission Amendment Act? All in order? Is it agreed to the House? Is it—we all agree?
[Agreed]

Now we'll go—if there's any other—no further other bills, we'll go on to committee reports. Tabling of reports?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage—the required 90 minutes notice prior to the routine proceedings was provided in accordance with rule No. 26-2.

Would the honourable minister please proceed with her statement.

Holodomor

Hon. Cathy Cox (Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to recognize the Holodomor, a dark chapter in history, when wheat became a weapon in Ukraine.

In 1932 and 1933, an artificial famine in Ukraine was created through the deliberate seizure of land and

crops. On fertile lands known as the breadbasket of Europe, millions of people slowly starved to death.

* (13:40)

For many years, the Holodomor went unrecognized and even denied. But the truth has come to light because brave survivors have boldly shared their stories to help ensure this horrific chapter in history is never forgotten.

And last year, on the 85th anniversary of the Holodomor, Mrs. Luba Semaniuk shared her experience as a young girl growing up in Ukraine. Her words are well worth repeating as a reminder of what millions of people suffered through.

She wrote: I will never forget the sights and sounds of people crying because they had nothing to eat. I will never forget painfully watching family and neighbours dying of starvation, and I will never forget my mother grinding up dried corn cobs and husks and using that to make soup broth for her children to survive. And even though that was all that they had, my mother was telling me to take some of the broth over to neighbours, only to find the mother and her two young sons dead of starvation. These are things that should never be experienced by anyone, especially a six-year-old girl. And she says she will never forget and forever remember.

We must continue to build awareness about the Holodomor. One of the ways we are accomplishing this is by educating our children and grandchildren.

And it was my sincere honour to host students today from the English-Ukrainian bilingual program at R.F. Morrison School during today's noon-hour commemoration of the Holodomor here at the Manitoba Legislature. And under the direction of teacher Hannya Bryl-Klimenko, the students prepared a beautiful dance to commemorate the Holodomor. It is a chapter that we teach the next generation about this dark chapter in history, to ensure this atrocity is never ever repeated.

As another way to raise awareness, members of this House will notice our Ukrainian flag flying at half-mast in Memorial Park today.

As a special commemoration of the Holodomor, thoughtful members of Manitoba's Ukrainian community have graciously provided each member of the House with stalks of wheat tied with a black ribbon, which has become a symbol for the Holodomor.

Madam Speaker, as we reflect on this atrocity, I would like to request a moment of silence in honour of those who perished in Holodomor.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is it the will of the House to have a moment of silence after we get through all the minister statements? *[Agreed]*

The honourable member for Fort Garry, Riverview, to the minister's statement.

Mr. Mark Wasyliv (Fort Garry): On November 23rd, we and the rest of the world will commemorate the genocidal famine known in Ukrainian as the Holodomor. It's considered to be one of the worst atrocities in human history, but it's relatively unknown.

In 1986, a study of the famine by British historian Robert Conquest, entitled *Harvest of Sorrow*, was perhaps the first time that Western audiences received information about this tragic event.

There is evidence that an estimated 10 million Ukrainians suffered slow, horrifying death in a conscious act to starve the Ukrainian people and to take away their hope for a free and independent Ukraine. This is a horrible event and it's inflicted a deep and lasting scar on the Ukrainian community here and throughout the world.

There are strong and vibrant Ukrainian communities here in Manitoba and across the country. Many of these families were directly touched or impacted in some way by this genocide.

The famine and genocide has been recognized by the provincial government as an atrocity and a dark page in human history.

I urge the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba to join with the Ukrainian community in commemorating this tragic event. By honouring the survivors and those who lost their lives in the famine, we are also bringing awareness to the tragedy.

It is only with these hard lessons of the past that we can hope to prevent reoccurrences of genocide in the future.

Vichnaya pamyat, vichnaya pamyat, vichnaya pamyat. Eternal memory, eternal memory, eternal memory.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I ask for leave to respond to the minister's statement.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is there leave for the honourable member for Tyndall Park to speak on this minister's statement? *[Agreed]*

Ms. Lamoureux: I rise today to speak in remembrance of those from Ukraine who suffered the horror of the genocide, the Holodomor.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the famine imposed on Ukraine 86 years ago began with the deportation of Ukraine's farmers through several waves. There were also deportations and executions of Ukraine's religious, intellectual and cultural leaders.

I am grateful we have such a strong presence of Ukrainian heritage here in Manitoba, and we are incredibly fortunate to have such an active community who educates us through commemoration events.

Several years ago, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I had the opportunity to experience the national museum memorial to Holodomor victims in Kyiv, Ukraine. Here, I was able to learn more about and reflect on this horrible genocide. This is where the Holodomor and the true tragedy behind it became very real for me.

Mr. Speaker, the senses that overcome one's body in this museum resonate and amplify how horrific the famine was. It portrays the pain and suffering that millions of people were forced to endure. When I reflect upon this experience, I recall two angels of sorrow at the entrance of the monument. These angels represent the guardians of the souls who starved.

I also think about the more commonly recognized statue of the young girl clutching a handful of wheat. This statue is titled the Bitter Memory of Childhood, and has been dedicated to the most vulnerable victims of starvation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the stories of our history can often be terrible and unexplainable to articulate; however, we must continue to tell them in remembrance and the hope to learn from the past.

Thank you.

A moment of silence was observed.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Team Kurz Curling Champions

Mr. Scott Johnston (Assiniboia): Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is my honour today to rise to pay tribute to an outstanding curling team from my constituency of Assiniboia.

We have us—we have with us in the gallery today Team Kurz, whose home rink is the Assiniboine

Memorial Curling Club. That's the home of champions, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They were the nine—they were the 2019 gold medal winners this past October at the World Mixed Curling Championship in Aberdeen, Scotland.

Team Kurz members are: Skip Colin Kurz, who unfortunately couldn't make it today; Third Meghan Walter; Second Brendan Bilawka; Lead Sara Oliver and Coach Jim Waite. In April 2018, they won the mixed provincial curling championship. Later that year, Team Kurz won the nationals and celebrated our province's first mixed Canadian title win in a decade.

With their win, they earned the honour of representing Canada at the World Mixed Curling Championship in 2019. This past October, after a week-long, tough competition, Team Kurz defeated Team Kapp of Germany 6-5, in an exciting come-from-behind win, to earn the gold medal.

With this victory, Canada has now won back-to-back world mixed curling championships, and I know that certainly warms our Premier's (Mr. Pallister) heart, as he's a former mixed champion.

This young team of talented curlers continues to have a very bright future, and I am sure they will do Manitoba proud for many years to come.

Madam Speaker, I would ask that my colleagues join me as I congratulate Team Kurz for winning gold at the mixed-World Mixed Curling Championship.

Well done.

West Central Women's Resource Centre

Ms. Lisa Naylor (Wolseley): Manitoba's rate of violence against women is double the national average. With the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence commencing next week, I wanted to commemorate an organization in the Wolseley constituency who is working so hard to support women and non-binary folks.

Today, I am pleased to highlight the West Central Women's Resource Centre. This centre is actively breaking down systemic barriers and providing desperately needed services to women and their children.

The drop-in centre sees about 100 women a day, who come to reduce isolation and have their basic needs met: a meal, a shower, hygiene products, laundry facilities or access to a telephone. The centre also offers dozens of programs, from mentorship to

job readiness support and child-minding training as just a few examples.

* (13:50)

Over the past years, the staff and volunteers have noticed a significant increase in demand for their services. Last year, the centre connected 194 women and their families to housing and income supports, provided critical trauma support, served 14,000 meals, helped settle 302 newcomers, and led the development of a strategy to end homelessness for women in Winnipeg.

To keep up with the growing demands for their services, the centre has made a commitment to purchase the Clinic site, also located in Wolseley in a very central location, to continue to serve clients from downtown, West End, and all over the core area of the city.

This tripled the centre's space, allowing them to expand services; the cost of the relocation requires the centre to raise \$7 million in private and government funds.

Minister Squires has been very supportive of the centre and I look forward to—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I just want to remind the member that you can't use members' names. It has to be either their department or their constituency name.

Ms. Naylor: The minister has been very supportive of the centre and I look forward to working with her and all of my colleagues in the Chamber to continue to support the great work of the centre and to champion their fundraising efforts.

Today, we have staff and clients from the centre here. Thank you so much for your compassion and dedication to support some of our city's most vulnerable women.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for Wolseley.

Ms. Naylor: Mr. Speaker, I ask for leave to have the names of my guests included in Hansard.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is it the will of the House to have leave to have the guests listed in Hansard? *[Agreed]*

Rachel Bergen, Megan Carrothers, Lorie English, Eden Friesen, Sharon James, Halima Jelloul, Helena Kelly, Gloria Knott, Denise MacDonald,

Haidee Maderal, Melissa McGregor, Dale Pike, Lisa Spring

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Any other members' statements?

Weston Memorial Community Centre

Ms. Malaya Marcelino (Notre Dame): Mr. Deputy Speaker, many times when we think of community centres, sports activities come to mind. Community centres keep their visitors and members positively occupied and provide a space for them to interact with one another.

Weston Memorial Community Centre goes the extra mile; it provides a safe haven for many, most especially seniors and children, and it has been serving the Notre Dame community since the 1940s.

This community centre is located close to Blake Gardens co-op, which is the province of Manitoba's largest government housing complex. Many of the residents living there are serviced by the community centre, and this centre hosts about 600 to 900 community members every week.

Weston Memorial Community Centre offers various programs to its guests. Their weekly after-school program provides children with hot meals and a safe space to play. And other programs include the Bright Start play program and the City of Winnipeg Free Play drop-in.

This community centre also has a host of programs for seniors. Senior Tuesdays provides seniors with healthy lunches and technology classes. Weston Club 302 Bingo is a favourite for many of the participating members.

And other activities available for community members include Ping-Pong, foot care, Zumba classes, Spirit of Peace anger management classes, and an upcoming chess club. They also provide the larger community with food through the Sparling United Church's food bank.

Weston Memorial Community Centre has lived up to its mandate and more, and continues to do so by uniting the community through enjoyable and developmental programming.

To the staff and volunteers at Weston Memorial Community Centre, I applaud you. And a special thank you to Michelle Cooke and Brennon Green, community centre staff who are joining us here today in the gallery.

Recognizing Federal Cabinet Ministers from Manitoba

Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface): J'aimerais offrir mes félicitations à Dan Vandal, le député fédéral de Saint-Boniface–Saint-Vital, pour sa nouvelle position comme Ministre des Affaires du Nord.

Translation

I would like to offer my congratulations to Dan Vandal, MP for Saint Boniface–Saint Vital, on his new position as Minister of Northern Affairs.

English

I would like to offer my congratulations to Dan Vandal, MP for Saint Boniface–Saint Vital, for being appointed to the federal Cabinet. As Minister of Northern Affairs, he faces a portfolio with major challenges as well as major opportunities. It's great to see it—a province—our province have a representative like Dan, who is both Franco-Manitoban and Metis, on the national stage.

I'd also like to wish the best to Jim Carr, who has been appointed to special representative for the Prairies. Former Premier Brad Wall was just saying to—Jim was an excellent choice, and we know that we are, as a House, unified in wishing him the very best in recovering from his illness.

This is a turbulent political time in Canada, and while we all have our political differences, I would also like to wish the best for all Manitoba MPs from the Conservative and NDP parties in representing our province and all its peoples.

There are many reasons to be grateful for being Manitoban, and one of them is that at all levels of government we have a fantastic tradition of a dynamic political culture.

Thank you and best wishes to all MPs.

Merci.

Altona Police Service—100th Anniversary

Mr. Josh Guenter (Borderland): It is my pleasure to recognize a very special anniversary in my constituency. On October 19, 2019, the Altona Police Service held a community ball, a night of fine eating and entertainment attended by dignitaries and over 250 members of the community, to celebrate a very historic 100-year milestone for the local police service.

It was a wonderful night for our community, and the performances by the Winnipeg Police Service pipe band and local musicians Brothers Keep and DJ Kyle had everyone involved. The police service selected The Station, our local Youth for Christ, as the beneficiary of the proceeds from the evening.

One hundred years ago, in 1919, the village of Altona hired its first night watchman, who was tasked with filling and lighting street lamps, ensuring street safety and enforcing the curfew for children under 16. Later that year, Altona hired a police constable who assumed these duties, along with new ones like repairing streets and sidewalks, conducting janitorial services for the local school and acting as a truancy officer.

The job description has obviously changed with the times, but the Altona Police Service still delivers the same level of professionalism, integrity, honesty and reliability.

I want to thank past members of the Altona Police Service, as well as those serving today: Sergeant Dan Defer; Corporal Shawn Tarnick; Constables Mark Legal, Brendan Funk, Anthony Dueck, Dustin Giesbrecht; and Special Constable Sanja Kiansky. And I want to especially thank Police Chief Perry Batchelor, for his service to our country previously as a member of the Armed Forces and for his service to our community today. Congratulations.

Thank you.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Before we start with oral questions I would like to draw the attention to all honourable members to the Speaker's Gallery. We have with us today a good friend, Raquel 'detmuss'—Raquel Dancho, MP elected for Kildonan-St. Paul, and her fiancée, Scott Gurski, is with her. And we also—who also—guests—they're also guests of the Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage (Mrs. Cox).

And also today we have with us is Brynn Fielding, the daughter of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding). She's with us here today. Welcome.

And we also have the former MLA for Transcona, Blair Yakimoski.

Welcome everyone here today.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, on a first question.

Recent Liquor Mart Robberies Request for Summit to Address

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Yakimoski-like reception there, eh?

On a question on the recent spate of thefts from liquor stores, Mr. Speaker.

You know, nobody should feel like they're in danger when they go to work or when they're simply visiting a business in the community, and yet time and time again over the past few months we have seen increased thefts from liquor stores, many of which have been broadcast across social media, bringing that issue closer and closer to home. But, yesterday, one of these incidents, which took place at the Tyndall Park Liquor Mart, rose the issue to a new level, unfortunately. Course, our thoughts are with the victims, both the bystanders and the employees of the Liquor Mart. But what is concerning is that this issue has been raising—has been rising in prominence here in the province of Manitoba, and yet this Premier and this government have not acted to stem the tide.

The question for the Premier today is simple: Will he convene a summit, bringing together unions, community groups, businesses and the provincial government, as well as law enforcement, to get a handle on the thefts from Liquor Marts?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Well, of course, our hearts go out to the victims, the family and friends of these people who were attacked by this senseless series of events.

* (14:00)

In fact, the member is quite wrong in his assertion in respect of actions; we've been taking a whole-of-government approach and we'll continue to. We've actually embarked on eight new initiatives in just the last five weeks in respect of this and other related issues around crime, contributing over \$14 million to those initiatives alone.

That being said, when someone is injured as a consequence of an attack such as this, it reminds all of us of the vital importance that lies in making sure we do our best to create an environment of public safety and security for all our citizens.

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

Mr. Kinew: The Tyndall Park Liquor Mart has been a hotspot for this activity for some time. The Premier would be well aware of this; the minister responsible would be well aware of this as well. And yet, in spite of that, they refuse to act and they put no measures in place to prevent an incident such as the one that unfolded yesterday from happening.

Now we see that the liquor corporation is putting into place some additional measures such as a security measure, but the question remains: What steps will be taken to protect paying customers once they leave into the parking lot?

Again, we are seeing from this government a lack of attention to the immediate solutions needed to stem the tide of these thefts from liquor stores, but also ignorance regarding the addressing of the long-term root causes that has led to an increase of crime and violence in the city of Winnipeg as well as across the province of Manitoba.

So the question remains: Will the Premier convene this summit and will he commit to new resources to respond to—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable minister's—member's time is up.

Mr. Pallister: There's a lot in the member's preamble, none of which is factual.

The fact is that we have been taking action and we'll continue to take action. We've been adopting a whole-of-government approach. We've been working with our partners not only in the police forces of our province, but in various other community agencies as well. And so we will continue to take action.

