

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

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The Honourable Myrna Driedger
Speaker*

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-First Legislature

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, March 12, 2018

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

Please be seated. Good afternoon, everybody.

I would like to just point out that you will notice that there is a cameraperson to my left, and we have had some technical camera difficulties. So we have a camera operator here on the floor for today until they can fix their technical problems.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

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

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

The honourable member—or the honourable Minister of Agriculture.

Prairie Regional Synchronized Skating Championships

Hon. Ralph Eichler (Minister of Agriculture): With the commencement of much anticipated 2018 Winter Olympics only days before, synchronized skating set the town of Stonewall on fire as skaters converged on veterans memorial skating complex.

Hundreds of ice skaters competed on February the 10th and 11th for the 2018 Prairie Regional Synchronized Skating Championships. The Stonewall Skating Club hosted this two-day competition where performers from the ages of five to 56 had a chance to showcase their skating skills to qualified judges.

The event involved skaters from other provinces, providing them with the opportunity to qualify for Skate Canada Synchronized Skating Championships in several categories, including novice, intermediate, open, junior and senior.

Top teams of each of these categories in every region had the possibility of advancing to the national competition which took place from February 23rd to the 25th in Oshawa.

As with all championship events, a huge volunteer commitment prior to the event was—especially during the event is required. Stonewall was proud to be hosting such an event and showcasing our first-class facility.

Madam Speaker, please allow me to recognize the many volunteers, organizers, participants who have joined us in the gallery today. Who knows, one day these skaters may someday go on to realize their dreams of competing in the Winter Olympics.

Madam Speaker: The honourable Minister of Agriculture.

Mr. Eichler: Yes, Madam Speaker, I ask leave to have the names of our guests recorded in Hansard for the record.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave to have those names recorded in Hansard? *[Agreed]*

Tara, Kelly, Jordan, Wallace and Maddex Glaspey; Kelly, Haylee and Kennedy Kimball; Lucy Hoff; Roberta Finnie; John Montgomery and Sam Holyk

John Joseph Harper

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): I rise to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the death of J.J. Harper, on Friday, March 9th. He had a profound impact on our province and on my life.

John Joseph Harper was killed by a bullet from a police officer's gun after he was stopped in a case of mistaken identity. He was mourned by his wife, Lois, and three children, along with many others. The public outcry that followed led to the creation of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry.

Some recommendations were implemented, giving us better representation of indigenous people on the Winnipeg Police Service, improving control over Child and Family Services by the Metis and helping reduce discrimination against women under the Indian Act.

Still, other recommendations are outstanding, like banning peremptory challenges in jury selection, ending the federal minister's veto on First Nation bylaws and the creation of a charter of rights and freedoms for indigenous governments.

Madam Speaker, the first time I can remember coming here to the Legislative Building was when my mom and I took the bus here to protest the shooting of J.J. Harper. That was my first time coming here; now, 30 years later, I have a seat in the front bench of this Chamber.

Now that I am only a year younger than J.J. Harper was when he died, and I'm about to myself have three kids of my own, I'm very mindful of the sacrifices it took so that someone like me could sit in this spot. It is a responsibility I do not take lightly. I want to help all Manitobans, and part of that means I'm committed to help bringing about a day where young indigenous people like J.J. Harper, Colten Boushie and Tina Fontaine are no longer mourned as martyrs calling on us to do the right thing but rather that the next Tinas, Coltens and J.J.s can achieve more than I have done, be better than I have been and truly enjoy all that life has to offer.

Miigwech, J.J.

St. Vital Curling Club

Mrs. Colleen Mayer (St. Vital): Over the past few years, Madam Speaker, there has been excitement building in St. Vital thanks to our local curling club.

Founded in 1933, the St. Vital Curling Club has served our community well and has become a mainstay for the curling community.

With humble beginnings, the St. Vital Curling Club operated in a barn-like structure with a clubhouse. This building was owned and shared with the St. Vital Agricultural Society, and during the winter months curlers would use the three sheets of ice in the arena, and during the summer the ag society would host their annual fair.

By the early 1950s, the curling club had grown into—in popularity and consisted of six sheets of ice. And by 1955, after coming to a joint agreement with a large grocery store chain, the club founded its permanent home at 286 Regent Avenue—or, Regal Avenue, pardon me.

Today, our curling club is run by an eager board of directors, many wonderful volunteers and a

tremendously dedicated staff. Their love of curling can be seen through the growing success of the club.

At the club, you'll find curling programs and leagues for anyone of all ages. Starting as young as five years old, youth can learn how to curl and sharpen their skills, maybe even be the next Olympians at the next Olympics.

During this past—driving past the curling club, you cannot miss the colourful mural on the back of the building honouring Team Jennifer Jones. Jennifer Jones began her extraordinary curling career at the St. Vital Curling Club, reaching the highest success of an athlete in her sport that she can achieve, an Olympic gold medal. Team Jones is the first curling team from Manitoba to ever take home a gold medal from the Olympics.

And in 2018, at that Olympics, a second star curler from the St. Vital Curling Club brought home another gold medal. Kaitlyn Lawes, two-time Olympic gold medalist, won her first gold medal while playing with Team Jones and this past winter won a gold medal for the mixed doubles event.

I'd like to congratulate all of the curlers from the St. Vital Curling Club and I hope that they find their passion as they continue to curl for many years to come.

Madam Speaker, I would like you and everyone in this Chamber to join me in recognizing the St. Vital Curling Club, the board, the staff and the volunteers for their commitment to ensuring the club has continued success.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for St. Vital.

Mrs. Mayer: I ask for leave to include the names of the individuals from the St. Vital Curling Club, who are in the gallery with us today, into Hansard.

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

Pam Kok, president; Annette Giguere, secretary; Bob Kirkland, past president and long-time volunteer.

Marty Dolin

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): Madam Speaker, today I pay tribute to long-time social justice activist, Wolseley resident and former MLA for The Maples, Marty Dolin.

* (13:40)

Marty died suddenly on February the 14th at the age of 78 after a lifetime of dedication to causes and issues larger than himself. I was grateful to have him as a friend, an activist colleague and honoured to receive his advice, which, I can tell you, he was never shy about offering.

While it's not possible to do proper justice to Marty's many contributions in the time I have, in our current era of unbridled greed and self-interest, I think it's important that at least some of his life story be shared.

He was born in June 1939 in the South Bronx of New York City. He started working at the tender age of 13 and completed undergraduate studies at City College and the American University in Mexico. His activism also started early, as Marty was one of many students who flocked to southern United States to help register black voters in the era of Jim Crow laws that enforced racial segregation. His opposition to the Vietnam War led him to Canada, first to Nova Scotia and then to Winnipeg.

To say that Marty made a lasting impression on his adopted home would be a massive understatement. He was quite simply a force of nature. Known for his booming voice, his infectious humour and uncompromising dedication to the people and issues he believed in, he backed up his words with action time and time again and committed himself a hundred per cent to everything he did.

As the executive director of Welcome Place for two decades, Marty helped thousands of refugees and their families begin new lives here in Manitoba. He was a passionate human rights activist, never afraid to challenge or expose the bad practices of governments, businesses or institutions. Simultaneously, he had the biggest heart in the world for society's underdogs, and gave many new arrivals their first jobs in their new home.

He helped build Clinic Community Health Centre, and as president of Clubhouse of Winnipeg he helped successfully lobby our former government to build more mental health housing units. I remember the pride in his voice as we toured the now-completed Fountain Springs project on Sherbrook Street that now provides 30 crucial affordable housing units to those in need.

At Marty's celebration it was written that, quote, he was larger than life, fearless and spoke—or shouted—truth to power whenever it was needed to

protect those he cared about. And Marty cared about everyone. End quote.

Thank you, Marty. You are loved. You are honoured. You are missed. And even now you are still awesome.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

St. Vital Interfaith Habitat Project

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Sustainable Development): Madam Speaker, I am proud to rise today to recognize and honour the St. Vital Interfaith Habitat Project. This group was founded in 2015 by Riel constituents Alf Horn and Orly Friesen.

When they formed this group, they had two goals. The first was to build an affordable, ready-to-move Habitat house for a deserving Winnipeg family. The second goal was to foster friendship and understanding, as well as a sense of community among the many different faith communities in our neighbourhood.

These faith communities came together to build their first Habitat house in the summer of 2016. There were nine different congregations who took part in the building of that house on the site of the St. Vital Evangelical Mennonite Church. During that long, hot summer, these groups worked together to build a home for a deserving family, and in the process helped to foster connections between their communities.

