

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

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

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
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	Man.
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	Ind.
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
LAMONT, Dougald	St. Boniface	Lib.
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, Hon.	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	Portage la Prairie	PC
WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC
YAKIMOSKI, Blair	Transcona	PC

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, November 22, 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.

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

##### **Bill 2—The Municipal Amendment Act (Strengthening Codes of Conduct for Council Members)**

**Hon. Jeff Wharton (Minister of Municipal Relations):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Status of Women, that Bill 2, The Municipal Amendment Act (Strengthening Codes of Conduct for Council Members), be now read for a first time.

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Wharton:** Madam Speaker, Bill 2 amends The Municipal Act to set a provincial standard for a minimum content for municipal codes of conduct, requires all elected council members to take mandatory workplace training and enables the Minister of Municipal Relations to make regulations that would further enhance the contents of the code.

Madam Speaker, this bill will do—be a direct result of province-wide consultations with municipal leaders and administrators undertaken by our government this past summer.

We are proud to put forward a bill that is more comprehensive and gives municipalities the ability to more effectively respond to harassment at the local level.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

##### **Bill 200—The Safe Access to Abortion Services Act**

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** I move, seconded by the member for Point Douglas (Mrs. Smith), that Bill 200, The Safe Access to Abortion Services Act, be now read a first time.

*Motion presented.*

**Ms. Fontaine:** Bill 200, the safe access to abortion, establishes buffer zones or safety perimeters around any clinic, hospital or health-care facility offering abortion services to Manitoba women and girls while prohibiting any protesting, demonstrating or picketing within these zones, and strengthens protections for patients and health-care providers against harassment and molestation.

Manitoba women and girls deserve to be safe and protected while accessing, as is their right, abortion services here in Manitoba.

Miigwech.

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

##### **Bill 3—The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Amendment Act (Cannabis Social Responsibility Fee)**

**Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Health, that Bill 3, The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Amendment Act (Cannabis Social Responsibility Fee), be now read a first time.

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Cullen:** Madam Speaker, our government recognizes that the legalization of recreational cannabis will bring with it significant social costs. This bill will establish a legislative foundation for the cannabis Social Responsibility Fee.

Beginning January of 2019 all retail cannabis stores in Manitoba will be subject to the payment of a 6 per cent social responsibility fee. Madam Speaker, our government will apply the funds generated by the Social Responsibility Fee to public education, safety, health and addictions programming. Thank you.

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

Any further introduction of bills?

Seeing none, we will move to committee reports? Tabling of reports?

### MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable Minister for Sport, Culture and Heritage—and I would indicate that the required 90 minutes notice prior to routine proceedings was provided in accordance with rule 26(2).

Would the honourable minister please proceed with her statement.

#### Holodomor Anniversary

**Hon. Cathy Cox (Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage):** Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 85th anniversary of the Holodomor to shine a light on a dark chapter in history when wheat became a weapon in Ukraine.

In 1932 and 1933, an artificial famine in Ukraine was created through the deliberate seizure of land and crops. On fertile lands known as the breadbasket of Europe, millions of people slowly starved to death.

For many years, Holodomor went unrecognized and was even denied, but awareness of this atrocity is building. Brave survivors have boldly shared their stories, helping expose the truth and ensuring this horrible chapter in life is never forgotten.

I am humbled that in this House today we are joined by four Holodomor survivors who later settled here in Winnipeg.

Eighty-five years ago, Mrs. Luba Semaniuk was a young girl growing up in Ukraine and she is bravely sharing her Holodomor experience. She writes: My memories of this time in my childhood were horrible. I will never forget the sights and sounds of people crying because they had nothing to eat. I will never forget painfully watching family and neighbours dying of starvation. I remember my mother grinding up dried corn cobs and husks and using that to make soup broth for her children to survive, and even though that was all we had, my mother telling me to take some broth over to my neighbours, only to find the mother and her two young sons dead of starvation.

These are things that should never have been seen or experienced by anyone, especially a six-year-old girl. And Luba writes: I will always remember and never forget.

Madam Speaker, Manitoba is among the many jurisdictions around the world that formally commemorate the Holodomor on the fourth Saturday in November, and this Saturday I urge everyone to pause and reflect on this horrific tragedy and the millions of lives cut short so senselessly. It is incumbent on all of us to make sure we learn from the painful events of the past to prevent atrocities like this from occurring in the future.

\* (13:40)

To commemorate the 85th anniversary, very thoughtful members of Manitoba's Ukrainian community have provided each member in this House with beautiful bookmarks with a photo of wheat and a candle which reads: To remember and honour the innocent souls of Holodomor. The community has also graciously provided stalks of wheat tied with a black ribbon, which has become a symbol for the Holodomor.

Madam Speaker, I ask for leave from the House to insert into Hansard the names of the survivors who have joined us here today. And I would also like to request a moment of silence in honour of those who perished in the Holodomor.