That being said, the member would perhaps have the opportunity to explain to Manitobans in his next preamble why his party, during the run-up to and during the election campaign, failed to mention or make a single reference to public safety in their platform.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, on a final supplementary question.

Mr. Kinew: So, the Premier will also know that in addition to the Tyndall Park location being a particular hotspot for this sort of Liquor Mart theft, that the location at Portage and Banning is also a hotspot for this sort of activity.

I'm sure many other MLAs and ministers in the room here know that there are Liquor Mart thefts

happening in their communities as well, yet what specific steps is this government taking to stop them today?

Silence. That speaks volumes about this government's approach. They refuse to take action to address these problems.

Immediately, they could call this summit which would bring together unions, business, law enforcement and the Province. But importantly, they need to take action on addressing the root causes—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: —of crime as well. On that front, complete silence once again.

Mr. Speaker, this government is failing to act.

When will the Premier commit to calling the summit as well as addressing the root causes of crime in Manitoba?

Mr. Pallister: Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I fail to accept the member's assertion that he and his party are emblematic of safer streets. The fact of the matter is that they, in their 50-page platform, did not make one single reference. The member speaks about silence— not one reference: not one reference to safer streets, not one program suggestion.

While we have acted on dozens of program initiatives and, of course, are going to act on more, while we are investing millions—tens of millions of dollars—in working toward safer streets, the member offers not one single suggestion, not one single program assertion, not one advance of one idea except to try to capitalize on the day after a violent action was perpetrated on innocent people by a misguided youth and others.

I fail to accept the preamble of the member. We will continue to work diligently for safer streets and safer neighbourhoods for the people of Manitoba.

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

Municipal Government Funding Operating Grants and Services

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Well, perhaps if the Premier would show some of the outrage for the actual crimes that are occurring that he shows when we attack his policy failures, then maybe we would get somewhere here in the province of Manitoba.

You know, just last week—if he wants a solution presented—we presented an idea of providing community supports for organizations like Bear Clan, Mama Bear Clan, Fearless R2W and Aboriginal Youth Opportunities to create that bridge between law enforcement and the community, which is clearly in need of allies at this time. And yet we saw that it was completely absent from any sort of approach addressing the root causes when they brought down their Throne Speech this week.

Now, the issue extends further to municipalities across the province of Manitoba. Within the past few days, we've heard of numerous proposed cuts for libraries, from community centres, even from policing: all services which would help us respond to this current spate of violence in Winnipeg. And yet where does the origin of that challenge lie?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The leader's time is up.

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Long on questions, short on ideas, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And that characterizes the NDP's approach on these issues and many others.

The fact remains that we've launched over 100 new initiatives in respect of the issues the member vaguely references without any specificity. We've launched initiatives to address treatment for those who are engaged in the use—regular use or the addictive use of alcohol, of drugs and other substances. We've engaged in upgrading the educational programs that were never upgraded during four terms of NDP government, so that our children can be educated as to the dangers of drug use. We've engaged experts in the consultative process of designing strategies, through the VIRGO report and other mechanisms, to co-operatively work to make our streets safer for people, to help people live safer lives.

But one thing we will not do is make excuses for criminal behaviour among our young people, as the member opposite seems to want to do on occasion. And I would suggest that we encourage all of us here not to try to score political points on the backs of those victims of crimes of irresponsible people who commit—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable First Minister's time is up.

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

Mr. Kinew: Well, all the initiatives that the Premier is highlighting were paid for with federal money, so I hope that Justin Trudeau gets his—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: —thank-you card in the mail, Mr. Speaker.

So I raise that point because the Premier knows full well the impact of adequate funding from one level of government to the other, and what that has to do with the provision of services. That is relevant today because the city of Winnipeg is now contemplating cuts, as are many other municipalities across the province, to services like policing, to community centres and to libraries. Now, they are being forced into this position because of the cuts and the operating grant freezes that this provincial government has handed down to them.

In light of the current spate of violence and the social challenges our province is facing, will the Premier simply reverse his cuts and freezes to municipalities across Manitoba?

Mr. Pallister: The City of Winnipeg's police budget is 22 per cent higher than it was 10 years ago, Mr. Speaker. The member always offers, and the NDP consistently offer, no practical solution other than throw money at the problem. That's it. That's where it starts and ends with them when the actual solutions are much more complex and are being engaged in by many of the people on this side of the House directly, and all of the people on this side of the House indirectly, through partnerships, and through hard work, honest work.

Rather than simply saying let's make the problem go away by throwing more money at it, I suggest the member and his colleagues engage in a little research before they make phony assertions, such as the federal government's paying for everything. They should remember that in those 100 initiatives, 95-plus of them are provincially funded by provincial taxpayers out of the same pocket that funds federal initiatives.

We work with the federal government co-operatively. We'll continue to do that, and we'll work with the City of Winnipeg and the other municipalities as well.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Mr. Kinew: Our communities thrive when we can raise our families in wonderful spaces, when our young people have the ability to expand their minds by accessing books in a local community library, when our children can reach their full potential, learning the life lessons afforded to them by playing sports out of local community centres, when our family members can shop safely at a Liquor Mart in our community because there is adequate law enforcement resources to keep our communities safe.

* (14:10)

And yet, all of those initiatives are under attack because of this Premier's cuts and his freezes that he has handed down to municipalities across Manitoba.

Now, many Manitobans are starting to connect the dots and they are not happy with the provision of services—or the lack thereof—overseen by this government and its Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding) dating back to his time as a city councillor.

Will the Premier simply stand up today in this House and commit to ending the freeze and the cuts for municipalities right across Manitoba?

Mr. Pallister: This year we'll invest more than \$1 billion in excess of what the NDP ever did in the caring and compassionate departments of government. We invest more than any other province in these departments per capita. In fact, the contributions for police services in the city of Winnipeg have risen at more than twice the rate of inflation over the last decade.

The member's simplistic solutions are always in the line of just throw more money at the problem and it'll go away. The member stands on the other side of the House and tries to argue he's a proponent for safer streets when the record he possesses and his party possesses does not speak to the commitment to safer streets. The actions of this government do.

WRHA Staffing Levels Employee Engagement Survey

MLA Uzoma Asagwara (Union Station): Mr. Speaker, the WRHA made a \$16-million cut to staffing in just one year, as explained in the health authority's financial statement. That's the biggest cut in the history of that organization. In real terms, it means that the people still working in our hospitals are being stretched further and further. Yet rather than engage with our front-line health workers to support their work, the Pallister government decided to cancel

this year's 'employee'—Employee Engagement Survey.

Why has the minister allowed this to happen?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): Mr. Deputy Speaker, yesterday the opposition tried to assert that somehow the number of doctors working in the WRHA was down. It was no more correct yesterday than it is today. It is false.

The number of doctors, including emergency physicians in emergency departments, is up.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for Union Station, on a supplementary question.

MLA Asagwara: Mr. Speaker, the Pallister government's cancellation of the Employee Engagement Survey, which is the question I was asking about previously, is really—just doesn't make any sense. Just weeks ago, the health region called a press conference focused specifically on the recruitment and retention strategies, and they recognized that they don't have enough staff. Yet, at that exact moment, the Pallister government cancelled the Employee Engagement Survey.

To put it plainly, they say they want a strong workforce, but they don't really want to hear what the workers in our hospitals have to say.

So again, I ask: Why has the minister allowed—
[interjection]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

MLA Asagwara: —that to happen?

Mr. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to respond to the member's comments yesterday in which they asserted a \$16-million decrease in overall salaries and wages in health care.

Now, I would say to all members that that was almost exclusively as a result of our commitment to tone at the top and trimming at the top. There are no front-line, no non-union—or, only non-unionized, only administrative positions that comprise that actual \$16-million decrease.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for Union Station, on a final supplementary.

MLA Asagwara: Mr. Speaker, I want to address what's going on in terms of the minister's wanting—or lack of wanting—to listen to what front-line service workers are trying to have made clear.

This government has cut millions of dollars from front-line staff, as documented in the health authority's annual—[*interjection*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

MLA Asagwara: —financial statement. There are 131 less beds in Winnipeg hospitals. Any staffperson at any level in the regional health authority would tell this government that more capacity is needed. In fact, they're telling this government that more capacity is needed, and yet the minister clearly doesn't want to hear that.

The survey was cancelled. It was the wrong approach. It's not what Manitobans expect or deserve—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member's time is up.

Mr. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Speaker, yesterday the opposition tried to assert that there are less doctors working now in Manitoba when, in actuality, there are more doctors working in Manitoba.

So, are there more nurses working now in Manitoba? Yes. Are there more doctors working now in Manitoba? Are there more emergency department physicians working at the WRHA? Is this government getting better health care senior—sooner for all Manitobans?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for Thompson, on a question.

Access to Affordable Child Care Wait-List and Capital Projects

Ms. Danielle Adams (Thompson): Mr. Speaker, we know more and more parents are struggling to find affordable public child care. Sadly, it is women that are typically impacted most with this. But I don't think this concerns the minister.

Through a freedom of information request, which I will table, we have learned a total of 12 previously approved capital projects were placed on hold. Those projects were previously approved and ready to be built and expand early child-care centres in Manitoba.

Why has the minister placed these projects on hold?

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Families): I thank the member for the question.

And I will indicate for the member that we are working diligently with the Manitoba Child Care Association, with parents and families, closely to

ensure that we move towards a better system that is more available for Manitoba families.

We know that we inherited a significant mess from the previous NDP government. We are committed to cleaning up that mess on behalf of Manitoba families to ensure that they have the daycare that they need when they need it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for Thompson, on a supplementary question.

Ms. Adams: These are critical, needed child-care spaces that the Premier (Mr. Pallister) and his minister have placed on hold. These are opportunities for families to go to work, go to school, and they are simply being set aside. They are afraid to admit that they are failing to provide more child-care spaces.

Mr. Speaker, in a free—in the same freedom of information we found the government has not updated the child-care wait-list but they have—and they will not disclose it.

Will the minister disclose the number of children on the child-care wait-list today?

Mrs. Stefanson: Well, I can tell the member opposite that that child-care wait-list more than doubled under the previous NDP watch, Madam Speaker.

We will work and continue to work with the Manitoba Child Care Association, with Manitoba families, towards ensuring that there is affordable child care there for Manitobans when they need it.

What I will also say is one thing that we did announce in the last election is more than 1,500 new child-care spaces as a result of the expansion and the building of more schools in Manitoba, 13 more schools on top of the seven more schools that were previously introduced, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So, I know members opposite, you know, they want to say, you know, whatever they want from their seat, but we know the record under that previous NDP government, and I'll take no lessons—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member's—minister's time is up.

The honourable member for Thompson, on a final supplementary question. [*interjection*] Order.

Ms. Adams: Mr. Speaker, they stopped publicly disclosing the wait-list in June of 2018 and now they won't even disclose the numbers to the public. That can only mean one thing: that the wait-list has

increased and they are afraid to admit that they have broken yet another promise.

They are making it more difficult for public facilities to provide quality staff and programming through their funding freezes. Now we have learned that they are putting capital projects on hold and they are afraid to admit their cuts are growing the wait-list.

Why is the minister depriving our public of a child-care—[*interjection*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Ms. Adams: —system?

Mrs. Stefanson: Well, again, the member opposite is completely wrong in her preamble, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I'll reiterate again for the House that we're working closely with the Manitoba Child Care Association. We have a ministerial advisory group that will be meeting next week as well.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we take the issues of child-care affordability and of child-care accessibility very seriously. That's certainly why we have expanded our child-care tax credit as well, to ensure that we partner with the business community to—for the not-for-'profis'—profit sectors of our communities so that we can partner towards building more daycare facilities in the province of Manitoba to ensure that there are those spaces ready for Manitoba families when they need the child care.

* (14:20)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for Flin Flon, on a question. [*interjection*] Order.

Obstetric Services in Flin Flon Request for Reinstatement

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): November 18th marked the one-year anniversary since this government did away with obstetric services in Flin Flon. Dozens of families, children marched down the streets to protest this and to ask a very simple question: when will obstetric services be restored in Flin Flon? Their statement was very simple: We want birth.

So when will this minister tell us that he's restoring obstetric services in Flin Flon, and when is he going to make that happen?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): That member knows that the Premier (Mr. Pallister) and I were very proud to attend Flin Flon's opening of the emergency

department, a \$27-million new opening for that community.

The member also knows that, personally, myself and also—I'm a—the minister sat down and met with that group to talk about their concerns. And the member also knows the decisions to suspend those services was done on the basis of safety, as ordered by a doctor and a nurse expert.

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

Mr. Lindsey: Madam—or, excuse me, Mr. Speaker, the minister won't tell is that he forced the regional health authorities to use vacancy management in order to meet their austerity demands.

The minister need only look at the health region's two public compensation disclosure documents. It shows a 19 per cent decline in the number of physicians working in the Northern Health Region in just one year—19 per cent reduction in one year.

Why is the minister running northern health care into the ground and hurting our communities?

Mr. Friesen: Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm a bit confused by the assertion that somehow the opening of a new \$27-million emergency department for Flin Flon is somehow running it into the ground.

Beyond that, I would say, though, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this government has been clear that, while we inherited a mess, in terms of health care, from the NDP, we are working every day to be able to build the system that is more sustainable, better organized, with accountability built in, so that we have good health care not just today, but long into the future—not just here, but in the North.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for Flin Flon, on a final supplementary question.

Mr. Lindsey: The minister talks about opening a new ER, but he fails to talk about closing every other service at that hospital in Flin Flon.

So it's been a year since we've been without—[*interjection*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Lindsey: —obstetrics in Flin Flon. The region has been slow to staff up in order to meet the austerity demands of the Pallister government. Nineteen per cent decline in the number of physicians. The minister won't talk about that.

Who knows what's next on the chopping block. The minister can resolve this today by committing to the funds necessary to staff the North appropriately and he can commit to staffing up an obstetrics unit in Flin Flon.

Will he do that today?

Mr. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will review Hansard, but I believe that the member just indicated that there was a closing of every other service at the Flin Flon hospital, which is not just disagreeable, it is actually disappointing; it is fear mongering.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, where the NDP oversaw the disorganization and the disintegration of our health-care system, we are fixing that. We are rebuilding the Manitoba health-care system to get better care closer to home. And over the next number of months, that member will see how we are bringing health care back home to the North after years of disrepair by the NDP.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for Notre Dame, on a question.

Throne Speech Poverty Reduction

Ms. Malaya Marcelino (Notre Dame): Mr. Deputy Speaker, tens of thousands of Manitobans live in poverty. Thousands go hungry every day. Yet, unfortunately, Tuesday's Throne Speech included exactly zero references to the word poverty. It's a missed opportunity and it certainly is revealing about the Pallister government's priorities.

I ask the minister: Why is poverty missing from the Pallister government's agenda?

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Families): Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when poverty was mentioned in the context of the previous NDP government, it was mentioned in a way that Manitoba was the child poverty capital of Canada.

That is not something to be proud of at all, and that's why we took measurable steps to ensure that we put programs in place to ensure that we reduced that child poverty—the child poverty rate by some 42 per cent, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

We know that there's more work to be done, and we're committed to working with stakeholders in community towards eradicating poverty in our communities.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for Notre Dame, on a supplementary question.

Ms. Marcelino: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the 2019 HungerCount report shows that Manitoba has the highest food bank usage rate in the country and the highest percentage of children using food banks.

In the constituency that I serve, seniors tell me that they live on a grocery budget of \$6 per day, weekly food bank usage for families is normal, and we have schoolteachers who regularly pack extra food for their classroom students, and on Friday afternoons, schools give out food packages because they know that their students are unlikely to eat during the weekend. Yet, the word poverty does not appear one time in the Throne Speech.

Why is the Pallister government leaving so many Manitobans behind?

Mrs. Stefanson: I thank the member for the question.

There are indicators that are used nationally and standards that are used nationally to decipher what the poverty rates are across the country, and I know that under the previous NDP government we were the child poverty capital of Canada.