The project was so successful that they built—decided to build a second Habitat house in the summer of 2018. There will be up to 15 faith groups who will be part of this very worthwhile project. This spring, the St. Vital Interfaith Habitat Project will be hosting a number of events in our community to raise funds for this house, and their goal is to raise \$175,000.

I am so inspired by the efforts of the St. Vital Interfaith Habitat Project. Not only are they giving generously of their time and talents to provide a home for a family, they are also providing many different faith groups in St. Vital an opportunity to get to know one another and to build bridges of friendship and understanding.

In a world that often seems so divided and contentious, the St. Vital Interfaith Habitat Project is a shining example of the amazing things that can be accomplished when people from different faiths and backgrounds work together for a worthy cause. They are a wonderful example of the spirit of generosity

that Manitobans are known for, and I wish them great success with their Habitat house project this summer.

Today we are joined by Mr. Horn and Mr. Friesen and many members of the St. Vital Interfaith Habitat Project and Habitat for Humanity. And I would ask my colleagues to help me congratulate and honour them that are in the gallery this afternoon.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: Prior to oral questions, we have some guests in the gallery that I would like to introduce you to. We have 15 representatives of the heavy construction industry who are here as guests of the MLA for Elmwood.

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

ORAL QUESTIONS

Special Drug Program Request to Retain

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Instead of expanding coverage for life-saving medication, this Premier is cutting back. Now, without warning or consultation, without any concern for the consequences, the Premier has cancelled the special drug program.

Now, this 50-year-old program was created so patients and families would not be bankrupted by the high costs of necessary, life-saving drugs. Now, these are massive bills that are being sprung upon over 1,000 Manitobans. One of the folks that we talked to last week will have to pay some \$11,000 this year just to get the drugs that he needs in order to stay alive. The Premier doesn't seem to care about the impact that this cut will have on the patients who are going to be affected, doesn't seem to care about the consequences of these cuts.

Now, we know that the Premier is receiving big increases in transfer payments from the federal government, but will he use it to help those who need it most?

Will the Premier restore the special drug program for Manitobans?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Au contraire, Madam Speaker, we care deeply on this side of the House about having a health-care system that's fixed up, not the one that was left in disarray by the previous administration. That's why we're committed

to investing in it. That's why we're investing more in it every year. That's why we're investing a half a billion dollars more in it right now than the NDP ever did.

But just the amount of investment isn't the only thing, Madam Speaker. We need to have a system that invests more wisely in preventative endeavours, in endeavours that make sure that we receive better results and outcomes for Manitobans. Where they got it wrong, we're fixing it.

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

Mr. Kinew: It seems wise to me to provide the drugs that people need in order to stay alive. In particular, one of these drugs, which helps those with cystic fibrosis, will ensure that the progressive deterioration of those young people's lungs is halted in its tracks and will allow those people to enjoy a good quality of life and, indeed, life itself, in our community.

Without it, one of the people that we spoke to last week says, if I don't take my medication for a few days, don't worry about it; I won't have to take it anymore.

The implications of what he meant, I think, are clear, and that is the result of a cut being made by this Premier, a decision he made at his office table.

Now, we know that this program reached some 1,100 Manitobans. And now some of those folks will have to pay up to \$11,000 a year in unforeseen medical expenses just to say—just to stay alive.

So I'd ask the Premier once again: Will he restore the special drug program here in Manitoba?

Mr. Pallister: Madam Speaker, perhaps it is consistent with a member more concerned with image bending and innuendo than facts to not raise the facts in his preamble, but the facts are these: we are making larger and more significant investments in health care than the previous government ever did. So the myth of cuts is just that. It's a false statement.

In terms of results, Madam Speaker, one needs to focus on making sure that they understand that we have the most comprehensive system for providing drugs to our citizens, in this province, of any province in Canada, and we're committed to making that system work even better.

So where they got it wrong—in spite of increasing taxes, increasing deficits and debt, their

results on health care continually went down. Where they got it wrong, Madam Speaker, we're going to get it right.

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

Mr. Kinew: What I've seen in my career in public life so far, in terms of the health indicators going down, are that physiotherapy was cut, a number of emergency rooms are scheduled to be closed, and now the special drug program, which helps those who are in dire need of medication just to stay alive, is also being cut. That is this Premier's record.

Now, what's particularly surprising about this is right now we have an opportunity to work with the federal government, to call on the federal government to pay to create a universal, national pharmacare program. And while this opportunity is there before us, this Premier is taking us in the exact opposite direction: less drug coverage, higher deductibles, more costs on people just to stay alive.

The budget is about choices: Will the Premier make the right choice today, reverse the cut for the special drug program and instead choose to invest in a universal pharmacare program here in Manitoba?

*(13:50)

Mr. Pallister: Well, recently, Madam Speaker, the federal government embarked on a massive reduction in the amount of support for health care in this province and the members of the NDP just sat quietly on their hands and said nothing about it.

We are going to stand up for health care. We'll continue to do that. More paramedics, 60 full-time positions for paramedics, lower ambulance fees—we had the highest ambulance fees in the country. We're going to be 30 per cent and then 50 per cent lower, Madam Speaker.

These are real results that affect real people. Renal dialysis investments, expanded access, capital projects to fix up the buildings the NDP ignored while they were doing their for-show campaigns and advertising.

We're investing in the things that will help Manitobans get better health care, including one of your favourites, Madam Speaker, newborn screening. These are the things we'll do to fix the system that was left so broken and in disarray by the previous NDP government.

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

Municipal Transit Services Provincial Funding Agreement

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): We know that any credible plan to fight climate change has to include investments in transit.

Now, regular Manitobans rely on transit each and every day to get to and from work, to drop children off at school. Seniors use transit, in some cases, to go to appointments that they need, in other cases simply to visit the local food bank.

But this Premier has broken his promise to protect our front-line transit services. He hid his cut for transit across this province in a massive omnibus budget bill last year.

Now, without warning or consultation, he cut millions for transit in Winnipeg, in Flin Flon, in Brandon and in other communities. Now transit riders in our city have to pay \$100 a month for their bus pass.

Will the Premier reverse these cuts and restore the 50-50 funding arrangement for transit in Manitoba?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): You can always tell when someone's losing an argument, Madam Speaker, they start to make things up, and that's exactly what the member opposite is doing. The fact remains that the Auditor General of our province has commented very forcefully and very clearly on the NDP government's lack of a plan for environmental improvement. They said, in fact, that for the plan they proposed on a back of a napkin to work we would have to take all diesel- and gas-operated vehicles off the highways and roads of Manitoba.

That may be one way to promote the use of public transit, Madam Speaker, but it defies all probability as a real alternative. We've presented a plan which is better for our economy. It is better for our environment and we will go ahead with that plan with the support of Manitobans, in spite of the silence of the members opposite when it comes to anything green.

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

Mr. Kinew: A couple of facts for your consideration, Madam Speaker, and they both have to do with the number 8.3 million.

Eight point three million dollars: that is the drop in funding because of the provincial government's cut to transit services through our city. Eight point three million dollars is also the exact same amount this Premier has spent on high-priced consultants. Priorities, Madam Speaker. Tons of money for high-priced consultants; not enough money for those people who need transit services in order to get to work, to be able to access child care and to be able to leave food deserts in the inner city and buy healthy, nutritious food.

The Premier's priorities are millions for these consultants and, again, not enough for transit, an environmentally friendly mode of transportation.

Will the Premier reverse course and, in today's budget, announce the restoration of the 50-50 funding agreement for transit in Manitoba?

Mr. Pallister: Perhaps the member could explain how over \$10 million in six separate untendered contracts given to a party donor of the NDP was giving value to the people of Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, the only green the NDP ever cared about was the green in people's pockets. They ran for election in 2011 on one promise and one promise only. They went to the doors, they walked, they knocked, they said we will not raise taxes, and then they raised taxes by broadening the PST. They attacked the tax to—\$200 million—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: —taken off the kitchen tables of Manitobans, the very people they promised they wouldn't raise the taxes of, especially impacting negatively on low-income people in our province, including transit users.

So I don't need a lecture from the member opposite on the rights and wrongs of helping low-income people. They know how to raid them and take the green out of their pocket. We know how to lower taxes and leave some money in their pocket.

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

Mr. Kinew: Not sure why the Premier is getting so wound up. I mean, if he only looked to the gallery today, he'd see a lot of smirks on the faces of those in

the heavy construction industry when he's giving his answer there.

And it seems to me that in the last election I recall the Premier and his candidates going door to door, knocking on all those doors and pledging not to cut front-line services, and yet they've cut front-line services in transit, in health and in other services right across the government. But, again, these cuts were made without consultation: without consultation for the workers affected, without consultation for the municipalities who have to try and make the numbers work in a plan issued by this Premier that just doesn't add up.