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

Once everybody speaks, then I will ask for leave to have a moment of silence.

*Holodomor survivors: Luba Semaniuk, Zina Dlugosz, Sonia Kushliak, Maria Zajce*

**Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas):** This year marks the 85th anniversary of the Holodomor. Today, we honour the memories of those who were lost to this tragedy and lend our support to the friends and families who were left behind.

In 1932, Statlin [*phonetic*] imposed a policy of forced 'starth' 'collectivation' on the Ukrainian people in the Soviet Union. After their farms were seized, they were forced to work on state-owned farms and meet government-imposed grain quotas. Statlin [*phonetic*] knowingly raised Ukraine's grain quota beyond what could reasonably be produced, causing mass starvation and death.

This state-sponsored, systematic genocide had the intention of crushing the aspirations of a free, independent Ukraine. Stalin [*phonetic*] effectively hid the famine and its dangers from the rest of the world. Although reports did leak out, the brutality of the situation was dismissed, leaving the Ukrainian people defenceless. To this day, many people are not aware of how devastating this famine was. Approximately 7 million lives were lost between 1932 and 1933. One third of the victims were children.

Many of the Holodomor survivors and relatives have made their homes here in Manitoba, which is why we recognize the fourth Saturday of November as the Ukrainian Famine and Genocide Holodomor Memorial Day.

Remembering such painful events can be overwhelming, especially for survivors and their families. But remembering is important, and in doing so we honour the victims and give hope to survivors and to everybody so that no such tragedy will ever happen again in this country and in this world.

Miigwech, Madam Speaker.

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows):** Madam Speaker, today I rise in remembrance of those from Ukraine who suffered the horror of the genocide, the Holodomor.

Here in Manitoba, we are proud to have such a strong presence of Ukrainian heritage, and we are incredibly fortunate to have such an active community who educates us through commemoration events such as today.

The famine imposed on Ukraine 85 years ago started with waves of deportations of Ukraine's farmers, as well as deportations and executions of Ukraine's religious, intellectual and cultural leaders.

Madam Speaker, several years back I had the opportunity to experience the national museum, memorial to Holodomor victims, in Kiev, Ukraine. This is where the Holodomor and the true tragedy behind it became very real for myself. The museum teaches us just how horrific the famine was. It portrays the pain and suffering that millions of people were forced to endure.

When I reflect upon this experience, I recall two angels of sorrow at the entrance and they represent the guardians of the souls who starved. I also think about the most recognized statue, one that we have the honour of having here on our Legislative grounds

of the young girl clutching a handful of wheat. This statue is titled the Bitter Memory of Childhood, and has been dedicated to the most vulnerable victims of starvation.

In closing, while the stories of our history can often be terrible and unexplainable to articulate, we must continue to tell them in remembrance and the hope to learn from the past.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** Is there leave to have a moment of silence? [*Agreed*]

Please rise.

*A moment of silence was observed.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### Grace Hospital Foundation Holiday Events

**Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance):** Madam Speaker, today I wish to shine a light on an important event in my constituency put on by the Grace Hospital Foundation.

The Grace Hospital Foundation was established in 1990 and is affiliate of the Grace Hospital board of management and the Salvation Army at the time. The Annual Winter Celebration is one of the events put on by the Grace that supports programming at the hospital. This event also becomes a real West End tradition for kicking off the hospital season, as I'm sure the Speaker much knows.

On December 5th, all are welcome to meet at the Grace Hospital Auditorium at 5:30 p.m. where families will have the opportunity to participate in a variety of holiday-themed events including things like a sleigh ride, visit from Santa, cookies and decorating. The festive evening really caps off with a stunning fireworks display that is—can be seen from across St. James and Charleswood.

The commemorative Tree of Life, which also will be lit at the same time, has over 3,000 white lights in shine of memory of loved ones and is also a reminder of hope that we have in our hearts for patients at the Grace Hospital.

Grace Hospital is more than a renovated emergency room in the constituency of Kirkfield Park; it's a place where people come together to learn and to support each other, to feel a sense of belonging with their neighbours and friends, and contribute to the type of community that we could be very much proud and call home.

I want to recognize the Grace Hospital for their continued work in the community not only as a health-care provider, but also as a place to bring people together in a supportive and positive light. I invite you to take part in the December 5th in some festival fun at the Grace Hospital Auditorium and we are here to enjoy, as we kick off the holiday season, this important event not just for Kirkfield Park, but people across the city.

I'd like to welcome and to recognize Jon Einarson, who is Executive Director of the Grace Hospital Foundation, and I want to thank him for his contributions as well as the board's contributions for all the hard work they do.

Madam Speaker, I ask to leave—and Jon, I know, here is in the audience. I ask for leave to have his name added to Hansard.

**Madam Speaker:** The guest name will be added into Hansard of—through the speech that the member just presented.

Further member statements?