That was absolutely unacceptable. We put various measures in place to ensure that we have improved child poverty rates in Manitoba.

We recognize that no child that lives in poverty is acceptable, and we will move towards eradicating that, but we're not going to do this by playing politics across the floor of this Chamber, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We'll do it by working together.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for Notre Dame, on a final supplementary question.

Ms. Marcelino: Mr. Deputy Speaker, there has not been a single new commitment to social housing since the Pallister government came to office. This is despite all the research that points to housing-first policy successes that has changed the lives of thousands of Canadians for the better.

This government seems incapable of understanding that the wave of crime and addiction that we are experiencing are rooted in issues of poverty, violence and childhood trauma. If they did, the word poverty would have appeared at least once.

Will the Pallister government reconsider its approach and include poverty in their Throne Speech next year?

Mrs. Stefanson: We are taking measures to make life more affordable for Manitoba families. In fact, we have—there's 3,000 more Manitoba families that are

helped through our programs by the way of Rent Assist. So that helps in the area of housing, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

It goes without saying, really, that we inherited a mess from the previous NDP government: over \$1 billion in deferred maintenance charges that—on the backs of taxpayers of Manitoba. That affected the number of units that were available for those families that need them, because of their neglect of housing—of the current housing stock that Manitoba Families—that housing had for—in—under MHRC.

So we're working towards eradicating those problems, Madam Speaker—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable minister's time is up.

Public Safety and Crime Government Response

Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface): The Premier's major response to concerns about crime has been to cherry-pick statistics and deny that it's a problem.

The fact that the NDP didn't mention public safety in their platform once is no excuse for the inaction and denial we're seeing from this government. For a government in its second term, it's an increasingly threadbare excuse.

The Premier's had three years of majority government. Either he's in charge and responsible or he isn't. But since 2015, property crime is up 70 per cent, employees are being terrorized, and now hospitalized, by brazen thefts and not just at liquor stores. Whatever this government is doing, it ain't working.

Does this Premier recognize that on his watch, criminals feel as though they can steal as much as they want and nothing will happen to them? *[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Lamont: When is this government going to enforce the law?

* (14:30)

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Well, I'm—unfortunately, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think you may be losing control here a little bit because I wasn't able to hear the last part of the member's question, but I will say this: the part I did hear was something about he isn't working, and I would dispute that. I am sure he's working very hard.

But we are working even harder. We're working even harder to address the issues of crime in our

province and we'll continue to do that. We'll do it co-operatively and collaboratively. We'll continue to work with other levels of government. We'll continue to work with the municipalities in our province. We'll continue to work with the police forces, the prosecutors, the staff, the experts in our province who offer advice. We'll continue to consult and we will continue to implement, as we have been doing strategies that we believe can counter the trend of individual behaviour that is indescribably ignorant and hurtful.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for St. Boniface, on a supplementary question.

Mr. Lamont: When it comes to crime, this has been a do-nothing government. The Justice Department lost years of annual reports from the IIU. There's a crisis of the administration of justice in northern Manitoba. We have overdose deaths that aren't being reported to the medical examiner, a record number of murders in Winnipeg; but Thompson, Manitoba, is actually Canada's most dangerous city.

We heard six months ago that anti-theft measures in Liquor Marts were working, but now the problem is worse than ever. Employees and customers are being terrorized and assaulted.

Does the Premier really think the Justice Minister is doing a good job when it's clear that criminals can steal with impunity in this province?

Mr. Pallister: I appreciate a question on SNC-Lavalin from the member, Mr. Speaker, but that being said, we're addressing the issues of crime, crime prevention through a complex strategy, multi-faceted and all-party, all hands on deck, if the member would like to get involved. Certainly, we have all the departments working collaboratively.

We have initiated a number of programs specifically designed to address the social and the economic determinants—factors that can contribute to criminal activity. We have consistently invested more in our Families Department, our Education Department and Health Department to make sure that we are making the necessary investments, and we're doing so on a collaborative and foresighted manner, I might add, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as well.

So the member's assertions are false, and this is why he is where he is.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for St. Boniface, on a final supplementary question.

Mr. Lamont: For many years the city of Glasgow was the murder capital of Europe. This changed after they took a different approach to reducing and defusing gang violence to actively intervening with gang members to get them out of the life with the creation of violence prevention networks. It worked.

It is not enough to ask people and businesses to buy a stronger door that won't break when someone tries to kick it in. We want to reduce the number of people kicking in doors in Manitoba.

Will the Premier consider an all-party task force on crime to work with communities in order to develop recommendations on reducing crime and making communities 'safer', not just punishment after the fact?

Mr. Pallister: What an incredibly misguided approach, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to make false assertions, accusatory preambles, repeat them, put them on the record, and then ask for an all-party action committee.

Mr. Speaker, we have no desire to do anything but work with the experts on these issues, and we'll continue to do that, and to work with community representatives, the police, the prosecutors, but also those engaged in community betterment. We are not focused only on treatment, but also on education and preventative investments. And this multi-faceted approach will take time to work, as it did in Glasgow.

Emergency Medical Services Announcement of New Ambulances

Mr. Brad Michaleski (Dauphin): Mr. Speaker, after 17 years of the NDP government's mismanagement of taxpayers' dollars, our EMS system was outdated and ambulance fees were one of the highest in Canada.

Can the Minister of Health please update this House on the work our government has undertaken to improve our EMS system and the safety and quality of care for Manitobans and our front-line EMS professionals?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thank the member for Dauphin for the question. I also thank him for hosting the member for Brandon East (Mr. Isleifson), the new legislative assistant for Health, and also the new minister of government services when they opened the final completion of the new Dauphin emergency department just a week ago.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we promised to reduce ambulance fees by 50 per cent. We did it. We

promised to hire 150 new paramedics, and we did it. We've now—we're now committed to hiring 80 new paramedics. And last week we just announced the arrival of the first of a fleet of new ambulances for the province of Manitoba: a \$10-million investment to improve emergency medical services across the entire province.

We are getting better health care sooner, and this includes new ambulances for all of Manitobans to have—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The minister's time is up.

The honourable member for St. Vital, on a first question.

Northern Manitoba Freezing of CEDF Loans

Mr. Jamie Moses (St. Vital): Mr. Deputy Speaker, on Tuesday the Pallister government missed a great opportunity to announce it was lifting the freeze on business loans through the Communities Economic Development Fund. The fund provides vital financial support to businesses in northern Manitoba, but it has been frozen for two years.

Why is this Pallister government dragging on this for over two years when the support is needed now?

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance): Our government's very proud of the record we have in terms of getting the fundamentals of government right to ensure private sector investment happens in the province of Manitoba.

We know that Manitoba's leading the nation in private sector capital investment. That means money that's coming into the province and it also means jobs, Madam Speaker.

We encourage the opposition to join our plan to create 40,000 new jobs for Manitobans.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for St. Vital, on a supplementary question.

Mr. Moses: The CEO of CEDF, Mr. Speaker, appeared before the Thompson city council on October 28th and expressed the organization's desire to meet with the Pallister government to establish business loans—again, in the very near future.

Can the minister tell us the status of that request for that meeting and simply tell us when the loans will be reinstated?

Mr. Fielding: Our government is interested in meeting anyone that wants to create jobs in the

province of Manitoba. That's why we have some of the longest, lowest unemployment rate in Canada. That's why we see things happening in Manitoba. We have over 40,000 job-creation plan that's in place that will create jobs. We think that's a strategy that's going to work for Manitobans.

We're seeing some success, Madam—Mr. Deputy Speaker, in terms of the private sector capital investment. They're seeing Manitoba as an opportune place to come and invest, and that's exactly what's happening.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for St. Vital, on a final supplementary question.

Mr. Moses: Economic diversification is needed now more than ever, not just at the time of the Pallister government's choosing. The freezing of this two-year delay of new business loans for CEDF should never have occurred.

Why is the Pallister government neglecting this important financial lifeline in northern Manitoba for far too long?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): I wasn't sure if I heard lifeline or pipeline there, Mr. Speaker.

As far as the economic aspects of growing—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: —an economy, the NDP never misses a chance to kill jobs. In the midst of a very, very, very challenging harvest time, in the midst of tremendous stress for many, many families, especially farm families in rural Manitoba, CN threatens to strike and then launches a strike. And to show total 'insensitivity'—insensitivity towards the plight of not only farm families but all those who depend on the logistical services of CN rail, the Leader of the Opposition decides to enter into the fray and do a photo op with the Teamsters.

This is the level—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: —of insensitivity to the millions of dollars put at risk, the operating loans, the challenges that small businesses and family farms have to face every single day, the stress that family farms have to endure, and the member opposite decides to launch into the fray and pick sides, ignoring the realities being faced by Manitoba families today.

Shame on him.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Time for oral questions have—has expired.

An Honourable Member: On a point of order.

Point of Order

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, on a point of order.

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Yes, I congratulate the First Minister on his continued interest in the federal Conservative leadership campaign there, however I maintain committed to standing up for the—*[interjection]*

* (14:40)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: —people of Manitoba.

I will share an interesting fact with the—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Order.

Let's have respect in this Chamber here. Shame on everyone here.

Mr. Kinew: I'll share a quick fact that I learned from the Teamsters who were out on strike.

So the trains that are currently being moved by CN right now are not domestic product. They are currently prioritizing international shipments. These are intermodal trains. That means product coming into the country from China and emptied train cars heading back to port to be shipped back overseas.

So while this side of the House may want to stand up on the side of the billionaire shareholder class that has created this strike, we will stand up for the working people of Manitoba every single time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable Government House Leader, on the same point of order.

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): The member opposite cited no breach of a rule. He did, of course, protest too much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. He knows the hardship that is happening as a result of the strike.

I think that the Premier's (Mr. Pallister) words struck very close to the heart of the Leader of the Opposition, and that is why he felt that he had to stand up, so I hope that he actually takes the words from the Premier to heart, and I hope he reflects on those over the next day, and he may want to come back to the House with an apology.

As to any leadership intentions, from what I've seen in this House, the only person who should be worried about leadership is the member who occupies, for now, the office of the Leader of the Opposition, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On that point of order—*[interjection]* Order. Order. Order.

On that point, the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Kinew) does not have a point of order; the dispute is over the facts.

* * *

Mr. Deputy Speaker: And—but let's just have respect for each other in this Chamber. We've got a little bit too much heckling there. Let's respect each other's differences, and go on with debating here.

The time for oral questions has expired, as I said before. Now for orders of the day, government business. Oh, petitions. Sorry.

PETITIONS

Personal-Care Homes

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

Manitoba elders and seniors have built this province and should receive a high level of support, having earned the right to be treated with due respect, dignity, understanding and compassion as a fundamental human right.

Seniors who reside in personal-care homes have more diverse and complex physical and brain health issues today than those who were in similar homes even just five years ago, yet the staffing formula, or minimal personnel requirement, is over 20 years old.

The issue of the changes to, and more complex nature of, care is being exacerbated by the provincial government policy of discharging people out of hospitals more quickly, leaving many residents still in need of a high level of care.

Manitoba does not have enough health-care aides and nurses specifically trained to care for seniors with high and complex levels of physical and mental issues such as those with dementia, coupled with multiple chronic conditions.

The added complexity of care with such residents is putting additional stress on doctors and family members, as it may take six to eight weeks for a doctor to see a resident in a personal-care home.

Unfortunately, the lack of quality care received by many residents is not unique, causing one person to say that: It was easier to watch my dad die in the personal-care home than to watch him live in the personal-care home.

Staff are so overworked that they are forced to tell senior elders and residents in need: Go in your diaper; I can't help you; or, you will get food eventually.

Relatives are also being told that residents in care homes should not ever expect to walk again after hip or knee replacement surgery because care homes are not set up for rehabilitation.

The provincial government has allowed personal-care homes to serve food that is warmed from frozen instead of being freshly cooked, depriving seniors the taste of good food, which is one of the few real pleasures that they would be able to enjoy at this time of life.

Although residents enter personal-care homes to have the best possible quality of life in their last few days, weeks, months or years, relatives repeatedly hear the words: He came here to die; and: She came here to die.

Relatives are relatively angry, frustrated, disappointed and shocked at the care their loved ones now receive in Manitoba's personal-care homes.

Administrators in personal-care homes respond to complaints by stating they need more better—and better-trained staff.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to increase training and staffing requirements for personal-care homes in Manitoba to ensure residents receive high-quality, nutritious food as well as compassionate care.

Signed by Monique Earle, Rachel Scarpino, Wayne Lebosse *[phonetic]* and many others.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: In accordance with our rule 133-6, when petitions are read they must be deemed to be received by the House.

ORDERS OF THE DAY
GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable House leader—Government House Leader.

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): Sure, whatever, Madam—Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm not hung up on titles.

Could you please resume debate on the Throne Speech?

House Business

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader): On House business, pursuant to rule 33(8), I am announcing that the next private member's resolution to be considered on the next Thursday of private member's business will be one put forward for the honourable member for St. Johns.

The title of the resolution is Call to Address the Urgent Public Safety Crisis.

Miigwech.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It was brought by the honourable member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine) that, pursuant of rule 33(8), I am now announcing that the private member's resolution to be considered for next Thursday of private member's business will be one put forward by the honourable member for St. Johns.

The title of this resolution is called the—Call to Address the Urgent Public Safety Crisis.

In order?

THRONE SPEECH
(Second Day of Debate)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for—is—resume debate on the Throne Speech brought—that followed address presented by the—His Honour the Administrator.

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): I would like to begin my remarks today by acknowledging that we are gathered on Treaty 1 territory in the homeland and birthplace of the Metis Nation. I also want to acknowledge that all of us here gathered in the Chamber represent communities that are on, you know, the treaty territories and ancestral homelands of the Dakota, the Dene, the Anishinabe, the Anishininiw, the Cree, the Metis and the Inuit.

We are preparing to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the creation of the province of Manitoba, and so I think we ought to acknowledge 150 years ago that

there was a great leader by the name of Louis Riel, who helped to usher our province into confederation.

Now, Louis Riel was our crucial leader. He was our father of Confederation, and he was our first premier, Mr. Deputy Speaker. He formed a progressive government here in this territory, and he declared a bill of rights—a bill of rights that recognized the need to protect linguistic minorities, including the Franco-Manitoban community.

He articulated the affirmations of the rights of indigenous people, and he brought forth a vision where people from all backgrounds could live here and work together to make successful lives for themselves and their families.

Louis Riel founded Manitoba as a pluralistic, multicultural democracy made up of people who have a right to strong public services and public infrastructure. It's remarkable to think that he articulated all those things 150 years ago, and I'm very proud to stand here in this Chamber today, as should be every member in this Legislature, proud to be here as inheritors of Louis Riel's legacy.

* (14:50)

That was 150 years ago. Moving ahead to 100 years ago, we had the Winnipeg General Strike, which was a time when workers here in our Capital Region rose up together to declare their right to a living wage, to have the right to come home safely at the end of the day when they go to work in the morning and, of course, to have the freedom to negotiate and to bargain collectively.

Now, I would note that some 100 years later, many of these rights are still being fought for by people in the labour movement and workers and working people across Manitoba. But coming out of that general strike 100 years ago, J. S. Woodsworth became a prominent leader in this province and eventually founded the CCF which, in turn, became the NDP.

Now, I'm very proud, as are all my colleagues, to be leaders within the political movement that is the inheritor of those leaders of the Winnipeg General Strike, including leaders like Helen "Ma" Armstrong, who is very prominent in the women's labour league.

Now we, on this side of the House, stand firm in advocating for those rights, which is why many of my colleagues and I today joined the Teamsters who are currently on strike at CN. Again, we stand on the side of people who have to work for a living and the rights

that they have guaranteed under our Charter of Rights and Freedoms here in Canada.

So, it was 150 years ago, 100 years ago. We move now to 50 years ago this year. Ed Schreyer, in 1969, became premier of Manitoba and, in the process, formed our first NDP government.