Will the Premier reverse course and start to repair some of the damage that he's done with his broken promises from the last election and instead, repair or restore the 50-50 funding arrangement for transit in our province?

Mr. Pallister: Well, finally, a preamble on something the member knows something about: breaking promises, Madam Speaker.

The NDP underspent in only one department of government in their previous term, just one. They overspent in every single department of government except one department. Guess which department. The one he's alluding to now as being a protector of, Madam Speaker. They took \$2 billion out of Infrastructure. They raided that department every single year, and every member of the Manitoba Heavy Construction Association remembers that and knows that. They raided, raided, raided that department and then had a parade the year before the election and showed off about what they could do.

That's not how you invest in infrastructure. You invest strategically. That's what we're doing. You invest regularly. That's what we're doing. You invest to get the contracts out as early in the year as you can. That's what we're doing.

We're taking the advice of the people that work hard in our province and pay their taxes and expect value for them, Madam Speaker. Where they got it wrong, we're going to get it right.

Personal-Care-Home Beds Provincial Contribution Cap

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): Despite a lot of talk from the other side, over the past two years construction has started on exactly zero new personal-care-home beds in Manitoba.

Has this Minister of Health stood up to the Premier (Mr. Pallister) and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen) to demand they raise the unreasonable cap on provincial contributions to the construction of each PCH bed, which has put care for seniors out of reach for so many communities?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): Madam Speaker, the member will know, having been in government for many years and a government that underfunded personal-care homes, that left to languish many seniors in many communities over those years to not find appropriate care, that his track record when it comes to personal-care homes is abysmal.

We were pleased last year to announce three new personal-care homes, two in rural Manitoba, one in Winnipeg, that are now well in the phases of their planning, and will be announcing their own timelines when it comes to construction, and we know there'll be more announcements soon, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Swan: This government needs to listen to what Manitobans are actually saying. And I table the latest report from the board of directors of The Convalescent Home of Winnipeg who say as follows: At this time, we and our partners in the Italian community have decided to indefinitely defer our initiative to replace the existing home with a new one on a new site. This decision was made in light of the current funding formula for long-term-care facilities by the provincial government, making it impossible for us to develop a new facility at the present moment. The board will continue to monitor the situation and look at options to allow us to pursue this goal in the future.

Will they have an answer today or will they have to wait until the election in 2020?

Mr. Goertzen: I'm not sure what the member's definition of the word impossible is, but there have been already three different personal-care homes announced under the new funding formula where the Province of Manitoba is contributing significantly to personal-care homes.

There'll be more announcements, Madam Speaker, proving that his assertion of impossibility is false.

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

Mr. Swan: What Manitobans are realizing is just how unreasonable this government's cap for personal-care-home beds is for their communities. We now see local governments having to go out and borrow money, local governments planning to raise taxes.

And we understand that one rural municipality has chosen to impose a flat tax on its property owners by way of a local improvement levy, the kind we'd normally see for things like road improvements, to try to raise money for a personal-care home. So, whether your property is worth \$50,000 or \$2 million, you'll have to pay the same as a local improvement levy, and that's not right.

*(14:00)

Why has this Minister of Health left so many communities and seniors across Manitoba out in the cold?

Mr. Goertzen: Madam Speaker, the member opposite can feign concern for taxpayers, whether they're being charged by the municipalities or by school boards or by the provincial government. He, of course, has a track record on all of those levels of ensuring that Manitobans pay more. Our government has the opposite.

He only has to stay tuned now for less than an hour to find out what we care about: lowering taxes and leaving more money on the kitchen tables of Manitobans, Madam Speaker.

Poverty Reduction Strategy Request for Government Plan

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): The minister is now a year behind on his legislative review of the Poverty Reduction Strategy, and so far we've had zero assurances that the budget will include a plan to help Manitobans—Manitoba's low-income seniors and families.

The minister promised to launch a new strategy by the end of 2017 in last year's budget. Instead, he sat on his hands for 11 months and then punted the deadline by announcing consultations.

This budget is called Keeping our promises, but will he continue to break them?

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Families): Ensuring people that are in poverty have resources and have an ability to pull themselves up is an important piece for the government. The opposite—the opposition member knows quite well the NDP's

track record when it comes to poverty. They created the—Manitoba as the child poverty capital of Canada. Food bank usage spiked under the NDP government.

We're going to consult, and the reason why we're going to consult, why we think it's so important, is that the NDP did no consultation before they introduced their Poverty Reduction Strategy. Where they got it wrong, we're going to get it right, Madam Speaker.

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

Mrs. Smith: They had 11 months to figure that out. They've now started to try figure it out and actually doing a horrible job at it.

Since the Premier (Mr. Pallister) took office, low-income families have been living with even less. A 2017 report showed Manitobans have the highest child poverty rate in this country. More than two out of every seven children are living below the poverty line.

The Premier (Mr. Pallister) has been dragging Manitoba in the wrong direction. When the report recommended implementing a \$15 minimum wage, the Premier froze Manitoba's for two years. When it recommended increasing access to education, the Premier hiked tuition for over 2,000 students.

Why doesn't this government have a real plan for—that's working for Manitobans?

Mr. Fielding: We do have a real plan, a plan that we're going to consult with Manitobans, something you forgot about when you introduced your child poverty reduction strategy.

Our government has introduced, in terms of the basic personal exemption, taking close to 2,100 individuals off the tax rolls in and itself. Our government focuses on getting people back to work as opposed to some services and supports that are there. We're building capacity for individuals, people to get in the work area—it's just so important to address poverty issues here in the province of Manitoba.

Madam Speaker: Just a reminder to members that when asking questions or posing answers that all comments should be made in a third-party fashion through the Chair.

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

Mrs. Smith: While this government's trying to figure out what to do, Manitoba families and poverty activists have been calling for changes since the minister took office. He ignored all of them last year and he still refuses to commit in this budget.

Last year's budget saw this Premier froze—freeze minimum wage, cut jobs across the province, increase rent for Manitoba Housing, cut the Rent Assist program, hike post-secondary tuition, increase transit fees and make deep cuts to prevention programs.

Will this minister continue this attack on Manitoba's poorest families, or will he finally give them a break?

Mr. Fielding: Addressing poverty issues is an utmost importance to this government. Since this government has taken office, we've increased the Rent Assist budget by millions of dollars. In fact, close to 2,700 Manitobans are getting support through the Rent Assist program. You could fill the Convention Centre twice over with the amount of people that support from this government since we've taken office in terms of the Rent Assist program.

We think that's a part of the answer to the poverty reduction. We're also waiting back to hear real consultation of how we get it done with Manitobans, Madam Speaker.

Criminal Justice Reform Strategy Funding for Crime Reduction Programs

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): Justice practitioners are concerned with Manitoba's rising incarceration and recidivism rates; they want the justice of minister to increase restorative justice programs, alongside required dollars, in today's budget.

The minister has announced a strategy to supposedly revamp the criminal—[interjection]—to supposedly revamp the criminal justice system with little—[interjection]

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Fontaine: —with little, if any, additional dollars noted.

Does the minister actually plan to commit appropriate funding in this budget today?

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I thank the member for the question.

I was honoured last week to stand with outstanding members of our community—Onashowewin, Block by Block, Salvation Army, law enforcement, including the WPS and the RCMP and so many others—on the announcement of our criminal justice modernization strategy.

And I can tell the member opposite that after many, many years of NDP government we had among the worst crime rates in Canada, the worst incarceration rates in Canada and among the worst recidivism rates in Canada, Madam Speaker.

Where members opposite failed, we will deliver.

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

Ms. Fontaine: The minister's plan includes a focus on restorative justice. But ironically this new strategy comes a year after cuts to restorative justice programs and community prevention initiatives. The minister cut the historic program Restorative Resolutions, which has increased recidivism rates for decades—has decreased recidivism rates for decades—
[interjection]

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Fontaine: It's Monday, you guys. It's Monday.

And she cut more than \$180,000 from front-line organizations from—like Elizabeth Fry and John Howard.

Will the minister restore and increase funding for these organizations in the budget today so that they can do their very important job?

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

I'll remind her what she said in response to our modernization strategy announcement on Friday. The member for St. Johns said, and I quote, I don't think the previous government or any government has substantially invested in restorative justice, Madam Speaker.

So that means many, many years under the previous NDP government the member opposite is stating that the member for Minto (Mr. Swan), who was the minister of Justice for five years, Madam

Speaker, and was the Attorney General of our province, they didn't do anything for restorative.