Now, in his time in office he did many remarkable things, things that we would even regard as truly progressive today. He brought forward affordable public car insurance; he paved the way for a carbon-free electricity grid; they brought forward, for the first time, the idea of a basic income, and he ended the Conservative practice of charging health-care premiums here in the province of Manitoba.

Now, since Schreyer's time, the NDP has governed Manitoba for 32 of the last 50 years, and in the process, those governments helped to realize many aspects of Riel's vision, including in the Pawley years under Premier Howard Pawley, when we saw the introduction of a human rights code and the attendant protections of human rights, as well as the protection of French language rights here in the province of Manitoba.

Those rights were later expanded under Premier Gary Doer, who was elected 20 years ago this year, and, of course, Premier Greg Selinger.

Now, in the intervening years, we've also seen strong moves from NDP leadership while in opposition. Perhaps most notably Elijah Harper stood in this very Chamber and stopped the Meech Lake Accord for its refusal to adequately regard the rights of indigenous peoples, and I speak on behalf of our entire caucus in saying that we are very proud to be inheritors of that great legacy.

Now, the NDP caucus and the team that I'm very proud to stand here with today is impressive by any standard. We have people here who all did something very difficult to get elected to this place. We had members who made history in the process of coming to this Chamber, and we have some members who are still fighting each and every day to be able to sit in this House. I'm thinking of my colleague from Transcona at this time. And so we're very proud of our team.

I would say to you, Mr. Speaker, we are the only party in Manitoba that increased our seat count in this recent election and we took most of those seats from the government. That's right, Mr. Speaker. The government lost seats, including part of their Cabinet, in the most recent election, and anything else that they tell you is nothing but spin.

So we're very happy to be returned here with an increased number of seats. I hear the member from Assiniboia chirping and perhaps laying out the reasons why he refused to stand for re-election in St. James. Again, we know that he was fearful of the fact that the government was losing seats and I don't blame him. Again, trying to defend the moves that the Pallister government has made certainly didn't fly with the people of St. James and not with many other Manitobans as well.

Now, again, moving past the government's spin and just re-affirming once again for the record that they lost seats in the recent provincial election, that they lost one of their Cabinet colleagues, I do just want to return and reiterate the fact that I am very proud of the team that I am a part of here on our side of the Chamber. Now, I'm very honoured to have been chosen by the people of Manitoba to lead their official opposition and to act as the voice of conscience in this Chamber and to hold this government to account.

Now, it's an important role and it's a role that I share with my colleagues in a very humble way. And we hope that over the intervening years—four years, likely; perhaps three years if there's another early election—we will prove to the people of Manitoba that we are worthy of their support and we'll be working very hard to earn the right to form their next government here in the province of Manitoba. Now, to be sure, there is a lot of work to do. We have a lot of work to do to earn that trust, but when I look at our caucus, and when I look at our team, I see a team that is getting closer to representing Riel's vision for Manitoba and indeed the vision that this province was founded on.

Now, of course, we have much more work to do. There are certain aspects where we have to go beyond the vision that Louis Riel articulated here in Manitoba. And at this time I'm thinking specifically of the issue of gender, which Louis Riel did not include in his list of rights. And so, beginning very, very soon, we're going to be bringing forward measures to ensure that everybody in Manitoba has the respect and is included by this government, and I'm talking about all expressions of gender there. And over the next few years we will be working very hard to identify, to mentor and to support more women to enter into politics so that we achieve gender equity with the election of our next caucus and of our future Cabinet.

Now, this is an important step, along with other issues of representation, that we all must take seriously here. And when we achieve these goals, we

will all be the benefactors of that progress. Indeed, our democracy works best when everyone's voices are included, and I say that in terms of gender, I say that in terms of cultural communities, I say that in terms of economic backgrounds. For the people, by the people is an American phrase, but it is an ideal that we ought all aspire to when it comes to the exercise of our right to vote.

Climate change is one of the defining issues of our time, Mr. Deputy Speaker. One of the reasons why I entered into politics is because I want to help solve the climate crisis. Now, let's be clear: future generations will judge us by the way that we respond to the threat of global warming, and, specifically, future generations will judge us by the way that we responded to this threat of global warming over the next decade.

Now, they will ask each of us, as parents and as grandparents, you know, our kids and grandkids will sit us down someday and ask us what we did when we had a chance to act to prevent floods, ice storms and smoke from forest fires from permanently degrading and destroying our way of life here in Manitoba. And it's my intention, when they ask us what we did, that I will be able to say that I did what I could.

And so we know what is needed in order to address the issue of climate change, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We have to set targets that will help us end global warming. We have to put in place job-creating policies that will allow us to achieve those targets. But importantly, if politicians and political leaders fail to achieve those targets, then there must be accountability, and we should exercise accountability as severely as we do when governments fail to balance their budgets. Again, we pay attention to fiscal accounting; it's time for us to pay attention to environmental accounting as well.

*(15:00)

So the climate crisis is certainly a topic that demands urgent attention on the public policy level as political leaders. But I would argue that each of us also has a personal responsibility to do our part to assist the environment as well. So that's why, in my own life and in my own home, I am trying to take many steps to try and improve the impact that I have on the environment. So I switched the way that I get around from point A to point B. I continue to try and raise my kids to know how to live off the land.

And so when we do eat meat these days, it's probably an animal that we've harvested ourselves or

perhaps it's from the farmer that I order meat from in southwestern Manitoba—perhaps, actually, in your constituency, Mr. Deputy Speaker—who practises regenerative agriculture, meaning he's raising cattle and chickens and other animals on the land in a way that's designed to reduce emissions and yet to still have a good yield.

And so this sort of personal responsibility, personal agency and individual accounting, I think, is needed for all of us in order to be able to solve the climate crisis, and I'm hopeful that all 57–56 of my colleagues will take that seriously and in addition to acting in the public sphere, that as MLAs we will also help to spread the word in our own communities about the good work that we can do to help prevent global warming from turning the 'curmet'—current climate crisis into a climate catastrophe.

Now, in our recent alternative speech from the throne, we articulated many visions for how we might improve on the government's governing agenda. And, unfortunately, I was not surprised when they brought forth their Throne Speech that the document that we had prepared a week in advance pretty neatly anticipated the announcements that they were about to make.

So to draw your attention to a few of these priority areas, we know that there is a continued emphasis on cutting health care on the part of this government. And so we propose a different approach that sees us move upstream and invest in keeping people healthy in the community and healthy at home so that we can not only make the health-care system more sustainable in the long term, but also guarantee a strong quality of life for Manitobans for many, many years to come.

When we turn to education, we know that this government is intent on launching an education review whose predetermined outcomes likely include the amalgamation of school divisions, reduction in the amount of teachers and cuts to education funding—in fact, they campaigned on cutting education funding in the recent election—whereas we view education as an investment in young people that will help them adapt to the changing technology-driven society, which is continuing its evolution all around us.

Now, I've spoken with—Mr. Deputy Speaker, I've spoken with many tech experts, and what they tell me is that for sure you need what are called hard skill training: math, science, STEM topics. You need to be able to code and things like that. But many of these tech leaders tell me that those skills are often out of date within two to five years after being acquired by a

learner. And so what young people really need to be able to do during their educational journeys is to learn the ability to be autodidacts. Spelled more clearly and maybe a more conversational way, young people need to learn about lifelong learning. They need to develop the critical thinking, creative thinking and collaborative skills that will allow them to adapt to a changing world and a changing environment.

One of the best ways for young people to get this is to have a strong education from the K-to-12 level, but then also, you know, to have access to good college programs, to have good access to liberal arts undergraduate educations and then to have access to professional training as well, should they choose to further their educations in that direction.

Now, unfortunately, what we've seen so far from this government is a refusal to recognize that that is the way the world is headed and that young people ought to be able to have those academic freedoms and academic opportunities at their disposal. Instead, we're seeing a narrowing of the focus of education and vision, if you could even call it that, on the part of this government, that renders young people into simply being cogs in the machine.

Now, recently, we have also been talking a lot about public safety and the issue of crime in the province of Manitoba. In the recent Throne Speech, we saw a very narrow dealing with the topic, one that failed to deal with addressing the root causes. So what we advocate for on this side of the House is that we need immediate steps to make sure that people feel safe and secure in our communities right across Manitoba. But we also, at the same time, need to pay attention to the long-term investments that are needed to turn the issue of crime and violence in our communities into a more positive direction.

And so, from our recent alternative throne speech, I'd highlight just a couple of ideas. One is to provide stable operating funding to the Bear Clan Patrol. Whether you're in Brandon, here in Winnipeg, Selkirk, other communities, I think we all recognize the good work that Bear Clan is doing to provide a link between community members and services and, in some cases, even law enforcement.

Now, the other issue that I wanted to present from the alternative throne speech on this topic that I think is a good one that the government ought to pay attention to is the idea of placing community resources led by organizations like Fearless R2W, Aboriginal Youth Opportunities, Mama Bear Clan

and others into schools where they could interact with young people.

Many of us in this Chamber are familiar with school resource officers. These are police officers who are placed into schools. They attend high school hockey games. They attend graduation ceremonies. They attend, you know, just school on a day-to-day level, talking to kids in the hallway, the idea being that they can build a link between the students and the police services so that they can help better connect with young people when they are in need.

And so what we're proposing is to use a similar model, but to place community-based allies into those positions, so that you might have somebody like a Michael Champaign in a school like William Whyte, and then they notice when a young person hasn't been there for a few days—hey, is everything okay? Is there something going on at home that we can help you with? Could we maybe recommend that you talk to somebody who might be able to assist you with some of the challenges?

And, if we lower the barriers to entry for people asking for help, if we meet young people where they're at, if we wrap them with services and access to a pathway to success that begins with education, continues through post-secondary, advances with a good job that pays a living wage and then, of course, continues on to home ownership and the building of generational wealth for that family, then that is when we are going to truly transform things into our society into being one where each of us can be proud inheritors of Louis Riel's legacy and the articulators of his vision. *[interjection]* I want to thank my colleague, Matt—or thank my colleague from Concordia there for his continued dedication to this mission, and it's one that I take very seriously.

And so, over the next few years, but this session in particular, you are going to see us pushing to not just honour Louis Riel's vision and legacy with words, but to do so with actions. And so as long as God is willing and as long as the river doesn't rise, I will be here each and every day, pushing forward on that front. And so I thank you for your attention, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

However, if you've been listening carefully to question period and the Throne Speech, you will know that this government has already failed in their responsibility to govern responsibly for the people of Manitoba. And so it is with great hesitation, but indeed, after careful deliberation, that I now move an amendment that will culminate with this government

falling, the triggering of a new general election and the election of a new NDP government for our 150th anniversary.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Kinew: Maybe. I don't know. We'll see. Maybe not. We'll have to see. But I do think that the members from Riding Mountain and Assiniboia, you know, shades of The Muppet Show over there that they are, are actually listening with open hearts and open minds and open ears. And so they will have to listen carefully—and I say that with love. I say that with love and friendship and admiration and good vibes across the Chamber floor today, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So with all that said, I move, seconded by the member for Union Station (MLA Asagwara),

THAT the motion be amended by adding at the end the following words:

But this House regrets that the provincial government has:

- (a) continued to freeze funding for municipalities, 'forching' large—forcing large communities like Winnipeg, Brandon, Thompson, Dauphin and Selkirk, and smaller communities like Gimli and St. Lazare to make difficult decisions on cuts to public services and programming that keep communities safe and welcoming; and
- (b) broken the health-care system that Manitoba families and seniors rely on by closing emergency rooms, firing hundreds of nurses, privatizing life-saving services for rural and northern communities, eliminating more than 130 hospital beds in Winnipeg, ending obstetric services in Flin Flon and failing to build a single personal-care-home bed in its first term; and

* (15:10)

- (c) failed to acknowledge cuts that have caused numerous cancellations of cardiac surgeries and exacerbated emergency room hip, knee, and cataract surgery wait times; and
- (d) continued to ignore Manitobans by proceeding with its health-care overhaul, which will cut critical services and closed facilities relied on by rural and northern families; and
- (e) refused to address the public health crisis by failing to provide long-term investments to community organizations and harm reduction

initiatives which help Manitobans dealing with mental health and addictions get the help they need and reduce blood-borne diseases; and

- (f) presented no comprehensive plan to help reduce and end poverty, which in turn fails to address the root causes of crime; and
- (g) failed again to present any commitments to build new social or affordable housing, despite having promised to do so in its first term, and made the situation worse by selling government housing units, even though a Housing First strategy has been proven to move people out of poverty; and
- (h) continued to put the long-term success of Manitoba students at risk by laying the groundwork for cuts with an internal mandate review, as well as education commissions report, having already eliminated small class sizes/support services, cut education funding and frozen teacher wages; and
- (i) continued to increase tuition for post-secondary education while interfering on the academic freedom of post-secondary institutions by tying operating grants to student outcomes and interfere—sorry; and
- (j) interfered with Crown Corporations numerous times, specifically agreements signed by Manitoba Hydro, offering online service delivery with Manitoba Public Insurance, projects with Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries and the delivery of Efficiency Manitoba strategic plan, all of which caused Chairs and full boards to resign; and
- (k) failed to listen to Manitoba producers who have overwhelmingly said that their approach to leasing Crown lands will cause irreparable harm to family farms in Manitoba that are already dealing with serious challenges due to climate change while also failing to provide them with insurance supports during a time of need; and
- (l) broken its commitment to budget over \$500 million per year on highways annually, and underspend highways infrastructure by hundreds of millions of dollars while also continuing to pursue the privatization of infrastructure services; and

- (m) failed to make any clear commitments to address the Manitoba Human Rights Commission order for a no-sex-designation option on all government identification; and
- (n) cut supports for French language services at the Université de Saint-Boniface Santé en français and Translation Services, and eliminated the assistant deputy minister for the Bureau de l'éducation française; and
- (o) failed to meaningfully consult with indigenous leadership regarding the Lake St. Martin outlet channel and other initiatives that affect indigenous rights; and
- (p) failed to implement a living wage and instead made it more difficult for employees to unionize and instituted an unconstitutional wage freeze law that is now being legally challenged; and
- (q) ignored the needs of the northern communities who have lost hundreds of mining jobs by putting families into poverty and contributing to a rise in crime by the failure to release funds in the Mining Community Reserve Fund; and
- (r) failed to make any clear commitments to evaluate the challenges in the northern justice system, particularly those in Thompson, that have negatively impacted individuals from all northern communities; and
- (s) failed to take any meaningful action on climate change by not making any commitments to put a price on carbon, substantively reduced Manitobans' greenhouse gas emissions, grow the clean energy sector of Manitoba Hydro, or invest in infrastructure projects, such as the North End treatment plant that would benefit all Canadians by helping to curb emissions and reduce pollution; and
- (t) continued to freeze operating funding for public child care centres, making it difficult for facilities to offer day-to-day programming during children's most critical years, and to attract and retain quality early learning and child care workers, while also failing to address the growing wait list for public, non-profit centres, and instead focusing on moving towards a private operating model; and

- (u) failed to offer any supports to newcomers in this diverse and inclusive province.

As a consequence of these and many other failings, the provincial government has thereby lost the trust and confidence of the people of Manitoba and this House.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It has been moved by the Official Opposition Leader—Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Kinew), seconded by the honourable member for Union Station (MLA Asagwara),

That the motion for the amendment be adding at the end of the following words:

But this House regrets that the provincial government has

- (a) continues freezing—

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I hear dispense? Dispense.

So the amendment is in order. Debate proceeds.

Hon. Reg Helwer (Minister of Central Services): I'm pleased to be back into the House to address the Speech from the Throne and, of course, the amendment to the Speech from the Throne. I listened intently to it, and it just continued to present the—I can't use that word—let me think: How should I phrase it? You know, if you continue to say something time and time again, you expect that it might become true, but that is certainly not the case from what we hear from the opposition.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, pleased to be back in the House, as I said. Welcome back to everyone. I haven't had an opportunity to speak since the election, and going through an election campaign is always a challenging and rewarding time. I am—this is the third election that I have been able to put my name forward and fortunate to be re-elected by the citizens of Brandon West, very fortunate to represent such a fine community and, indeed, the people of Brandon and Westman are often great people to work with and very pleased to be here on their behalf.