We're taking a new approach, Madam Speaker. We're taking a responsible approach, and where members opposite failed, we will deliver.
[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

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

Ms. Fontaine: The minister forgot the whole other stuff that I said in respect of her strategy, including funding.

At a time when crystal meth use and fentanyl is rampant, the Pallister government is refusing to address the correlation between addiction and crime. Manitoba needs a strong harm-reduction strategy that works in partnership with the most vulnerable to address addictions.

The minister dissolved an anti-gang suppression strategy and cut \$75,000 in the annual funding from GAIN. Instead of cutting, the minister must focus on preventing the spread of drugs by breaking down street gangs' influence and helping youth at risk.

Will the minister's new strategy use harm reduction and restorative justice to target gangs and addictions?

* (14:10)

Mrs. Stefanson: I want to thank the member for the question, Madam Speaker, and it gives me an opportunity to talk about our four-point plan, which includes a prime-crime reduction strategy, targeted resources for the most serious criminal cases and effective—more effective restorative justice use and responsible reintegration of offenders back into society.

We know that members opposite failed for the 17 years that they were in government, Madam Speaker, and where they failed we will pick up the ball and we will deliver for Manitobans to ensure safety in our communities for everyone.

Harassment Policy at the Legislature Inclusion of Indigenous Teachings

Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook): I learned that a colleague of ours was subjected to inappropriate behaviour by another member of this House. She was quite shocked by the invasion of her personal space. Technically, under Manitoba law she could have

proceeded with legal recourse, but instead she chose to practise indigenous laws by meeting with that person one-on-one. Today, in her eyes, the issue has been resolved and the matter is forever closed.

Our indigenous teachings form the basis of our indigenous laws. Would the Minister of Justice be willing to take part in a ceremony to help her better understand indigenous law?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): It's an excellent question and an excellent point, and I appreciate the member raising it today.

I think it's important to understand that with the new approach we're taking in respect of harassment, it isn't a partisan issue, and it's one we can all get behind, and I hope we do.

There are right ways to deal with this, and one way is to say there is no wrong door and to mean it and to make sure that we encourage people who are harassed to take their concerns forward, to take them forward in a way that they are unafraid to do, and this hasn't been the case in the past. There's been a culture of concealment.

But one thing we must not do is we must not get into smearing and tarnishing the reputations of all in this Chamber by innuendo, and that was what was done last week by the member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine), and I would encourage her, if she has concerns, genuine concerns, bring them forward. Please do that. But do not smear the members of your own caucus, the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard), every member—every male member of this Chamber in accusations if you're not willing to do that. I encourage you to take those forward. It's the right way to deal with it, and it's how we'll heal this important issue.

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

Ms. Klassen: We have heard the many shocking stories of harassment that took place within these walls of the Legislature. It took courage and strength for those brave women to come forward and share their horrifying experiences.

The First Minister has talked about changing the culture here at the Legislature. I believe it would be extremely beneficial for the Premier and this government to include the seven teachings of the grandfathers within the government's harassment policies.

Can any first minister please share with the House what those seven teachings are?

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister responsible for the Status of Women): Well, I thank the member opposite for raising this question, and I want to start by offering my sincere gratitude to all the women who showed intense—intensive courage when they came forward and shared their experience of being harassed in their workplace. And I'm very proud that our Premier and our government is moving forward to ensure that every woman who comes to work in this building, every woman who works for the Manitoba government, can work free of harassment, and our no-wrong-door approach, along with several other initiatives, including transparency and public accountability, will ensure that everyone who comes to work in this building is free of harassment.

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

Indigenous Population Protection from Systemic Violence

Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook): I'd like to table a list of our seven teachings.

As an indigenous woman I live in constant fear of becoming a victim of violence. I recently returned from a trip to Poplar River First Nation. I spent 12 hours there, from daybreak until dusk, visiting homes. I pulled into every yard in a strange vehicle to the homeowner, yet I was greeted with open arms and a big smile. Not once did I feel—did I sense fear in this community, save for the dogs. But that sense of fear returned once I drove back into Winnipeg and through the Hanover area. One of my greatest fears is having my car break down in this area.

Systemic violence towards indigenous people continues daily.

Can the Minister of Justice tell us what steps the minister is taking to protect Manitoba's indigenous population?

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I want to thank the member for her questions today and certainly encourage her and ensure that Manitobans are—we're moving forward with a four-point plan in our criminal justice modernization system, Madam Speaker.

We've endured the worst crime, incarceration and recidivism rates in our province over the last number of years under the previous NDP government and we want to ensure—and many of

those people are Aboriginal people, and that's why we are—[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Stefanson: —introducing our modernization strategy to reduce the number of indigenous people that are incarcerated, Madam Speaker. That's exactly what our four-point plan is all about, and I look forward to working with the member opposite on this very important initiative to ensure the—that we have safer communities and timely access to justice for all Manitobans, including indigenous Manitobans.

Criminal Justice Modernization New Strategy Announcement

Mr. Scott Johnston (St. James): Last Friday our government announced a bold new plan to help end cycles of crime, to build safer communities and ensure timely access to justice for all Manitobans.

Madam Speaker, can the Minister of Justice update the House about this very important initiative?

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I want to thank my honourable friend for that wonderful question today.

I was honoured last week on Friday to stand with Onashowewin, Block by Block, the Salvation Army, law enforcement, so many others, to announce our criminal justice system modernization strategy.

Madam Speaker, after a decade of the worst crime, worst incarceration and among the worst recidivism rates in our country, we know that Manitobans deserve better. That's why we've announced a four-point plan, including crime prevention, targeted resources for the most serious crimes, effective restorative justice and responsible reintegration of offenders.

Madam Speaker, we—our strategy will build safer communities and ensure timely access to justice for all Manitobans, and we look forward to working with all those members in the community towards a safer Manitoba for all.

School Division Funding Enrolment and Programs

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): Madam Speaker, the Pallister government has cut funding to dozens of school divisions across the province, including Swan Valley School Division.

In light of another year of cuts, Board Chairperson Kelli Riehl simply says, we can't cut anymore. The only option left for them is closing schools.

The board is formally proposing the closure of the Minitonas Early Years School, and with no end in sight of the cuts by this government, the board is also contemplating the closure of the Birch River School.

Given that the minister has left school divisions no choice, will he be entertaining proposals to cut more schools, and will he be lifting the moratorium on school closures?

Hon. Ian Wishart (Minister of Education and Training): I thank the member for the question.

He needs to be reminded, however, that our government is actually funding education in the K-to-12 system at more than \$50 million more per year than their government ever did, a total of \$1.323 billion worth of funding to the K-to-12 system.

We are certainly open to discussion with the school divisions, their long-term plans. We have always been. There is a—been a process in place for some time in terms of closing schools, if that was necessary, and we will look at that option with the school division.

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

Mr. Wiebe: The demand for French immersion is growing fast in Manitoba, and despite what the minister says, the recent funding announcement that he made doesn't keep up with enrolment, let alone inflation across the province. So, for fast-growing programs like French immersion, this is now a serious problem.

Last year the minister told the media that he couldn't commit to ensuring that every student who wanted French immersion would get it.

I ask the minister: Why is he underfunding our schools and leaving doubt over important programs like French immersion?

Mr. Wishart: French immersion certainly is an important program across Manitoba schools. It's one that has shown substantial growth.

* (14:20)

We work with the school divisions. It is they that make the decision as to where they put their resources in terms of capacity for courses like French immersion. I certainly encourage all school divisions to work very constructively with their residents and with us as a government to make sure we have capacity to deal with the demand in French immersion courses across the province.

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

Mr. Wiebe: Well, the minister is right, it is up to school divisions to decide where those resources go. But it's this minister that is starving those school divisions of those resources and making them make those tough choices.

Parents have been clear that they want their children to have more one-on-one time with their teachers. Parents want small class sizes, and the Conservatives previously even acknowledged that this is a time that—where it really helps and it really makes a difference for young students.

The minister's recent funding announcement made clear his priorities. Funding isn't keeping up with enrolment and dozens of school divisions are now seeing an absolute reduction in their funding.

Why is this minister shortchanging our students?

Mr. Wishart: We're certainly pleased to work with school divisions across the province get the best use of the resources we have available to educate students in the K-to-12 system.

Previous government put in place many rules and restrictions on where the money would be spent. We have opened that up so that school divisions have latitude within themselves to make their own choices as to where their priorities are. Where that government failed, ours will succeed. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Northern Health Care Health Professional Shortage

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): My constituents are deeply concerned that there's a 50 per cent vacancy rate of health-care professionals in their community's clinic. There's supposed to be six doctors and nurse practitioners in Flin Flon Clinic, but now there's only three, soon to be two. In Snow Lake, it's losing its doctor April 30th. This loss of health professionals has reached critical levels.