I am always astounded, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on the work that is done in a campaign on your behalf by the volunteers. They are what makes things work. They do so much work on your behalf, and you are not always aware of what they're doing because they just get to work and get things done. So thank you to all the volunteers that worked on our campaign and thank you to all the donors.

Indeed, we did broaden the campaign with my colleague from Brandon East and colleague from Spruce Woods, that we were able to have a unified campaign in Brandon and part of Westman to make sure that we would keep Brandon blue again. And I'm very pleased to be back with my colleague from Brandon East. He ran a great campaign in Brandon East.

We had a great number of volunteers out there knocking at doors and listening to people throughout the community. A lot of help from Spruce Woods and other members, as well, that we were able to make sure that we were successful again in the entire Brandon community. So thank you to the member from Brandon East and the member from Spruce Woods, the Minister of Justice (Mr. Cullen).

The campaign team that we put together is—we had many new people, we had several people that had helped us in the past. And to name some of them, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that were important to the success is, of course, the chair was Lee Jebb. We had Glen Crook as the official agent, who's now finding out what that means as he works with Elections Manitoba to put all the returns in place and dot the I's and make sure that all the numbers are in the correct slot there.

Dale McKay and Mike Leech did a great deal of fundraising, as did my father, Ron Helwer. They were all a great part of the campaign to have out there. Trudy Corbett, Dianne Fotheringham, Kathy Vandale, Jeff Cristall ran the signs with Jeff Bales—and the sign wars in Brandon are unique, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They sometimes disappear overnight. They sometimes get destroyed and need to be put back up. I've often asked city council if we could do away with signs on public property, but sometimes they say that might be the only way that we know there's an elections happening in Brandon.

So they do like to have those, but there are bylaws in place that most of the—my opponents followed very well. I think we had a very respectful campaign, although I was disappointed by the dialogue from some of the NDP candidates that just parroted the phrases that were coming out of, you know, NDP headquarters and trying to mislead and scare Manitobans—very disappointing on that side.

And it must have been very difficult, I think, for the candidates—for the NDP in Brandon, indeed, for the things that they were forced to say.

* (15:20)

Other members of the campaign team, we got some young people. Ashleigh Hamm was great on the photography, the videography and a little bit of social media. In fact, my daughters noticed fairly quickly that who's doing my social media because they knew it wasn't Dad, that—Ashleigh said, I only put one emoji in there. So, you know, we're finding a lot of help from different places.

My sister Sherry Helwer is always a big part of it, as, of course, individuals from past campaigns, Bob Harrison and, you know, my lovely wife, Aynsley Helwer, is always there for support and to listen to the things that I might be thinking, causing problems—that are causing problems, but working things through.

So the people that came out and volunteered, especially in door knocking, which is a critical part of the campaign that we did throughout Brandon, was a very important part. Literature droppers—there were some young people, very young people, that came out: Hannah Sharp and Quinnlan Andrews. Was very rewarding to see teenagers out helping us and being part of politics as we move ahead. They are the future of our great nation.

And, of course, thank you to the voters, the residents, of Brandon West and, indeed, Brandon and Westman itself. It was a unique campaign for me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I said, the third one that I have—that be able to run in, and third time successful, very rewarding to represent the citizens of Brandon West, to make sure that they are well represented here and that we are fulfilling their concerns and meeting their needs and requirements as we really, as MLAs, help them to navigate the bureaucracy. And the staff that we have are critical to that as well.

There was something that was a little different for me this campaign, Mr. Deputy Speaker. As many of you know, I've—we're into Movember now and trying to grow something here that supports that campaign against—to draw attention to prostate cancer, testicular cancer and mental health for men. We're often not very good about talking about those things, so it's trying to draw attention to that. I have gone public with the circumstances that I've gone through, having testicular cancer this summer. Indeed, first indication, really, was just prior and during the day of the Premier's (Mr. Pallister) state-of-the-province address in Brandon where I had an ultrasound that morning, and a good friend, Dr. Harold Fung, looked down at me and said, you've got cancer. Not something one wants to hear.

The Premier came out, did a fabulous job on his state-of-province speech. I had to read most of it in the paper; I didn't quite pay attention. Sitting at the lunch that day was a little difficult, as I'm sure you understand. So to have the diagnosis of cancer as the colleague—we—our colleague from Transcona has had as well and is dealing with, other members of the Assembly, of course, and, indeed, our own Lieutenant Governor and the Member of Parliament have all come forward with their own issues. People that we have as friends have had this diagnosis, more severe, less severe. It is all a very unique occurrence to be told those three words, you have cancer. And at the time I might have thought—well, I did think, is there a different way to say it? You know, you might have cancer; I think you have cancer as opposed to, you have cancer, is a very definite approach to it.

But, you know, I do have to say that the doctors, the nurses, the medical practitioners, ultrasound technologists, staff were absolutely fabulous. I could not have had a better experience, and it quite saddens me to hear the opposition speak about our medical system. In fact, it does anger me some because of the experience that I had is not what they are trying to reflect to Manitobans, nor is it what I hear from the many people who have approached me as I've gone public to tell me of their experience. They are quite shocked with the approach the opposition is taking to representing what is happening in our medical system, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I know it's not true; you know it's not true. As I said, the experience I had from Dr. Akerele, Dr. Duncan, Dr. Kassier and Dr. Skead, the nurses, the staff, the receptions—receptionists, was absolutely fabulous from beginning to end. I could not imagine how it could be any better.

And that is my reflection and many of my friends' reflections and other people that have come forth to tell me their stories of their medical—what's happened in the medical world in Manitoba.

So thank you to all of those people that have helped along the way, and I wish them all well. They want a good outcome for their patients, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as we all do.

We've all lost friends to cancer. Indeed, a very good friend a few years ago, Vince Crisanti, he and I would spend many times together talking about his business and his family. He started up a cellphone business when there—it was brand new in his father-in-law's Canadian Tire store, just a little kiosk. Was very successful with the business and

his family, and, unfortunately, taken from us with cancer.

Vince was always well known for his bright socks, which I do reflect here from time to time, and for his elaborate ties, one of which I am wearing today, Mr. Deputy Speaker. As he passed away, those of us who were close friends and family were given the opportunity to select some of Vince's ties, and this is one of them that I wear in his memory.

And we also remember the many sunsets together at Clear Lake, and that reminds me—reminds us of Vince's life, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So how do you tell people that you have cancer? It's not something you just walk up and say, hey, by the way, something happened over the summer. It's something that's part of you. It doesn't define you. Family and friends—of course, my wife, Aynsley, were very supportive.

The campaign was unbelievable in their support, because I was told after surgery I could do light walking. Had to ask the question, does that include door-knocking? Well, depends on the steps, how many steps you can take.

Sometimes, as the MLAs for Brandon East and Spruce Woods know, I had to quit and leave the team a little early, wasn't able to finish that night but eventually got strong enough to come back and be able to do it continuously because—the member for Transcona (Mr. Altomare) and I—have talked a little bit about our experiences.

You wake up in the morning. You know, you let the dogs out, feed the dogs. You get the coffee and breakfast and maybe read some of the news, respond to emails, and then promptly crash for an hour or two. It's just beyond your control. But, eventually, you get past that, and I wish him well in his recovery. It's not something that we deal with easily. Hopefully, it's not something that we deal with that often.

The reason I want to draw attention to it publicly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is because when I would go to the hallway, the waiting room outside the surgeon's, the urologist's office, everybody knows why you're there. There's chairs down the hall and you do what I've come to refer to as the man-nod. I see you. I recognize you. I won't tell anyone.

But we should, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We need to talk about it more. If we were more outgoing, there'd probably be a lot more hugs. And I do have to thank

many people for the good wishes, the stories and indeed, the hugs, including the Premier (Mr. Pallister).

So, talk about it. If you think there's something up there, something wrong, get checked. Catch it early. Don't take it for granted. My latest mantra has become, you know, that the—life happens when you're making other plans. It was made very popular from John Lennon in one of his songs, but has been attributed to many others, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So I think what I hear from the opposition is a disservice to our health-care providers and what truly happens in health care. It's not my experience. It's not what many stories are that I've been told. They all want the best outcome, and we know that change isn't easy. But we have been very good in proceeding along with the changes that are necessary to make sure that we are continuing to provide the best health care to Manitobans.

The Throne Speech was great in setting out that opportunity for growth; some more changes that are coming to health care. There's plans in place. We are moving ahead to make sure that Manitobans have access to those health services that they need.

Of course, a lot of discussion on tax reduction: making Manitoba more affordable for Manitobans, putting money back on the kitchen tables because Manitobans best know how to spend their money.

* (15:30)

What I saw in opposition, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was a government in the NDP that thought they knew best how to spend the money, and we know that that's not true, having spent four years on—three and a half years on Treasury Board, and I wish all the current members of Treasury Board well, we know that that is not the case, that we are still paying for the many misdeeds and the many pieces of mismanagement from the previous NDP, and it is something that is very disheartening. But we're on the path to fixing those problems, and we're—we have some very good people in place to help us with that.

Red tape is something we've had a lot of discussion about in this Chamber, and when I talk to businesses now, as you know that I have a background in business, still own a business, but I have not been active in it since 2011. So I am removed from the day-to-day work of businesses, and what I encourage business people to do is talk to us. If you run into a barrier, if you run into something that doesn't make sense from the government, tell us; don't just work with it and move ahead. Let us know, because we can

make those changes, and we can improve things in Manitoba and continue to improve those things.

Obviously, trade is a big issue. In the current world that we're living in, Mr. Deputy Speaker, many changes to the trade world over the last couple years, with the United States and China being in a trade war, seemingly the United States being in a trade war with just about everybody, including us, and we are a trading province in a trading nation. It is important not only that we get it right, to trade with other provinces, but indeed the world, because we are great at producing products and moving them across the world. Unfortunately, now, we have a rail strike going on that is impairing that ability to not only move our product out to the world, but the world's product into Manitoba, and 'monny' of those products and services we require here on a daily basis are not at risk at this point, but there comes a point, not too far down the road, where they may be at risk.

So as Minister of Central Services, and responsible for the Civil Service Commission, we've rapidly been putting together this new department, and determining what is in it, what is not in it. But, when I look at the basic requirement of this department, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is to help government buy better, help government buy smarter. We know that the former government didn't do that; they had no idea how to do that, and what Manitoban, what business person wouldn't want to help the government buy better? It's just a great opportunity. Business does this every day. Every time they look at, they look at how to buy better, how to buy smarter, where to buy new product and how to move it. So these are things that we're all bringing into government and I'm thrilled to be part of the team that's going to do that, working with the capital, that show our return on investment for Manitoba.

The new ambulances, the 65 ambulances, are just a start there, Mr. Deputy Speaker. New paramedics, and of course, we are working on The Civil Service Act was mentioned in the Throne Speech that I think will be a great change. The Act—the current Act is 134 years old. The world was a lot different 134 years ago. Women weren't allowed to vote. Now they're a great part of our Legislature and representation. So things are different; we need to modernize—a modern workplace, modern standards and values that will be brought to the fore.

Of course, the Learning Fund, the Idea Fund that we've rolled out to bring the ideas forward from the front line, how we can make Manitoba life better, how

we can improve services, improve health care sooner, by listening to the talented front line. And we're still listening, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Many changes that we're putting into place to make Manitoba better today.

Mental health and addictions have often been at the forefront. There is no one answer, but working together with the private sector we can make things better with our Safer Streets, Safer Lives program.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I ran, first of all, for election because I was not happy with the way that Manitoba was headed. I think many of us were not happy with the direction of the NDP government, and we wanted to make Manitoba a better place to be in. It was a path to ruin that the NDP were on, and we have changed that path, and we are now moving forward to a better Manitoba for everyone in this area, everyone in Manitoba. We know the Premier (Mr. Pallister) often talks about the only thing better—*[interjection]*

For all of us? Yes, indeed, for all of you. You are among the most fortunate in Manitoba to be MLAs. You, as MLAs, are in the one per—you're the one percenters of the world. You may not realize that but, indeed, you are. Indeed you are, and we are the ones that can help Manitoba grow and prosper with your help. You're welcome to help us make it a better place. I know you worked hard to destroy it, but we're on the path to making Manitoba better.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I wish you all well and we're just going to work—continue to work, keep our head down and fix a lot of the problems that the NDP created.

Thank you.

MLA Uzoma Asagwara (Union Station): I'm honoured to rise today to introduce myself—further introduce myself to this House, the constituents of Union Station, and to share a bit about my path to this new role.

First I'd like to acknowledge that we are in Treaty 1 territory, the traditional territory of the Anishinabe, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dene and Dakota people, and homeland of the Métis nation.

I'd like to thank the constituents of Union Station who elected me to represent all members of our communities. Thank you to the many volunteers and folks on our team who worked so very hard for us to accomplish something historic.

It is an absolute honour to serve community as the MLA and I'm grateful to all of those who believed in me and who continue to express their support.

Yesterday, when we were all here in the House and looked up and saw the groups of students in the gallery—there was even a baby in the gallery—it really struck me that these are some of the first young people, the first youth who are seeing black people in this Chamber as MLAs for the very first time, and that for them, this is now their norm.

For my nanny who turned 85 this year and has lived in Canada for several decades, this is the first time in her life in Manitoba that she is seeing this type of representation. I'm really grateful that she has the opportunity to see this.

I hear from families and individuals on a regular basis how significant this past election was. I've had youth, racialized folks and two-spirit LGBTQ people and folks, really, from all demographics tell me that they are inspired. Some have expressed that they now believe they, too, can aspire to politics. Others have said that they're so happy their children have someone who is not only fully capable but who also looks like them in this role of public service.

Overall, what I knew and what I know is being consistently echoed, that we are all served better when our representatives actually reflect the communities that they serve.

My path to this moment is not unlike many people in Manitoba. I am a first generation Canadian. My parents immigrated from Nigeria to Winnipeg in the 1970s and they raised all five of their children here in Winnipeg.

My mother, Doris, was instrumental in me becoming the person I am today. As a child, I was bullied. I was made fun of for being black, for having hairstyles unfamiliar to other children, for being more like a boy than a girl, for being a young, queer kid who didn't have the language to explain their identity.

My mother saw all of that and worked so hard to advocate for all of her children to be treated with respect and to be treated equitably. She knew the importance of utilizing free community resources. A lot of resources in our family were pretty tight, and she wanted to make sure that her five kids remained constructively busy, safe, and surrounded by people who would nurture us and our talents.

School in our household, in the Asagwara household, was year-round. We didn't really have

summer vacations other kids had. We would frequent the Pembina Trail public library and sign out books on science, math and history and write book reports that our mother would grade. We went to open swims at Margaret Grant Pool; at All Saints' church right here in Union Station, we found community and supports who remain active in my life today.

* (15:40)

One of the resources I accessed the most were basketball courts and community centres and schools. Rain or shine, I was that young person who'd be outside shooting hoops. And, once the WNBA was created, and I actually realized that I could aspire to professional sport, it changed everything for me.

Not only did I see myself in the Michael Jordans and Scottie Pippen, but I could now see myself in Lisa Leslie and Sheryl Swoopes, and so many strong black women who wore beautiful jerseys and played the game with integrity, passion and joy. From teachers to other parents and coaches, I learned, from all of those resources, that the folks who were playing in the WNBA, many of them had gotten scholarships and played university basketball. I learned that you could get a degree, play a sport, and be a part of something bigger than yourself, and so, with the support of so many, so many people in community along the way, I did just that.

Right here in Union Station, I became a University of Winnipeg Wesman, where I played for five years for an amazing head coach, Tanya McKay, who taught me what it means to support people first in becoming the best versions of themselves, and that wins always come second to that.