Will the minister reverse his cuts to northern health care and address this critical shortage?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): Madam Speaker, we know that the regional health authority is—all of them are working hard to deal with issues around doctor recruitment. There has been a great success over the last couple of years when it comes to doctor recruitment. In fact, we have more doctors working in Manitoba than ever before in the history of our province, Manitoba. That doesn't mean that there aren't—it doesn't mean that there aren't challenges at any given time in any given place, but the overall trend is clear. There are more doctors coming to Manitoba and more doctors practising in Manitoba.

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

Mr. Lindsey: Perhaps more doctors coming to Manitoba, but not to Flin Flon, not to Snow Lake.

I've also been informed that there's a 15 to 30 per cent vacancy rate with health-care aides in Flin Flon. As a result, one constituent tells me that she and her husband have to go daily to the senior's home to help feed her mother and tend to other care for her mother. Recently, my constituent was away for an extended period of time; she actually had to hire someone to be assured that her mother would get the care she needs and deserves.

Will the minister take action, reverse his cuts to northern health care and ensure that there's proper care for northern seniors?

Mr. Goertzen: Madam Speaker, the member will know that if he ever has individual constituents who have concerns or challenges that he is certainly free to bring them to my office. I know he's availed himself of that offer many times in the past, and we work with him and with constituents wherever we can to ensure that people are getting the service that they deserve.

In terms of investments into the North, it was only last year's budget where there was funding for the new Flin Flon emergency room, and the member opposite voted against it. So I'm not quite sure what he's looking for, Madam Speaker. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

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

Mr. Lindsey: Another constituent tells me that the health-care aide vacancies mean that those with disabilities aren't getting the care they need.

Her daughter, supposed to get 55 hours of home care a week, but she's lucky if she gets 20. She is often being sent only one home-care worker, because that's all that's available, instead of two, which are required.

Will the minister take action, reverse his cuts to northern health care and allow those with disabilities to live a life of dignity?

Mr. Goertzen: It was several years ago when the former government, the NDP, were in office, that they hired one Reg Toews to do a review of home care. Many of those recommendations were not acted upon by the NDP, they were left to languish and, Madam Speaker, despite the fact that they had many years to act upon them.

We continue to work with those who are involved with home care and to enhance the service. When it comes to northern investments, I mentioned the Flin Flon ER. There are many other investments, some that we've announced in the last few weeks, and the member opposite will have an opportunity to prove his commitment to rural Manitoba by voting for the budget, which will enhance rural health care.

Madam Speaker: The time for oral questions has expired.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: And at this time I see we have a guest in the Chamber with us. To my right in the loge is the former MLA for Arthur-Virden, Jim Downey, and we welcome you to the Manitoba Legislature.

PETITIONS

National Drug Plan

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): Madam Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly

To the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba:

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Canada's public and private drug plans leave many patients with little or no coverage, resulting in 10 per cent of patients not taking the prescribed medication because of affordability.

(2) It is estimated that Pharmacare would save Canadians between \$4 billion and \$11 billion per year.

(3) There have been repeated calls to include prescription drugs in Canada's universal health-care system, including:

(a) National Forum on Health (1997, chair, Prime Minister Jean Chrétien);

(b) Commission on the Future of Health Care in Canada (2002, chair, Roy Romanow); and

(c) several national organizations, including Canadian Nurses Association, Canadian Medical Association, Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to encourage the federal government to amend the Canada Health Act by adding prescription medicines prescribed by a licensed practitioner to the definition of covered services in accordance with an established formulary.

(2) To urge the provincial government to develop, jointly with the federal government, a universal, single-player, evidence-based, sustainable public drug plan that contains purchasing power to secure best available pricing, a list of essential medicines addressing priority health needs and the ability to expand to a comprehensive permanent plan that would promote the health and well-being of all Canadians.

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

Access to Health Care

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Direct cuts to front-line health-care services, including the closure of emergency departments, intensive-care units, an urgent-care centre and more are occurring across the province.

(2) These health cuts will drastically reduce the ability of Manitobans to access timely, quality health-care services.

(3) The provincial government made these decisions unilaterally, failing to consult with front-line health-care professionals who provide direct care to patients.

(4) The provincial government has had its main focus on the bottom line and failed to present a clear and detailed plan for the public health-care system that will actually improve and optimize patient care for Manitobans.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to reverse the cuts and closures that negatively impact patients' ability to access timely, quality health care.

* (14:30)

(2) To urge the provincial government to make real investments in Manitoba's public health-care system that will provide a direct benefit to patients, such as: increasing access to primary care, the development of a primary health human resource plan, increasing publicly funded personal-care homes across Manitoba and increasing the efficiencies of diagnostic testing in Manitoba's health facilities.

Signed by many fine Manitobans.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Grievances?

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, on a grievance?

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): On a point of privilege, Madam Speaker.

MATTER OF PRIVILEGE

Madam Speaker: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, on a matter of privilege.

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Yes, I rise on a matter of privilege.

During question period, in a response to a question from the member from Kewatinook, the Premier (Mr. Pallister) made a number of comments to our colleague from St. Johns, directing that the member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine) should make some sort of disclosure that that member has up to this point not decided to make for themselves.

I would put on the record as a preamble to this point of privilege that in this time of #MeToo and Time's Up that I think it is imperative that we leave it

to victims and to those who have experienced forms of sexual misconduct or other forms of harassment and bullying to decide for themselves whether or not they want to make a complaint, and it has been my experience in talking to people about this recently that it is not a place for others to direct, you know, people who have experienced these forms of misconduct, that they should make a disclosure against their consent, and I would suggest, particularly, it is not up to us men to tell women when or if they should make some sort of complaint.

Buried underneath that comment made by the First Minister was a tone that I would describe as seeking to intimidate the member for St. Johns—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: —and I believe that in trying to intimidate this member, that the First Minister has, in fact, breached the privilege of the member for St. Johns and, indeed, anyone in this Chamber who stands to try and end misconduct, harassment or bullying in the workplace. Perhaps this is not the intent of the First Minister. I'm sure that a quick apology would clear this matter up, but in the absence of such an apology, Madam Speaker, I argue that the privileges of my colleague here, as well as many others in this House, have been violated.

Madam Speaker: Before recognizing any other members to speak, I would remind the House that remarks at this time by honourable members are limited to strictly relevant comments about whether the alleged matter of privilege has been raised at the earliest opportunity and whether a prima facie case has been established.

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister responsible for the Status of Women): I would like to just respond to the point of privilege raised by the member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Kinew) about the exchange that happened in question period that was related back to an exchange that happened during the ministerial statement of last week, Thursday, when the member for St. Johns had cast aspersions upon all the men in this workplace, saying that some of you may or may not have harassed members of my—you know, and at that point it wasn't clear if she was talking about harassment directed specifically at her, and then later on we understand that she was talking about harassment that was directed at some people that she might know.

So for her to come out and say, I am, you know, calling into question the reputation and—of all the men who work in this House and therefore putting them all on notice that they may or may not have harassed me and it's up to them to come and apologize, we found that to be in very poor taste. It goes in stark contrast to what we're trying to accomplish in this building.

We are trying to build a safe workplace, we are trying to move away from the culture of concealment, we're trying to make it a place where women can come forward and talk in a very respectful manner about really personal and deeply egregious offences that may have happened to them. We want to know that women are heard and that their complaints are going to be investigated and that they will be supported. That is the culture that we are trying to create, and we sincerely believe that the member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine), in her actions on Thursday, was contrary to that culture that we are trying to create in this House.

So, Madam Speaker, to the member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Kinew), on his point of privilege, we disagree with his assertions. And, you know, the only thing that I did hear out of his statement was that when survivors come forward it's up to them to talk about their individual experience and that they should be listened to and believed.

Mr. Kinew: I believe that a point of privilege is rightly supposed to contain a motion within it. I would ask if I can add a motion as an addendum to the comments I made earlier.

Madam Speaker: Does the member need leave to do that? I will make a decision here.

If the member wishes to go ahead and make a motion with a seconder, I would hear it.

Mr. Kinew: Thank you kindly, Madam Speaker.

I would move, seconded by the member for Minto (Mr. Swan), that the matter that we have been discussing here be referred to the Legislative Affairs Committee.

Madam Speaker: A matter of privilege is a serious concern. I'm going to take this matter under advisement to consult the authorities and I will return to the House with a ruling.