After my five years at the U of W as an athlete, I was a member of the Canadian women's national basketball team. I travelled the world, competing in countries like China, Brazil and Chile, at Pan-American Games and Olympic qualifiers. I've been all over Canada and the United States as an athlete, and recently I was chatting with a woman who was new to Winnipeg. Her and her husband have been raising their two children here for the past one year. She knew about us winning the election, and she knows that I'm queer, she knows I'm gender non-conforming and she asked a lot of questions about my past.

And, when I told her about my past athletic career, about over—about my over decade-long psychiatric nursing and addictions specialist career, and my involvement in community as an organizer

and advocate, she looked stunned. She looked at me and she said something I will always remember. She looked at me and she said, you are Canada. That was one of the most humbling moments for me on this journey.

When we support those who face barriers and have systemic challenges to overcome, we create a generation of people who make history. I am evidence of that. Those are the values that informed my work as a front-line service provider for over a decade, and as a community activist and advocate. When we make informed and strategic decisions that are rooted in compassion, that are progressive and address the fundamental issues people are facing, we see long-term positive change, and this is why I believe most of us are here.

I know my NDP colleagues and I certainly understand that. And yesterday, in this House, it was my first time listening to a Throne Speech, and I would be remiss if I didn't highlight something that really set out to me that we should all take pause in regards to, and it was that indigenous people were first mentioned immediately following a section that highlighted crime and issues surrounding public safety.

I know, on a professional and on a personal level, just how harmful that kind of positioning can be, and I will never be complicit in harmful, stigmatizing narratives that serve to perpetuate perceptions of targeted and marginalized demographics whose voices are often unheard by those in power.

Last night I attended an event in honour of trans day of remembrance. This year I attended multiple vigils for folks in the two-spirit LGBTQ community who passed away due in part to transphobic violence they experienced throughout their lives, and narratives that are perpetuated in the media, in day-to-day life, that have a compounding impact on folks and their mental wellness and well-being.

Last night was an event that serves as a hard reminder that the two-spirit and LGBTQ community still face disproportionate levels of violence, while fighting to ensure that all people of all backgrounds and identities are treated with dignity and respect in the systems that we access.

I worked in the health-care system as a registered psychiatric nurse and addictions specialist on the front lines of mental health and addictions for over a decade. It was my privilege to be in a role of public service and it continues to be my—continues to be a

privilege in my new role as the MLA for Union Station.

I am thankful for this opportunity and I am committed to bringing my lens to this work. It's one that recognizes the dynamic and diverse experiences of the many, many communities who reside in Union Station. It's one that serves to amplify those voices that have never had a place here in this Legislature.

To have experienced what it means to not be seen, to be silenced and to be afraid to live authentically because some people in this world choose ignorance and hate and supremacy over understanding, love and inclusion and representation is to know just how important it is to celebrate and encourage people to take up space and pursue roles in spaces where their voices can make all the difference for so, so many.

We, as elected officials, have a tremendous responsibility, and it's one that I take very seriously: to lift up all those we represent. Yes, that means those who actively use drugs. Yes, that means those who are involved with justice. Yes, that's those who identify outside of binaries. Yes, that is those who still have yet to see themselves reflected in their elected officials in the Manitoba Legislature.

As we see what's happening in this world today, as we see a rise in narratives that would seek to silence so many people and quiet so many of the beautiful voices that make all of our communities incredible and resilient and amazing—it's with that in mind, it's with that—it's that that informs the responsibility that I feel, and it's with that that I commit to continuing to do work as a part of a really great team in the NDP that will ensure that the many people who access the systems, including the health-care system, can do so as safely and as dignified as possible.

And as I look at what's happening in our health-care system now as, as I said, someone who's worked the front lines for over a decade, I do have unique understanding of the impact that this government's ongoing broken promises and cuts to a health—our health-care system are having.

We know, and I fully understand, the challenges that these cuts are bringing to families in Manitoba, to individuals in Manitoba who are simply wanting the best for themselves and their community members.

And I could talk about the soaring wait-times that are evidence of consistent staffing cuts. I could talk about, you know, closed emergency rooms and 131 less bed spaces that are available to folks. I could talk about ambulances being diverted at alarming rates

from HSC and St. Boniface; cardiac surgeries that are being cancelled, that have been cancelled several times, specifically, due to staffing shortages.

I could talk about the North, where they privatized Lifeflight, suspended obstetrics in Flin Flon General Hospital, making it impossible for women to give birth in their own communities. At forced—those who want to give birth are being forced in to unsafe situations without supports they would have at home. They made \$1 million in cuts to the Northern patient transport program, and cancelled the expansion of the Thompson Northern Consultation Clinic.

Folks in Manitoba have every right to be concerned about what's to come. Phase 2 of this overhaul is going to result in fewer medical health institutions in rural and northern Manitoba, and already, services that are available in these communities are challenged due to staffing shortages. Over 17 emergency departments in Manitoba have been suspended and operating hours have been cut.

It's all of our responsibility to mend this health-care system and to make sure that we're hiring more nurses and doctors in order to end mandatory overtime, which I know a whole lot about, having worked as a nurse.

* (15:50)

And I'm hearing on a daily basis from my friends and community members who are working as nurses in the health-care system right now. The burdensome workload that our front-line workers are being forced to take on is unacceptable. There is a huge demand for nurses all over Manitoba.

In regard to the—women's health specifically, we need to see women's health being prioritized. We need to see women's health—women being provided the services and being—and seeing a promotion of access to services like reproductive health care. We need to make sure that something as simple as menstrual products are readily available in our schools for those who need it.

I could go on and on about things like mental health and how we need to make mental health more accessible in our health-care system. As a psychiatric nurse, as a front-line service provider, I heard day in and day out from families, from youth and kids the struggles that they were having. I still hear from kids.

I saw kids on the campaign trail as I was door knocking in Union Station, running into kids that I know through my field of work who are telling me that

not only do they not have access to the mental health services they need, they don't have access to the housing they need, they don't have access to the resources they need and that nobody's hearing their voices. We need to make those services accessible and readily available.

Community-based health-care services will help families. We need to see that supported and resourced appropriately. The demands in our society—to meet the demands of our society we need to see more counsellors working out of ACCESS Centres; we need to see that Lifeflight be made public again; ERs equipped with the capacity for staff that they should have; the obstetrics—and I'll say it again—reinstated in Flin Flon.

We need to see a stop to the closing and cutting of key medical services in Manitoba. Cutting and closing services is not the solution our health-care system needs: it is the problem.

And I am humbled and honoured to be in this role as the MLA of Union Station, to work alongside my NDP colleagues to ensure that all Manitobans have access to the resources and services they need; to ensure that we're addressing issues around poverty, social housing; to make sure that our youth have their voices heard and that they have access to the services they deserve; and to make sure that those folks who are most targeted and most marginalized and who have not been advocated for the way that they should be under this government, that those folks are the ones who know that we're here to amplify their voices collectively and who know that we're going to do whatever it is within our capacity to make sure that they take up space in the Manitoba Legislative Assembly that is their Manitoba Legislative Assembly.

Thank you.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for St. Boniface.

Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface): Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. *[interjection]*

Thank you very much, the member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe). Thank you, thank you.

I'm sad that there's no applause sign in the Throne Speech, Mr. Deputy Speaker, so I'll thank the member for Concordia.

I would like to say that, you know, this is a speech that builds on years of failed trickle-down economic policies. And it's really unfortunate, because I think,

in reading this Throne Speech, the premise is that it's still the 1970s and that what's holding back the economy is that wages are too high, that unions are too strong, that there's too much government spending and regulations and taxes all need to be slashed.

And, frankly, this is not the situation as we know it. So—and frankly, when it comes to coming up with how you're going to deal with a problem, getting the diagnosis right matters if you're going to come up with solutions.

And so, if the fundamental diagnosis is wrong, then you're not going to come up with solutions, and that's one of the major problems with this entire—with this document, that these policies that are being pursued are not working anymore.

If we actually look at the statistics of what's happening in Manitoba and across Canada, the rich are still getting richer, the poor are still getting poorer, we see record numbers of people on EIA and many in the middle and working classes simply can't pay their bills. Nearly half of Canadians are \$200 a month away from insolvency, and in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, that number is over half; it's about 55, 57 per cent. And in Manitoba, we have all sorts of issues that are going in the wrong direction. Unemployment is up, property crime is up, violent crime is up and there have been a number of states of emergency declared in Manitoba in the last few weeks. Some are natural disasters but, frankly, we've got other crises that are social, and some are economic.

And I'll start—the Throne Speech starts with a very serious omission, that it mentions Manitoba's 150th anniversary, but erases its founder, Manitoba's founder and first leader, Louis Riel and the Metis people he led. There's no mention of poverty or children in care or immigration or Lake Winnipeg.

And I think it says something that the first concrete commitment of this Throne Speech is a symbolic gesture that will have no concrete effect. It's a resolution expressing dismay—you know, legitimate dismay at the actions of the Quebec government in restricting religious rights. However, this is in, you know, in contrast to the fact that right now, this government is in court facing a lawsuit for legislation that may strip people of their constitutional right to bargain and negotiate for the value of their own work. And this is part of a pattern under this government, that three years ago the government interfered with bargaining at the University of Manitoba, and at a cost of \$2 million to the university.

This government has also passed a number of other bills that clearly removed people's ability to access their constitutional rights, and there's a lot of talk about freedom in this document but there's an old saying that freedom for the pike means death to the minnows. We are—if we are serious about freedom, then we also have to be aware that differences in power affect people's freedom and if we—and that we need to make sure that we have freedom for the many, and not just for the few.

As for the commitment to this Throne Speech, my—our concern is the cuts and constraint are all too real and all too achievable, but—and it, the speech itself is a mix of small promises, many of which are totally inadequate to address serious issues. On the other, there are some very big promises that are overblown and are frankly divorced from reality. This is not just a question of ideology or rhetorical flourish; it is that these policies will not work, and there's no consideration of how these policies will affect communities and Manitobans completely differently.

And this is one of the premises, is as the Throne Speech is presented, it talks about average—the average—what the average taxpayer will face, what the average person will face. It doesn't usually say citizen; citizen and voter barely appear as words at all in this document. But the fact is that there's a huge difference in the impact of these various policies. As an example, there's a promise that hundreds of millions of dollars in property tax cuts will be somehow evenly distributed. That's simply not the case. People in Manitoba own different amounts of property. Some people own no property at all. Others own multi-million-dollar properties. The fact is that eliminating the property tax on the education property tax will have completely different effects on some people. It'll mean huge, huge tax breaks for some and virtually nothing for others, and that's something that's incredibly important.

The fact is most people won't see any of these benefits. There's still no explanation of how a half-billion-dollar-plus hole that will be created in the Education budget will be filled, whether it would be through austerity and cuts, whether the—or whether the taxes would be—would fall on somebody else. The fact is that there are different types of taxes in our province, and one of the things that's happened over the years is that people who work for a living are—have been expected to pay for more and more of the burden of taxes rather than other—rather than others or people who manage to own for a living.

And the other concern is that there have been—you know, there is a lot of hype in this Throne Speech. One is about the benefits of removing trade barriers. Canada has no tariffs. There are actually no tariffs at all in Canada. Most studies that projected the benefits from this agreement will be minimal. We're not going to see enormous benefits, and that the details of it show that it's not at all about Manitoba businesses selling to other parts of the—to other provinces. It's actually about the fact that we'd be able to import much more *[inaudible]* stuff. That was—that's the benefit—those are the major benefits that are supposed to exist under the CFTA. They simply aren't there.

The other is the prediction that removing permits will somehow increase growth and investment in Winnipeg by 7 per cent. Again, this is a—just call this wildly optimistic. This is really a ludicrous number. These numbers are cherry-picked. They're bad math. They're bad formulas, and if this is what this government is building on, they're building on sand.

* (16:00)

Now, and this is—and, again, this is not just a political complaint. It's more than that. It's actually saying that these policies simply won't work. The numbers aren't there, in part because they're expecting massive returns on investment based on no investment. You know, it's clear enough that when you're saying—oh, no; now you can all hear me—that expecting massive returns on investment based on making no investment is not going to work. There's, you know, the fact is that when it comes—when you actually have expectations of risk and reward and having—achieving a reward for making a risk, you can't expect to get—to get a reward while taking no risk at all, and that's a lot of what is proposed here.

What we really need for economic growth and opportunity in Manitoba is investment. It takes access to capital, which is something that's been brought up over and over again by chambers of commerce and in consultations about what needs to happen, but that is nowhere to be found in this. We—it's what entrepreneurs and chambers of commerce across Manitoba have called for.

And this is, again, what really needs to happen, the sort of transformative policies are there. Whether it's poverty, whether it's crime, just aren't there. There's a lot of band-aids on broken legs and either kicking down—the can down the road, but failing to really grasp that there are—there is, actually, an opportunity to make really positive changes that just aren't being seized at all.

So I would like to move the Throne Speech subamendment in motion, if I may.

I move, seconded by the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard),

THAT the motion be amended by adding after clause (u) the following clauses:

- (v) failed to commit to community and employee input and evidence-based outcomes for health-care changes and placing insulin pumps, hearing aids, and life-saving drugs and devices under Medicare; and
- (w) failed to commit to implement the diabetes 360 strategy developed by Diabetes Canada to help treat and prevent further diabetes in the province, and
- (x) failed to implement a mental health and addiction strategy covering mental health care under Medicare to address the needs of vulnerable Manitobans; and
- (y) failed to adequately assist children with learning disabilities in the K-12 education system to do well; and
- (z) failed to commit to ending the practice of clawing back the children's special allowances from kids in Child and Family Services, particularly those who are in unpaid care; and
- (aa) failed to commit to addressing the urgent need for First Nations housing or developing emergency management protocols for northern and remote communities; and
- (bb) failed to mention the importance of immigration to Manitoba's economic and social fabric, which can largely be attributed to the Provincial Nominee Program; and
- (cc) failed to adequately address the issue of contaminated sites and lead exposure in St. Boniface and Weston in Winnipeg after years of reports which were not disclosed; and
- (dd) failed to commit to reversing decisions to dismantle collaborative health-care teams and increase senior management positions at health by expanding another bureaucratic arm of the government with Shared Health services; and
- (ee) failed to commit to improving issues related to independent living, hospice and personal-care homes, or reversing the decision to raise costs on senior care programs; and
- (ff) failed to commit to raising standards for ethics, integrity and conflict of interest; and
- (gg) failed to commit to investing in prevention to help keep Manitobans healthy and independent; and
- (hh) failed to commit to create an addiction strategy to address the methamphetamine and opioid crises; and
- (ii) failed to commit to enhancing the protection of children under the care of Child and Family Services; and
- (jj) failed to provide the Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth with expansive investigative powers needed to properly advocate for children and youth; and
- (kk) failed to implement plans to reduce poverty by replacing Employment and Income Assistance with a jobs and basic income program to help those in greatest need; and
- (ll) failed to commit to ending the extraction of natural resources mining in provincial parks; and
- (mm) failed to update and implement the duty-to-consult framework for indigenous communities, resulting in the delay of major projects such as improving the capacity of flow from Lake Manitoba to Lake Winnipeg; and
- (nn) failed to respond to states of emergency declared in rural municipalities after significant drought conditions have hindered farmers' abilities to operate successfully; and
- (oo) failed to address the unacceptably long delays for northern Manitobans to get bail in the criminal justice system; and
- (pp) failed to work with the federal government on the development of a national Pharmacare program to address the high cost of pharmaceuticals, especially for seniors and vulnerable Manitobans; and
- (qq) failed to commit to not dismantling Manitoba school divisions and keeping community input in education systems; and

- (rr) failed to commit to stop charging Manitoba Hydro exorbitant fees, which increases the debt level and prevents the corporation from returning to financial health; and
- (ss) failed to commit to strengthen government revenues and develop a credible plan to balance the budget based on growth and investment instead of cuts; and
- (tt) failed to commit to spending locally and stop hiring consultants from outside the province; and
- (uu) failed to commit to developing strategies to work with federal government, Metis and First Nations peoples to ensure that all Manitoba First Nation communities have better access to improved nursing stations, health-care initiatives such as the NUKA program, clean running water, Internet and phone connectivity, teachers and land and air transportation; and
- (vv) failed to commit to fulfilling the provincial government's election promises of raising the personal tax exemption to the national average, fast-tracking the construction of 1,200 personal-care homes, and to work positively and respectfully with indigenous people and communities; and
- (ww) failed to commit to implementing the eco-certification of the fisheries of Lake Winnipeg, Lake Manitoba and Lake Winnipegosis to ensure sustainable fisheries of walleye, sauger, whitefish, tullibee and perch for those lakes; and
- (xx) failed to co-operate with the City of Winnipeg and rural municipalities to implement an accelerated process to address sewage discharge into the Assiniboine and Red rivers in order to improve the health of Lake Winnipeg; and
- (yy) failed to commit to ensuring that full fire prevention and community protection plans are in place for all First Nations communities, including fire breaks where needed; and
- (zz) failed to commit to improving the outdated technology systems utilized in government departments.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable member for St. Boniface (Mr. Lamont), seconded by the honourable member for saint-for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard),

That the motion to be amended as follows—the—that the motion be amended that—the—adding after the clause (u)—for—the following clauses—

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I hear dispense. Dispense? *[Agreed]*

So the amendment is in order—subamendment is in order—to be continued with debate.