ORDERS OF THE DAY GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, would you canvass the House to take a brief recess? I know the security would like to empty the gallery, so that may take up to 10 minutes, and if you would, ring the bells in the usual fashion for five minutes to notify the members.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave for the House to recess for 10 minutes? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Cullen: Could you ring the bells for two minutes to summon the members as well?

Madam Speaker: And I would indicate to all members that the bells will ring for two minutes to bring members back to the Chamber.

The House recessed at 2:37 p.m.

The House resumed at 2:52 p.m.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Resuming orders of the day, government business.

Order, please. Order.

The House is now back in session.

BUDGET ADDRESS

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance): I move, seconded by the First Minister, that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

Motion presented.

Mr. Friesen: I am honoured to rise in this Assembly and to deliver Budget 2018.

It has been 21 months since I stood here and told Manitobans about the fiscal challenges left to us by the previous government and the measures our government would be taking to address those challenges.

The situation we faced was far more serious than Manitobans were led to believe by the previous government.

La situation à laquelle nous faisons face était bien plus grave que ce que le gouvernement précédent avait laissé croire aux Manitobains.

Translation

The situation we faced was far more serious than Manitobans were led to believe by the previous government.

English

The deficit was almost \$600 million larger than had been estimated and was projected to reach \$1.6 billion in this year if left unaddressed.

The province's debt had almost doubled to \$21 billion in just eight years. Debt service costs were approaching \$1 billion each year.

The previous government was warned by bond rating agencies to reduce the deficit, and when no action was taken, Manitoba's credit rating was downgraded. That happened on the NDP's watch.

A report by the Manitoba Employers Council concluded we had the highest taxes and were the least prosperous province west of Quebec.

Out of 25 economic, government and taxation indicators, Manitoba ranked last or second last in 22 categories among the five westernmost provinces.

Another report said that business confidence in Manitoba under the NDP was at its lowest level since they started measuring it.

Our rainy day fund had been drained, leaving us vulnerable to the impact of floods, fires and other costly disasters. The challenges went far beyond fiscal issues.

We inherited many of Canada's longest surgical and emergency room wait times. Patients were subjected to taxicab medicine.

Our students score the lowest in Canada in reading, math and science on standardized tests.

We have the highest child poverty rate in the nation and far too many children in the care of child-welfare agencies. That was the legacy of 16 years of the previous government.

A legacy of broken promises. A legacy of debt and mismanagement. A legacy of failure.

That is the onerous challenge we shouldered two years ago, as we began the task of fixing our finances, repairing our services, and rebuilding our economy.

We did so with a moderate and reasonable plan to return Manitoba to fiscal balance, while protecting our most vulnerable citizens.

In our first fiscal year, we were able to reduce the summary deficit by \$147 million, and last year's budget continued on the road to recovery, with no tax increases and no new taxes. A budget that delivered tax relief for Manitobans and lower ambulance fees. A budget that increased funding for health care, families, education and justice, investing in areas where it would deliver the greatest value to taxpayers.

And I am pleased to advise Manitobans that we are on track to reduce the summary deficit for the current 2017-2018 fiscal year by more than \$100 million.

We've made good progress over the past two years, but there are a number of issues that pose risks to the fiscal stability of our province.

Our economy is growing, but lower growth will be the new normal for advanced economies throughout the world. And Manitoba is not immune to that reality.

As an economy that relies on exports, uncertainty over the future of the North American Free Trade Agreement is a significant concern, as is the recent increase in interprovincial trade disputes.

Political instability beyond our borders and the threat of military conflict threaten world markets.

Tax reforms recently adopted by the United States government will make it more difficult to compete with American states for investment, job recruitment and skilled professionals.

That challenge is magnified by our federal government's recent changes to the way small businesses are taxed.

Climate change is another threat to our economy. Weather patterns are changing and extreme events are becoming more frequent. Severe weather events can quickly translate into unbudgeted costs measured in the hundreds of millions of dollars.

Over the past two years, we have also spoken about the threat posed by higher interest rates.

We warned that an increase in the cost of borrowing would slow spending, hurt economic growth and reduce tax revenues.

We said that higher debt servicing costs for our government would make the goal of balancing the budget more difficult. And that concern has now come to pass.

For the first time in Manitoba history, annual debt servicing costs for Manitoba will exceed \$1 billion. More than \$1 billion, money that could be spent on schools, families, health care, will instead go to lenders outside our province.

If debt servicing were a government department, it would be the fourth largest department. And this is the consequence of year after year of reckless spending by the previous government.

It underscores the seriousness of the situation our government inherited two years ago, and why it was necessary to chart a safer course for our province, and why we are proud of the progress that we have made in such a short time.

Budget 2018 continues on the path toward a stronger, safer and more prosperous future for Manitoba.

Le Budget de 2018 garde le cap sur un avenir plus stable, plus sûr et plus prospère pour le Manitoba.

Translation

Budget 2018 continues on a path towards a stronger, safer and more prosperous future for Manitoba.

English

Through the combination of measures that I will outline, we are projecting a summary deficit of \$521 million for the 2018-19 fiscal year—a reduction of more than \$200 million from the current year. We promised to make Manitoba Canada's most-improved province, and we are delivering on that promise.

We are on schedule to reduce the PST during our first term, and we are on schedule to deliver a balanced budget during our second term. We are keeping the promises we made to Manitobans.

We are fixing the finances, so that Manitobans will have greater stability.

We're repairing our services, so that Manitobans will have greater security.

And we're rebuilding our economy, so that Manitobans will have greater opportunity. The results of which will be a safer, stronger and more secure Manitoba for all Manitobans.

*(15:00)

Madam Speaker, the best government is one that listens more and talks less.

Since forming government, we have sought guidance from Manitobans on a number of issues. Our prebudget consultations have reached every corner of the province, and I want to thank the more than 34,000 Manitobans who came forward with great ideas on how to get better value for tax dollars that we spend.

Budget 2018 is the budget they told us they want. It reflects the concerns, the hopes and the priorities that we all share.

Many Manitobans told us that our income tax rates are too high compared to other provinces; people in Saskatchewan earn thousands of dollars more each year, tax free, more than us.

It isn't fair. It hurts our competitiveness and it's because the previous government did not index tax brackets. It was a hidden tax increase that we promised to end, and we kept that promise.

We increased the basic personal amount in the past two budgets, reduced the income taxes we all pay, and removed thousands of modest-income Manitobans from the tax rolls.

Budget 2018 delivers even more tax relief for Manitobans.

Le Budget de 2018 prévoit davantage d'allègements fiscaux pour les contribuables manitobains.

Translation

Budget 2018 delivers even more tax relief for Manitobans.

English

The basic personal amount will increase by \$1,010 effective January 1st of next year, and will increase by a further \$1,010 the following year.

A total tax break of \$2,020 by the year 2020. It's the largest tax cut in Manitoba history. It takes money off the Cabinet table and puts it back on the kitchen table in every home in Manitoba.

Nous retirons l'argent de la table du Cabinet et le remettons plutôt sur la table de cuisine de tous les foyers manitobains.

Translation

It takes money off the Cabinet table and puts it back on the kitchen table in every home in Manitoba.

English

It will remove more than 30,000 Manitobans from the tax rolls over the next two years.

The NDP took more from Manitobans and gave less. Our Progressive Conservative government is taking less and giving more.

Manitobans who most need it, seniors living on a fixed income, single parents, students, they will all benefit from the increased basic personal amount.

Manitobans who own small businesses have told us their concerns regarding changes the federal government is making to the way their businesses are being taxed.

While the federal government seems to see small business as a problem, we see Manitoba's small businesses as the solution: the backbone of our economy, the job creators, the innovators, the engines of growth.

That's why our Premier (Mr. Pallister) led a national effort to convince the federal government to reconsider changes that, in our view, punish ambition, discourage entrepreneurship and hurt our economy.

Business owners told us that our high taxes make Manitoba less competitive, and that costs us jobs and investment.

While other provinces were increasing the small business tax threshold to \$500,000 years ago, the previous government did not do so.

Budget 2018 increases the small business tax deduction from \$450,000 to \$500,000, effective January 1.

Le Budget de 2018 hausse ce plafond à 500 millions de dollars à compter du 1^{er} janvier 2019.

Translation

Budget 2018 increases this threshold to \$500 million, effective January 1, 2019.

English

This increase will make Manitoba consistent with most other Canadian jurisdictions.

It will make us more competitive in attracting business. It will create jobs.

The federal government has mandated that carbon emissions must be taxed, and that it would impose a tax on provinces that did not do so.

Our Climate and Green Plan is a made-in-Manitoba approach that respects our clean energy investments, supports our economy and reduces emissions.

It is better for the environment, better for the economy than the federal approach.

As part of our Climate and Green Plan, we have designed a carbon pricing system that carefully balances Manitoba's unique environmental and economic realities.

In order to ensure that the economic impact of meeting our climate change goals is sustainable, our government is committed to achieving meaningful emissions reductions while also reducing other taxes.

To this end, all carbon tax revenues received over four years will be returned to Manitobans through tax deductions.

Our government recognizes the right of our generation to develop and use our natural resources but not at the expense of those who will come after us. We bear a responsibility to protect our environment for future generations.

That is why our government will establish a conservation trust that will provide significant financial support for efforts aimed at achieving the objectives of our climate strategy, particularly those related to nature conservation.

With an initial endowment of \$102 million, the conservation trust will be managed by the Winnipeg Foundation, with the use of proceeds administered by the Manitoba Habitat Heritage Corporation. This endowment will be irrevocable, giving the fund permanent autonomy and independence from government.

The conservation trust will be available to private and public stakeholders engaging in projects that align with the goals and aspirations of our Climate and Green Plan. It will encourage community involvement.

Manitobans rely on our health-care system to give us the care we need when we need it. It is the most important priority of all Canadians, but the federal government's current funding approach places the sustainability of health-care services at risk.

Over 10 years, Manitoba will receive \$2.25 billion less through the Canada Health Transfer than it would have received under previous funding arrangements.

Despite the significant challenge posed by the federal government's refusal to more adequately support the No. 1 priority of Manitobans, Budget 2018 increases funding for the Department of Health, Seniors and Active Living to almost \$6.2 billion. It is the highest level of funding for health care in Manitoba's history. It continues to be one of the highest in Canada, in terms of both per capita spending and as a percentage of total expenditures.

This funding will shorten wait times and create 60 new full-time positions for paramedics. It will address the opioid crisis and other addictions. Spending for the Home Cancer Drug Program will increase by almost \$14 million. An additional \$7.7 million is allocated to increase the capacity for life-saving dialysis treatment in Manitoba.

We promised we would reduce ambulance fees and we are keeping that promise. The fee was reduced in our first two budgets and Budget 2018 cuts it by another \$85 to \$340.

Fees have been reduced by 32 per cent in just two years, and we are on track to reach our target of \$250 next year. That's another promise kept, Madam Speaker.

Since forming government, we have increased funding for the Department of Families by more than \$340 million, almost 20 per cent more than in the previous government's final budget. That includes an increase in Budget 2018 of \$60.5 million.

Funding is increased to improve the supply and quality of affordable housing throughout the province. We will continue to help families in need by providing more than \$13 million for Community Living disABILITY Services, and an additional \$7 million to index Rent Assist to median rates.

The shortage of child-care spaces throughout Manitoba is a crisis that was 16 years in the making, and we are moving quickly to address it. Budget 2017 added funding for more than 500 new licensed child-care spaces and 50 new home-based child-care spaces. Budget 2018 supports more than 700 new and newly funded spaces, including funding for new child-care construction in communities and schools across Manitoba.

This investment leverages \$47 million over three years in federal child-care support under the recently signed bilateral agreement on early learning and child care.

Budget 2018 also includes more than \$2 million in funding for a refundable tax credit, the Child Care Centre Development Tax Credit, to encourage private businesses to create new child-care spaces in their workplaces.

A strong education system today means a stronger Manitoba of tomorrow.

*(15:10)

Under Budget 2017, funding for the Department of Education and Training increased by \$36 million, with a total investment of \$1.3 billion in our kindergarten to grade 12 education system.

Budget 2018 increases that funding by a further \$13.7 million, the highest amount spent on education in Manitoba history.

That includes an additional \$6.6 million in K-to-12 funding.

We are making significant changes to the Student Aid program, with a focus on students who need it most.

Enhancements include \$1 million for low-income indigenous students and \$1.7 million to expand eligibility to students studying at private religious institutions in Manitoba, as well as institutions within Canada but outside of Manitoba.

Last year we announced that we would explore the benefits of building schools under a P3 partnership model and we retained advice to learn from the experience of other jurisdictions.

After a careful review of all the information, we have decided to build these schools by enhancing our conventional school construction approach.

With information gained through the process, we will achieve many of the same savings that would be with a P3 approach, but also leverage the scale of building multiple schools at once.

And, as a result, we have identified at least \$18 million in savings over conventional costs and are able to fund the construction of one more school than initially planned.

I am pleased to confirm that, over the course of the next two years, work will begin on the following new schools: Brandon School Division–Southeast

Brandon, K to 8; Seven Oaks School Division, Precinct E, K to 5; Winnipeg School Division, Waterford Green, K to 8; Pembina Trails School Division, Waverley West, K to 8; Pembina Trails School Division, Waverley West, 9 to 12.

Madam Speaker, these important capital investments are part of our government's commitment to catch up with the need for new schools that was ignored by the previous government, just as we are also catching up with the need for critical maintenance in our schools and hospitals, a growing crisis that has been ignored.

When I say that our government puts Manitoba families first, the numbers speak for themselves.

We're making record investments in health, education and families, a higher proportion of total spending than any other province.

Compared with the previous government's final budget, spending has increased for Health, Seniors and Active Living by almost 11 per cent, for Education and Training by almost 12 per cent and for Families by more than 13 per cent.

We are investing in what matters most to Manitobans, and we are getting results.

Our government is remaining committed to reducing crime, keeping our communities safe and secure. Budget 2018 invests an additional \$11 million in the Department of Justice.

We are creating a more affordable, less adversarial family law system.

We are investing in community mobilization programs that leverage partnerships between police, social service agencies and community organizations.

Community programs such as Selkirk Team for At Risk Teens, Southwest Teens at Risk in Stonewall, Dauphin At-Risk Teens, the Families and Youth Regional Support Team in Gimli, and Headway in Steinbach.

Budget 2018 also invests \$363,000 in the establishment of a Strategic Innovation Unit, which will report directly to the Minister and Deputy Minister of Justice.

And the unit will focus on long-term strategic projects, including a comprehensive review of police services in Manitoba and further modernization of our justice system.

Our government is committed to protecting women from violence and harassment.

Notre gouvernement est résolu à protéger les femmes contre la violence et le harcèlement.

Translation

Our government is committed to protecting women from violence and harassment.

English

We are ending the culture of concealment that was allowed to continue in the past, when government ignored victims of sexual harassment.

We are taking concrete steps to ensure that government of Manitoba employees work in an environment that is respectful and free from harassment in all its forms.

We want all parents in our province to know that when their sons and daughters come to work, they will be safe, respected and heard.

Our commitment to protect Manitoba's women goes beyond changes in the workplace.

Budget 2018 allocates an additional \$100,000 to the Salvation Army's Choose 2 Change program, a restorative justice program for domestic violence offenders.

We are also investing more than \$147 million from Justice Canada's Victims Fund in training, information and education related to sexual violence.

More than \$50,000 is allocated for workshops and training sessions for police, service providers and community members in order to improve access to Justice for sexual assault survivors.

Over \$75,000 will be invested in specialized training for Manitoba Victim Services, the Manitoba Prosecution Service and other community partners in order to challenge misconceptions about victims and their responses to the trauma of sexual violence.

An additional \$20,000 will enhance information resources available to survivors of sexual violence to ensure victims know what to expect when a police report is filed, as well as alternate sources of support for those who may choose not to report.

Manitoba Justice will partner with several community agencies, including Klinik Community Health Centre and Ka Ni Kanichihk and other government departments, to develop and deliver these important new initiatives.

The previous government had a long history of ignoring risks, overestimating revenues and underestimating expenses as part of its budgetary process. Our government will not make that mistake. We will not engage in guesswork budgeting.

For that reason, we have not budgeted any revenue from the sale of cannabis in fiscal 2018-2019. We do not expect a revenue windfall and we anticipate there will be many costs associated with this initiative.

This is uncharted territory. There is no prudent way to credibly project how much revenue Manitoba would earn, or lose, from the sale of cannabis in the coming fiscal year.

What we know for certain, and all provinces agree, is that provinces will bear the majority of the costs, including health care, education, road safety, justice and more.

We are working hard to get ready for legalization, but we remain concerned that implementation of the federal legalization of cannabis is being rushed without proper regard to the consequences and harm that could result.

Our government is committed to keeping Manitobans safe, and that is an approach we are taking to the sale of cannabis in our province.

The private sector will do what it does best: retailing.

The public sector will do what it does best: ensuring public safety.

Our government will be signing on to the federal excise duty framework, in order to ensure a seamless enforcement network across the country.