Hon. Sarah Guillemard (Minister of Conservation and Climate): It gives me great pleasure to be back here and speak to a wonderful Throne Speech that was filled with promise and hope. And I think that for a number of years previous to our government coming into play, there was a lack of that hope and there was a lot of confusion present, and that never leads to any progress.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would really like to emphasize that governments and elected officials of all parties, they have an option to lead by fear or to lead with hope. We are all given that option, and I am proud that my team has chosen the message of hope.

Within this Throne Speech, I was very encouraged to see discussion on Bill 21. The concerns raised by our leader, the Premier (Mr. Pallister) of Manitoba, are concerns that are shared by many who support the freedom of conscience, of religion, of public servants. And that is a core value that everybody should be aware of that we all need to collaboratively work together to protect.

Today, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am thankful that I can express the choice of faith that I have chosen in my life, free of fear of repercussion or ridicule or people mocking me. Although there are many who may differ from my choices and my opinions, I'm glad that we live in a society where my rights are protected, and we will continue to protect the rights of all Manitobans for how they choose to dress, how they choose to express their faith and voice their core values.

We have learned historically that silence only empowers the oppressors. It never helps the victims.

* (16:10)

Mr. Greg Nesbitt, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I choose to speak to support those who feel oppressed right now by the threats to their freedoms. And in Canada, it is a shame that people do feel this way, and we will work very hard to work towards alleviating that fear and ensuring that rights are protected.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, division and discrimination hurt everyone. When your neighbour is targeted, you have the duty to respond. We all have the duty to respond. Let us be one voice when we are protecting those who are oppressed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I listened intently to the member for Union Station (MLA Asagwara) as they shared their experience growing up, the difficulties faced by a society that tends to react out of fear because of their misunderstandings.

And I was touched by the lessons learned in life and how they chose to show compassion to others, as opposed to lash out with anger, which the majority of us would do if we were targeted and oppressed for who we are.

And I commend the member for Union Station for not only being elected into this position and sharing those perspectives, but I commend that member for also being a part of helping us learn from those experiences, helping us learn how to confront adversity and, in fact, to grow from it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is, however, a cautious note, and I do need to respond that when you are assuming intent based on a Throne Speech and the words held within—especially when it is negative—that you are assuming an intention is there, you run the risk of changing a dialogue of collaboration into division, and that is not what this government will stand for, nor will this government encourage.

We are looking for working together. There are a number of fronts that we need to really focus on so that Manitobans can benefit. One of those areas, absolutely, is health care. We need everybody's voices. We need everybody's support. And, ultimately, we all depend on our health-care system working and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it has not worked for years.

And when various elements are highlighted, including the stopping of obstetrical services based on clinical advice in one particular area—I will tell you that the Victoria General Hospital used to have an obstetrics unit. I had friends who delivered their children, and under the NDP government it was shut down because of clinical reasons.

And I will never argue that that was the wrong choice because we knew that the services provided at that site did not address the unforeseen difficulties that can happen during a birth. Sometimes the right decisions are very hard decisions, but they are right to preserve the safety and health of our citizens.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also am aware when we speak about mental health and that system, we are so far behind many other jurisdictions and, absolutely, there needs to be movement in that realm. As the mother of a child who is walking through that journey I have experienced the frustrations, the devastations, of long wait times, of trying to find the right services, the right people to assist our family in supporting my child.

That's not new. That's been for years. There was an existing anxiety disorders clinic for youth that was run out of a St. Boniface clinic. That was shut down under the previous government. Mr. Deputy Speaker, that wasn't shut down because there was a lack of need. I would love to hear the history of that decision making, but I imagine there was some concerns with funding and supports available to continue it. And this was during the good times, when the health transfers from the federal government was actually increased and a lot more than what we're receiving now.

So if these mechanisms and decisions were made during good financial economic times, to listen to criticisms at this point from a previous government who didn't even bother to look at the larger picture and the sustainability of health care, and join us when we asked for the federal government to reconsider their investments in this province, it's a little hard to take, and a little bit late to come to the table with these criticisms.

We are looking for collaboration. We agree there's a heck of a lot of work to do, still to do. And these recommendations that came under a commissioned report under the NDP government that they chose to ignore the recommendations of experts because of a lack of political will and courage, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are in government at the right time to do what's right by our citizens, and we hope that, long term, members of all parties can look at these hard decisions that were done and reflect back on it being the right decision, and moving forward we are all going to build a much better health system for our citizens.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd like to spend a little bit of time also thanking my volunteers who worked very hard this summer on our campaign in Fort

Richmond. As a member—the new member for McPhillips (Mr. Martin) has mentioned, I really enjoyed gathering with the entire core team and celebrating by gifting them with a team jacket. There are many ways you can thank volunteers, and there's words you can use, and certainly I will use words going forward multiple times because it's not just during the campaign that they've supported me; it's throughout life.

The majority of my family were part of my campaign team, including my father, my mother, my husband, my children, and a lot of close friends, and even members who have chosen to join us here at the Legislative Building to work and help work towards a better Manitoba. They spent hours at the doors with me, where we listened to everybody. There were supporters; clearly there were more supporters for myself, otherwise I wouldn't be here.

But we listened to those who did not support my particular party as well, and they know that they have an advocate and a voice representing their views as well, that I have met with them after the campaign and they know that my door's always open to hear different perspectives, to help us hone in on what is actually needed and necessary in order to be a voice for the entire community.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, our team was focused on building relationships. Our focus was not on a success is a win, although that's very nice at the end of a campaign, to celebrate a win. But ultimately, the focus and the success that we wanted to achieve was the relationships that we would keep and build upon in years to come, and I know that I share that same view with a number of members even across the aisle, that the relationship-building is key to all of our success but it's also key to any of the progress that we're going to make for the people that we serve in our constituencies.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wanted to also address some of the topics that we are hearing today. We spoke about some of the increased violence in different communities, including in the city of Winnipeg, and the frustrations we are hearing from citizens and their want to be involved in addressing even the thefts that we're seeing in the liquor store and some of the escalation of that violence.

The frustrations that people are mentioning is that somehow there's nothing being done, and that couldn't be further from the truth. It may be perceived that way, but ultimately we are looking at the best solutions and how to address the fear that people are feeling

nowadays, and that is a real and true fear. But when we make decisions based on fear, we tend to be very reactive. We tend to be very impulsive and potentially misstep.

* (16:20)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we cannot hesitate to hold people accountable for poor decisions. I am parenting a child who has experienced abuse at the hands of somebody in authority, and I will share from a personal perspective that the hardest discussion that I had with my child was that he cannot be blamed for the pain that he is in and for the trauma that he'll have to work through for his entire life, but he will be held accountable for the actions he chooses based on that pain and that trauma.

And what we are lacking in this society is the freedom to hold people accountable, even though their histories may have abuse and trauma in them. To not hold an individual accountable for their actions is going to lead to more of what we see in society and more violence.

I explained to my son that although the teacher who harmed him is the monster in his life, that if he chooses to treat others poorly and aggressively, he becomes the monster in their lives, and I, as a mother, cannot allow him to become that way.

That was the best tool and advice I ever gave to my child. It is one that I know is important in society, that we can't look to the people who have hurt us in the past or in the present to excuse our behaviours. It may explain our pain. It can explain a lot of our decision-making, but it will never excuse poor decisions and poor choices in life.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that was not an easy discussion to have. It was not an easy lesson for my child to learn, but I will tell you that my child is one of the most compassionate, caring individuals who seeks to help others who are in pain. That wouldn't have happened had I allowed the anger to determine his decisions and next steps.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we speak about violence in society, when we speak about historical wrongs, abuses and pain, I may not have walked the same path as many people in this House or in many of the communities in our great country, but I do understand that there is a need for us to understand and be a part of healing.

And that includes those who have been hurt, and it includes those who have been the ones who have

hurt, because if we do not start a dialogue, if we do not start from a place of understanding, we will never achieve the goals of reconciliation, we will never achieve the goals of progress or supports for those who truly need it.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with my few last words, I would like to also touch on the fact that I am very honoured and truly recognize the responsibility of being appointed as minister within this government, that it is my intention to be a part of listening, learning and growing this great province, and I look forward to working with all my colleagues in this Chamber.

Thank you very much.

Ms. Lisa Naylor (Wolseley): I am deeply honoured and humbled to have been elected to represent the people of Wolseley. Wolseley has been well-served by New Democrat MLAs for 36 of the past 38 years. I want to acknowledge the leadership of previous Wolseley NDP MLAs Myrna Phillips, Jean Friesen and Rob Altemeyer.

I also want to thank Jean for her support during the election with door-knocking, fundraising and providing me with her valuable endorsement to the community.

The Wolseley constituency is made up of several distinct neighbourhoods. Wolseley was the site of significant environmental activism over 60 years ago when women acted to save a large elm tree from demolition due to road construction.

For that and other reasons the Wolseley neighbourhood has long had the reputation as the granola belt of Winnipeg. In fact, I relocated to Winnipeg from Ontario just over 20 years ago in part due to my attraction to that neighbourhood which, even to an outsider, appeared queer-friendly, child-centred and brimming with environmentalists and social justice activists.

It also had a glorious tree canopy, providing shade, helping to remove CO₂ from the atmosphere while beautifying the neighbourhood.

But Wolseley is much broader and more diverse than I could have known before I lived there. The electoral constituency includes parts of West Broadway, St. Matthews, Minto and the West End. These are very distinct and diverse neighbourhoods where single family homes may be located next to rooming houses, and pawn shops have their place in the economy next to popular restaurants.

Within the public school system there are four elementary schools and a middle school, but we also have a significant gap between daycare services and the needs of our families.

Gordon Bell High School is a busy, exciting community hub where more than 30 per cent of the student population are newcomers. Many others are indigenous and all are welcome and have the opportunity to participate in arts programs, cultural opportunities and sports, as well as education.

West Broadway is a particularly population-dense neighbourhood where over 90 per cent of folks are renters and over 50 per cent walk, cycle, or rely on public transit.

These residents are impacted every day by the need for functional transit, affordable and safe housing where tenants are protected from irresponsible property owners.

Some community members are feeling climate change more acutely than others. For example, on Garfield Street in the northern part of the constituency, there is no trees–tree canopy. There are virtually no trees. This makes walking down the street or playing outside less comfortable in the summer and houses require more energy to keep cool.

We are also home to several large parks and riverbanks where more and more people are making their homes through tent communities or just finding a dry space to sleep on a park bench. I represent these community members, too, and will be fighting to represent their rights to access shelter, food and public bathrooms, as well as their right to dignity and respect.

I am extremely proud to represent this eclectic and dynamic constituency. I want to thank the voters of Wolseley and acknowledge the Minto voters who endured a recent electoral boundary change and retirement of their popular MLA, Andrew Swan. I also want to thank Andrew for being a generous ambassador for me during the election campaign.

With the early election call there was a lot of educating to do about the new boundaries, and folks from Minto had to be convinced that I would represent them, too. So, to all residents of Wolseley old and new alike, I thank you for putting your trust in me and I assure you I will do my very best to stand up for the needs for all.

I would like to offer sincere gratitude to everyone else who supported my election campaign. My campaign manager was Miranda Lawrence, and she's

here today. Miranda was one of the first people who asked me to consider running. I hardly knew her then, but now I consider her a loyal and valued friend. I can't imagine having had anyone to run the campaign who would have been harder working, more capable and passionate about the electoral process than Miranda.

We had a strong team of hard-working Wolseley volunteers and it would be impossible to mention them all, but I am grateful and humbled by the incredible amount of hours, energy and passion they all demonstrated.

I'm also grateful for the folks who delivered and made meals and helped myself and my family to have some semblance of normal life between July until September of this year.

I also want to thank my partner of 28 years, Lori Bielefeld, and our daughter Shayla. They both significant personal sacrifices this year in order for me to run for election, especially as the election call came more than a year earlier than we had expected. To Lori and Shayla: I love you and I can't imagine my life without you in it every day.

* (16:30)

I have a great number of family members and friends, both local and in other provinces who provided emotional support, meals and volunteer hours on the campaign. I'm not exaggerating when I say that my family is far too large to mention everyone by name, but I will mention two important women. First, my mother, Dorothy Naylor-Crowder. My mom was the matriarch of a large, blended family. Mom was born in 1923 and, as a young woman, she served our country during the Second World War with the rank of leading aircraftwoman in the Royal Canadian Air Force Women's Division.

Mom was widowed twice by the time she was in her mid-50s. She raised five children, three biological and two of us who were adopted. She was a loving stepmother to five more children after her second marriage. Mom was hard-working, someone who prioritized doing what was right over what was easy and a woman of faith who truly believed that all people mattered and deserved to be treated with dignity and kindness.

I mention my mom today because she died this year at the age of 95. In fact, she died during my run for the nomination. Since she can't be here to share this day with me, I would like to share an excerpt from the obituary that I wrote for her last spring.

Dorothy remained deeply invested in her large family and in keeping up with everyone's lives until the very end of her life. She had a keen mind, a memory for detail, a love of poetry and correct grammar. Friends and family alike have appreciated Dorothy's generosity, her inner strength and her deep, abiding friendship.

She volunteered for and gave generously to a variety of charitable organizations that served to mitigate the effects of poverty and to enhance people's lives through camping, spirituality and cancer care. She sponsored children overseas, supported new Canadians' immigration efforts and worried about the environment decades before it was more common for citizens to think and act globally.

Dorothy was a woman of faith who believed deeply in a loving and compassionate God. She also believed in social justice, recycling and the CBC. In addition to her family, her great joys in life included the time she spent with her many dear friends, her involvement in the United Church, making music, playing bridge, the taste of Vernors and paddling a canoe.

My mother was very excited about this new direction of my life and I selfishly wish she had lived long enough to know the outcome.

I also want to mention my sister, Ann Naylor, who is here today, who's been my biggest supporter and most important role model since I was a child. Without her unconditional love and social justice mentoring, I know that I would not be standing in the House today.

I was 12 years old when my sister took me to my first protest. She was a theology student then and she told me that she had learned to pray with her feet, which meant show up, walk the talk and stand up for those who need you.

Praying with your feet—or voting with your feet, as I think of it now—means show up to the protest, but it also means that you write the letters, sign the petitions, volunteer for social justice organizations, give money when you're able.

And, as I've discovered, sometimes showing up for social justice means running for office in order to change the policies or laws that maintain social, economic and environmental inequality and protect the privileges of only a few.

When I was still a teenager, I started volunteering at the Morgentaler Clinic in Toronto. I also spent

countless weekends standing shoulder-to-shoulder with others, defending the clinic and fighting for reproductive rights before and after abortion was decriminalized. I was a young woman who benefited from access to reproductive health, so showing up for—to fight for those rights wasn't a question for me.