A few minutes ago, I alluded to a number of issues that threaten the fiscal stability of our province, including severe weather events. Each of those factors underscores the need for a substantial Fiscal Stabilization Fund.

The previous NDP government drained the rainy day fund, leaving us vulnerable to costly natural disasters and other threats. Budget 2018 addresses this problem with a \$50-million allocation to the Fiscal Stabilization Fund, a 40 per cent increase in the balance of that fund. Additional contributions will be made to the fund in future budgets.

We recently announced a transformation strategy for the Manitoba civil service that embraces challenges and places innovation at the heart of its

work. It's an 'improach' that will give the talented women and men who work for our government the tools they need to advance change while building on the existing foundation of strong public sector values. It transforms the work we do and the culture in which we do it.

Jobs and economic growth remain at the centre of our plan for a better Manitoba.

When we formed government, Manitoba did not have a clearly articulated, evidence-based approach to economic development. It was a disjointed array of mismatched programs that were added to over time. In many cases, there was no review to determine if those programs have—had achieved their intended outcomes.

This past year, we engaged Deloitte to undertake a comprehensive assessment of the state of our economic development efforts and give us their expert recommendations on how to make Manitoba the most improved province in attracting business investment. That report confirmed the absence of clearly defined goals and objectives, significant areas of overlap among our many economic development agencies, and a lack of co-ordination within government departments.

Our government is committed to fixing those problems. We have asked distinguished Manitobans Dave Angus and Barb Gamey to lead the next step of designing a strategy aimed at reforming the way we attract business investment to our province.

*(15:20)

The need—[interjection] Thank you. The need for economic diversification and development throughout northern Manitoba has been ignored for too long. Decades of short-term fixes have not resulted in lasting solutions for an area with such tremendous economic potential.

Our government is changing that reality through our Look North economic development strategy, a viable, long-term plan for sustained economic growth and prosperity for people in the North.

We are working to increase tourism and mining activity.

We are also working with partners to extend high-speed Internet service to schools, health centres and over 55,000 First Nations' customers. In total, 72 communities and 88 institutions will have access to Internet service on par with what is currently available in southern Manitoba. It will reduce

isolation in the North and build hope. It will improve the health and quality of life for those living throughout the region, and it will make it easier for the development of entrepreneurial opportunities, the attraction of new businesses, and the expansion of existing businesses. It signals that northern Manitoba is open for business, open for Manitoba, open for opportunity.

When we formed government, we promised to spend at least \$1 billion annually on strategic infrastructure, such as roads and bridges, flood protection, hospitals, schools, universities and colleges. Budget 2018 keeps that promise.

FleetNet was ignored by the previous government for years, but we are making a historic investment to replace that aging and obsolete public safety communications network.

Shoal Lake 40 road, known to many as Freedom Road, will be completed this year, and major steps will be taken toward the completion of the Lake St. Martin outlet.

Sixty years ago, Duff Roblin saw the need for infrastructure that would protect all Manitobans from the danger of flooding. That baton has been passed to us and we will get the job done.

The people of Lake St. Martin-Lake Manitoba area have suffered greatly so that downstream communities would be safe from flooding. We owe it to those brave Manitobans to get the outlet finished.

We will soon issue a request for proposals to determine if provincial air services can be delivered in a manner that provides greater value to Manitobans. We have received expressions of interest from the marketplace and are now prepared to move forward to procure expert advice on tendering. This approach illustrates how all governments must change their thinking. They must get out of the rut of business as usual and find innovative solutions that provide the greatest value to taxpayers. That's what we're doing on provincial air services; it's what we are doing in every sector of government.

A number of participants in our prebudget consultations spoke about the need for stable, adequate funding for our municipalities. They're right, and that's why Budget 2018 continues to provide one of the most generous per capita levels of funding in all of Canada.

Basket funding gives Manitoba's local governments the autonomy they sought for, for so many years, but with that freedom comes the responsibility to lead by example by controlling expenditure growth.

Our government will continue to work in partnership with our federal and municipal partners on strategic infrastructure, while ensuring that Manitobans receive value for the taxes they pay.

Budget 2018 funds critical municipal infrastructure investments that will maximize value for money and return on investment, while ensuring that municipalities have fair say on the projects that matter the most to them.

Vital projects such as the City of Winnipeg's Waverley Underpass as well as upgrades to the City of Portage la Prairie's waste-water-treatment centre to accommodate waste-water flows from the new Roquette food processing plant.

The world increasingly looks to Manitoba for a reliable supply of safe, nutritious food products. Agriculture employs more than 33,000 Manitobans and generates approximately \$6 billion in annual economic activity. In addition, food processing produces about one quarter of all goods manufactured in Manitoba each year, with well over \$4 billion in sales.

With the addition of the Roquette processing plant and the expansion of the Simplot potato plant in the coming year—almost \$1 billion in private investment—those numbers will continue to grow.

That is why Budget 2018 invests in research and development aimed at advancing the diversification, competitiveness and sustainability of our agri-food industries.

Initiatives such as the new Sustainable Agriculture Incentives Program, which will grow our livestock industry and align with our Made-In-Manitoba Climate and Green Plan.

Cultural activity in its many forms contributes almost \$2 billion to the province's GDP each year and provides direct employment to more than 22,000 Manitobans—more than 3 per cent of our workforce.

Budget 2018 allocates more than \$20 million in funding for culture and arts capital projects throughout Manitoba, as well as community foundations.

Manitoba is home to the world's best curlers, and we look forward to the 2019 Tim Hortons Brier men's curling championship, which will be held in Brandon, and the completion of Manitoba's international curling centre for excellence in Winnipeg.

While other jurisdictions have dramatically reduced their film-production tax credits, we recognize the positive impact film production has had on our economy and creative community. Budget 2018 commits funding of almost \$16 million in the coming year for the Manitoba Film and Video Production Tax Credit.

And today, we are announcing the formation of a working group that will partner with our government to point this tax credit to the future, to develop a new framework that will ensure even better value for the sector and continued growth for our economy.

It was a Progressive Conservative government that created this tax credit. It is a Progressive Conservative government that will renew it.

Two years ago, Madam Speaker, we presented a plan to fix our finances, repair our services and rebuild our economy.

Il y a deux ans, nous avons présenté un plan pour redresser notre situation financière, restaurer nos services et rebâtir notre économie.

Notre plan est mesuré, il est responsable, et il fonctionne.

Translation

Two years ago, we presented a plan to fix our finances, repair our services and rebuild our economy.

Our plan is measured, it is responsible, and it works.

English

Our plan is measured, it is responsible and it is working.

ER wait times are down. Business confidence has grown from worst to first.

We've seen record levels of new home construction, record levels of private business investment, and the lowest unemployment rate in the country for most of the past year.

Our GDP is up, our population is growing and more Manitobans have jobs than ever before.

Youth employment increased by 2,200 jobs last year, the first increase in three years and the largest increase in 11 years.

In economic categories such as manufacturing investment, private capital investment and wage growth, we have moved from near the bottom of the provincial rankings to the top third.

Madam Speaker, we're moving in the right direction, on target to spend within our budget for the second year in a row.

We're reducing taxes while investing more in health, education, in children and protecting our environment, and we are on track to reduce the PST in our first term and balance this budget in the second term, just as we promised.

Our plan is working, and when you have a plan that is succeeding, you stick with it. That's what Budget 2018 does. We've kept our commitments. We're keeping our promises. We're fixing the finances so that Manitobans will have greater stability. We're repairing the services so that Manitobans will have greater security. And we're rebuilding our economy so that Manitobans will have greater opportunity.

As we look to the path before us, we know that there is much more work to be done, but our team is up to the challenge.

Nous savons que seul le Manitoba de demain est en mesure de surpasser le Manitoba d'aujourd'hui.

Translation

We know that the only thing better than today in Manitoba is tomorrow in Manitoba.

English

We know that the only thing better than today in Manitoba is tomorrow in Manitoba.

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): I move, seconded by the member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine), that the debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

* (15:30)

Messages

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I have two messages from His Honour the Administrator, as well as the budget documents, which I would like to table.

Madam Speaker: Please stand for the reading of the messages.

To the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, the Lieutenant Governor transmits to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba Estimates of sums required for the services of the province for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March 2019, and recommends these Estimates to the Legislative Assembly.

And that is signed by the Administrator.

The second letter to the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, the Lieutenant Governor transmits to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba Estimates of sums required for the services of the

province for capital expenditures and recommends these Estimates to the Legislative Assembly.

And that is also signed by the Administrator.

Please be seated.

* * *

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Government House Leader): I move, seconded by the Minister of Health, that the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, March 12, 2018

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are also available on the Internet at the following address:

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