As a feminist, I showed up for everything that impacted women's rights and autonomy, but feminism and social justice for me also meant showing up and fighting for other marginalized people and needs. That is why I volunteered on the very first AIDS and HIV helpline in Canada. That's why I protested nuclear weapons, participated in the labour movement and protested the Toronto developers and politicians that displaced numbers of homeless people through gentrification.

The values that were instilled in me from a young age led me on a path that became a 30-year career in front-line social services. I first worked for a street outreach service in Toronto, then in a treatment program with sexually exploited youth and, eventually, came to work as a health educator and a counsellor at the Women's Health Clinic here in Winnipeg.

Helping people heal and thrive after trauma is challenging work. During the past two decades, while working at Women's Health Clinic, I was able to provide individual support while also working to change the root causes of health and mental health challenges.

By addressing poverty and trauma caused by abuse, racism, colonialism or by discrimination based on one's abilities, body size or gender, we were always working to make our society as a whole stronger, more equitable, more compassionate and more resilient.

I first ran for school trustee in 2014 because I thought education and school culture could be strengthened if more school board members brought this mental health and social justice lens to budget and policy decisions. Even with Winnipeg School Division's record of leadership in supporting marginalized students, I saw gaps and heard stories from students about what they needed in order to thrive in our school environment.

I served for five years in the division, and I'm proud of what the board and administration were able to do together. As a trustee, I was able to fulfill the community's call for a safe and caring policy to better

support trans, two-spirit, non-binary and gender-creative students and staff.

I've also been honoured to support other initiatives that responded to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action, such as implementing Cree and Ojibwe bilingual programs and better integrating indigenous cultural knowledge throughout the division.

Now, as the member for Wolseley, I will continue to fight for sustainable education funding that's more equitable across the province yet still supports the priorities of local communities. I want to remind this government that just in the Winnipeg School Division alone, \$1 million per year raised from property taxes is dedicated to nutrition programs for hungry children. Many equally important programs are funded at the local level in school divisions across the province.

A transition away from property taxation requires a significant increase of provincial investment in order to meet the complex needs of students today and to ensure they can get to school, stay in school and have every opportunity to graduate.

All of the social change I've been a part of has been built on community power. I believe in consultation, in learning from the experts. In my counselling office, I frequently reminded clients that they were the experts of their own lives, their own experience and their own bodies. And I believe that Manitobans, individually and as a powerful collective, are the experts on what their communities need and what Manitoba needs.

Over the past year, I was able to hear from hundreds of people about the changes they want to see. I plan to be a politician who listens and who will champion the voices of those who are least likely to be heard by those in power. This government has callously abandoned indigenous people in Manitoba.

I am proud to be part of a party that champions indigenous leadership and prioritizes working with indigenous communities to address the failures of the child-welfare system and to ensure access to good-quality housing, clean water, accessible health care and high-quality education.

I've had the opportunity to visit northern and coastal indigenous communities and have seen the impact of climate change first-hand. And I understand that reconciliation cannot happen without putting the care of our earth first.

During the campaign, an older Wolseley community member told me someone has to stand up and say to these governments that you're killing our planet and there won't be anything left for my grandchildren. He told me he wants a government who will be bold and courageous when it comes to protecting the planet and mitigating the impacts of climate change. I cannot agree more. The climate crisis is deadly serious, and we need to take it on with a sense of urgency. I am grateful for the opportunity that the New Democrats have given me to serve as the critic for the environment and climate change.

This is indeed the challenge of our time, and it's already affecting all Manitobans in the form of floods, devastating winter storms, wildfires and droughts. These natural events pressure our health-care system, increase food security and displace families.

I have been a feminist activist for 35 years, and climate change is also a gender issue. Worldwide, women make up 80 per cent of the people displaced by climate change. Globally, just as in Manitoba, women are more likely to experience poverty, to have less socio-economic power than men, and this makes it more difficult to recover from disasters which affect infrastructure, jobs and housing.

We know that the costs of climate change are staggering. Agriculture, health care, infrastructure, immigration, income assistance, resource development and protection, northern relations and many other government responsibilities become 'exponentially' more expensive when we factor in the effects of climate change on these areas.

It is not enough to continue to do damage control after the fact when it comes to climate change. We must act now to slow climate change and mitigate the changes that have already occurred.

The government refuses to take meaningful action on climate. Undoing clean energy programs like Manitoba Hydro's hugely popular solar rebate program are not the steps that a government serious about tackling the climate would take.

Now, hundreds of Manitobans who tried to do their part to protect the environment by installing solar panels are out thousands and, in some cases, millions of dollars in installation fees and lost business.

* (16:40)

Manitoba producers are dealing with serious issues due to climate 'chance'. Abnormally dry conditions last year, and then flooding and drenched

fields this year have devastated producers. Thanks to the effects of climate change, agriculture is a riskier business than most to get into.

New Democrats take the crisis seriously; we believe in real action to reduce carbon emissions, preserve our environment, and protect future generations' quality of life. We also believe that climate change is an important opportunity to create good jobs in the clean energy sector and make Manitoba a leader in renewable energy.

Manitoba is not on track to meet our targets under the Paris climate agreement or the recommended targets put forward by the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. The province's greenhouse gas rights are—greenhouse gas rates are at an all-time high, and they have only increased under this government.

The Premier (Mr. Pallister) and his government have failed to take concrete steps to cut emissions and address climate change. The climate continues—the government continues to pay lip service to the idea of addressing the crisis, and then this summer they went and cut their emissions reductions goals by more than half, from 2.5 megatons to one megaton by 2022.

In the Throne Speech, the government again failed to make any commitment to put a price on carbon. They failed to make any commitments that substantively reduce Manitobans' greenhouse gas emissions. They failed to mention our crown jewel, Manitoba Hydro, that is a clean, green source of energy that can benefit Canadians in tackling climate change, and they failed to make any investments in green infrastructure projects, such as the North End treatment plant, that help curb emissions, reduce pollution and will help to save Lake Winnipeg.

Manitobans cannot afford to have a government that sits idle on climate change when it continues to have an impact on their everyday lives and their livelihood. And it is not enough to blame the inaction of past governments. We can all agree that the human race is late to respond to the climate crisis, but Manitobans need action now. They need a government that's willing to make real investments in capital and national infrastructure, to preserve and restore ecosystems. They need a government that uses science-led policies to get us off of fossil fuels and compel large polluters to pay. They need a government that's willing to electrify our province and expand this green, renewable energy to other provinces. They need a government that is willing to do whatever it takes to curb the impact of climate

change on their lives and be a national leader on this environmental and human crisis.

I look forward to holding this government to account with respect to the Climate and Green Plan. I will also push them to listen to what the science is telling us about necessary and immediate solutions to the climate crisis.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Shannon Martin (McPhillips): Thank you very much, Mr. Acting Assistant to the Deputy Speaker—*[interjection]* It's hard to keep track of titles sometimes, so, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, but I do appreciate always the opportunity to rise in this house as a legislator and share a few comments about the Throne Speech.

I think the timing couldn't be more appropriate. Many of my colleagues in this Chamber joined members of the Ukrainian community earlier today at lunch to mark Holodomor, which was obviously the situation back in 1932-33, when the Soviet Union began their policy of famine upon the breadbasket of the European area—that being Ukraine—and starved out millions of people, and I know there was actually three survivors here today as part of the Holodomor remembrance, and their words struck a chord, not only with myself but I think with all of us listening.

When you share what a eight- or nine-year-old witnessed during those very, very dark times in human history. One young person actually during the ceremony did note that at the height of the Holodomor, something like 17 people—men, women, and children—were dying every minute as a result of starvation.

So it was, I think, the fact that we, as legislators from all areas of the province, from all backgrounds, are here today, I think is testament to that we—how far we have come as a society, but there is no denying, with the lingering shadow of events like the Holodomor that we marked today, that there is more work to be done, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Throne Speech is often thought of as laying forward the path of government. The Throne Speech is never intended to lay out every nuance and every program and every policy the government will be bringing forward in the following year, but it is there to set the general criteria and guidelines to provide Manitobans reassurance that their government—their government they elected in a historic back-to-back majority elections—is here to

make sure that their words and their wishes are respected in this household.

So, as the former MLA of Morris and the only MLA for McPhillips—and I thank the people of—from McPhillips for making sure that their constituency has representation in government. It was quite an election, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

There was knocking on literally tens of thousands of doors, connecting with Manitobans from all walks of life, whether it was in—within the urban city boundaries of McPhillips or across the perimeter into West St. Paul, but it was clear, Mr. Deputy Speaker, from those conversations, that Manitobans were committed to seeing their province improve, that they recognize that the road that we have undertaken in our first mandate has paid significant dividends.

They've seen significant, significant investments, whether it be in infrastructure, whether it be in health-care, family services, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and a lot of those dividends and a lot of those investments are being—are seeing their—the results now, as noted by the Minister of Health today in question period in response to some of the flagrant misinformation put forward by members opposite.

We, in fact, have more doctors than ever working here in the province of Manitoba, more emergency doctors working here in the province and more nurses working here in the province. We, in fact, just hired another, I believe, it was 60 paramedics here in the province, and—as well as upgraded the fleet of ambulances, Mr. Deputy Speaker—all things that were never done under the previous administration, despite their 17-year tenure.

And so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's unfortunate we, as a new government coming in, have to spend a disproportionate amount of our time cleaning up the mess left to us during those dark days of NDP rule. I think of the PST, the provincial sales tax, which, you know, it's—there's a sad irony when members opposite get up and they talk about poverty rates and child poverty rates, and absolutely, it's something that more can be done on, but what they fail to acknowledge is that child poverty capital was actually under their mandate.

And we have been able to remove that title from Manitoba. That's not saying that all is perfect out there. There is clearly more work to be done, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but there is a certain sad irony in that the very government that brought in—the very NDP government that raised the PST, their leader

when he gets up and talks about poverty, fails to note that in his own comments, prior to election, he saw raising the PST—and I'm paraphrasing the member, and everyone's welcome to take a look at the research and the quotes on their leader, but he did note that the PST hike disproportionately affected those individuals at or near the poverty line, as well as those people on fixed income.

Mr. Doyle Piwniuk, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

So, while their NDP government was raising taxes that—in their own view, disproportionately impacted people on the low-income margins, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it was this government that came to office on a commitment of accountability and transparency. And not only that, but we fulfilled our commitment and we lowered the PST, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

* (16:50)

But we weren't done with just simply lowering the PST. We recognize that Manitobans, as taxpayers, deserve to have more of their income returned to them as opposed to being spent here and taking here on Broadway for ourselves as opposed to their own personal priorities.

One of the upcoming commitments that we made, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was to remove the PST off of personal services over \$50. And, in fact, I think it was Gord Mackintosh, in his book, *post rebellion*, where he noted that, behind the scenes, the NDP—or at least some within the NDP party—were greatly concerned, including himself, that you would be adding a tax to, essentially, I think he described it as a women's tax in his book.

So, again, for all the huff and bluff of members opposite when they stand and rise on what they call women's issues, when push came to shove, when they were actually in a position to take action, they did nothing and instead they imposed additional costs on women. Of course, when you're—when you hire or elect a leader with a history of domestic violence, I'm not surprised that some of those policies come through. But the members opposite need to be aware of the history within their own political party and some of the actions that they undertook.

One of the things, Mr. Speaker, that is worth noting is the fact that we've had tourism promotion significantly increased within this province, and I think we're going to continue to see it as Manitoba 150 kicks off next year.

And it's always interesting that, again, the previous NDP government talked about creating a dedicated fund and allocating a portion of tourism revenues to go exclusively towards tourism promotion, and yet not once during their entire tenure did they ever actually bring that policy into action, and it took the election of a Progressive Conservative government to not only bring in that policy of shared revenues to Tourism Manitoba, but now we've made a further commitment in the election to increase those—that funding for tourism promotion by 25 per cent, and I think we will see that highlighted when not only Manitobans take that one more trip in the—in this coming year to go to festivals and festivities throughout our province, but as we welcome people home—to come home to visit friends and families and see what they've been missing all these many years.

And we only need to look at where, you know, Hollywood has recognized that Manitoba is quite a place to do business, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Obviously, our improvements through the enhanced Manitoba film and tax credit have been paying dividends, and it's—again, it's interesting that—I was listening to the radio recently, and they were talking about how the actor Sean Penn was in doing some filming recently over the summer months, and I believe he was out doing some shopping or trying to do some shopping on a Sunday, and he couldn't believe at the restricted shopping rules that we have here in the province of Manitoba when it comes to Sunday and/or holiday shopping. But this is something that we heard as a government, and it's something that we've committed to taken action on. But, again, it's always interesting where those perspectives come from.

The previous NDP government did, to their credit, expand Sunday shopping, so it'll be interesting to see whether or not they support the continuation of those policies. But what's interesting, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in terms of history or the—as the—at least one NDP member liked to talk about the historical record, is that the NDP, actually before they changed Sunday shopping rules were against any expansion of Sunday shopping hours.

But then a big multinational corporation came in and they made it clear to the then-NDP government that the only way they would be setting up shop in this province was if the NDP expanded Sunday shopping. So the NDP acquiesced to this large multinational. On the other hand, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the changes that we're proposing to expanded Sunday or shopping—or

holiday shopping, has been driven largely by the small-business community.

Obviously, Munther Zeid has been in the news from the Food Fare perspective and what he sees as the inconsistency within the legislation. So I would hope that members opposite in the NDP that are willing to make those changes for large multinationals are willing to make similar and expansive changes to those mom-and-pops, those small businesses, that support many, many families in all regions of this province when we bring that legislation forward.

One of the other commitments that we have made as a government, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is to continue on to modernize and make effective emergency communications within our province. Again, for the information of the new members, they may not be aware, but their administration—there was a program, an emergency communications program, called FleetNet, and while the NDP knew for almost a decade that the system was defunct, in fact, it had gotten to the point that they had been told by the procurers or the providers of equipment, that they simply—it was so outdated that replacement parts could never—could not be purchased anymore.

It's gotten to the point—and, again, this is common knowledge for the new members—that the NDP actually were on eBay looking for parts for the security—or for the communications network, and it is only by the grace of God that disaster was not encountered, although it did come close. I know in the—I know during the forest fires, I believe in the 2012-2013, they said the system was down, and it got to the point where emergency personnel were literally shouting instructions to each other block by block.

And, despite knowing the dangers inherent in a system that could no longer be supported, the NDP failed to take any action on it and left it to the incoming government, being us, to take action on that file, and we have, with a massive modernization of FleetNet, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to make sure that those front-line workers, those front-line individuals that put their lives out there, whether it be our police, whether it be our firefighters, our conservation officers, whatever role they're playing, that they know

that they—when they're using that communication equipment, they know that that call would be answered.

It's also worth noting, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I thought it's of particular interest as with the new riding of McPhillips, I have Seven Oaks hospital, I've had the opportunity to be invited by the CEO and other staff to take a tour of the facility, which I recently undertook, and one of the things that the—one of the doctors noted was that about 90 per cent of all the patients that currently come through their door at Seven Oaks urgent care are treated there at Seven Oaks, and that about 10 per cent are being diverted, he said, but they're being diverted to where they should've gone in the first place, and again, this is a doctor telling me.

This is not the fear mongering and the falsehoods put—being put forward by the NDP but, actually, health-care professionals that are working every day on those front lines.

And I know during that campaign, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the—my NDP opponent and their supporters, including—they even had the unions out. I remember Unifor was out one day—or more than one day—out in their jackets emblazoned with Unifor, handing out NDP literature in support.

But they continued to promote that agenda of fear mongering to convince Manitobans that somehow health care would suffer under the reforms, ironically enough, put forward by an individual that their own NDP government hired through a single untendered contract. But the good people of McPhillips would have none of that fear-mongering put forward—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

When this matter's before House, the honourable member for McPhillips (Mr. Martin) will have four minutes remaining.

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, November 21, 2019

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