#### **Meet Me at the Bell Tower**

**Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas):** Meet Me at the Bell Tower community gatherings happen every week. Following the tragic death of Clarky Stevenson, a 15-year-old who was fatally stabbed, a group of young indigenous women between the ages of 12 and 14 organized an anti-violence rally. That rally and the tragic passing of Clarky was actually the inspiration for the creation of Meet Me at the Bell Tower.

Since then, every Friday at 6 o'clock a group gathers at the corner of Selkirk and Powers, and I invite all my colleagues to come out tomorrow to support each other, discuss issues facing the community and work towards establishing effective solutions and a safer community. Young people don't want to wait until and react in the face of tragedy. They want to be proactive in preventing violence, and Meet Me at the Bell Tower does just this.

Each week, they examine a range—a wide range of issues such as racism, child welfare and reconciliation. Recently, they gathered in support of Dwayne Lavallee, a young man from Skownan First Nation who went missing on September 22nd. They wanted to—they wanted the family to know that they cared and that Dwayne was loved and that they wanted to help support the family.

The North End is often only portrayed in terms of danger and tragedy. Well, Meet Me at the Bell Tower combats that narrative by celebrating the successes within the community and uplifting fellow community members. The gathering has grown over the years, and on November 23rd, tomorrow, they'll be celebrating their seventh anniversary.

\* (13:50)

Each week the historic bell is rung, the sound that carries hope throughout the community. It is a reminder to those that can hear it that there is a strong and caring community around them.

Today and every day we uplift and honour Meet Me at the Bell Tower relatives for the heart work that they do.

Miigwech, Madam Speaker.

#### **Senior Centres and Support Co-ordinators**

**Hon. Eileen Clarke (Minister of Indigenous and Northern Relations):** Today I rise in the House to acknowledge seniors and the senior support co-ordinators in my Agassiz constituency and recognize the work of Connie Newman, executive director for the Manitoba Association of Senior Centres.

Connie has been a devoted advocate for seniors and a dedicated director for the association. MASC works through community organizations and centres to ensure seniors' needs are met and support for those that deliver the services and programs.

The local co-ordinators and the board members of these non-profit organizations are the backbone to senior centres. They work diligently behind the scenes organizing programs, providing friendship, offering outreach, sharing information and making referrals.

The seven organizations in Agassiz that provide senior services are Carberry Plains Services for Seniors, Helping Hands for Glenella District, McCreary/Alonsa Support Services to Seniors, Home Assistance Neepawa and District, Gladstone Area Seniors Support Program, Plumas Senior Support Services, as well as MacGregor-Austin Senior Support Program.

The board members and the co-ordinators understand the diverse needs of their seniors and determine what programs may be best suited in their communities. Most of our rural organizations provide a social environment for activities, offer

congregate meals, transportation, health and wellness workshops, lifeline and friendly visiting programs. These services and centres are vital to the well-being of our aging population, and they're especially important in rural, small communities where seniors may be more prone to isolation and transportation challenges. Co-ordinators and volunteers often host fundraising events or sales to help offset program as well as transportation costs.

Thank you to Manitoba Association of Senior Centres, our local boards and co-ordinators for their vision, their leadership and exceptional care in supporting our seniors' independence.

Madam Speaker, I ask that all members of the House join me in thanking the volunteers, board members and support co-ordinators for their continued efforts and advocacy for the seniors that live in all of our communities.

Thank you.

#### **Annie Dee Little**

**Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook):** On February 26, 1965, Annie Dee Little came into this world. She was one of 12 kids: Mary, Georgina, Illa, Ella, Percy, Roy, George, Stewart, Doug, Cynthia, and they have a late brother, Clarke.

Annie is from Red Sucker Lake First Nation. RSL can lay claim to many successful people such as Annie, one of our first registered nurses in the Island Lake area; and our first MLA, Elijah Harper.

Annie has over 30 years' experience as an RN and has worked not only in each Island Lake community, but across the North. She is currently stationed in Berens River First Nation doing what she loves. Her people are her passion, and people love her dearly.

Annie took care of my own mom during her final days. Annie took the time to come and get my mom's wishes and carried them out. We didn't have to make any hard decisions thanks to her. Annie was there and explained carefully what we were to expect as my mom slipped away.

One great trait about Annie was that she held onto our Anishinew customs and practices of care and used them daily in work.

Annie married Abraham Harper of Wasagamack and had two precious children: Chastity April and Lance Abraham Harper.

Her son's name should be familiar to the Minister of Justice (Mr. Cullen). He was at the Remand Centre on October 25, 2016, and died because he was denied medical help.

Annie received the medical reports recently, and with her extensive knowledge, she knew things just didn't add up according to the medical data. She recently presented this to the United States–United Nations Rapporteur Mr. Dainius Pūras when he came to Canada to investigate what my people face within the health-care system.

Our beautiful, special, successful Annie Dee was assaulted yesterday, and we were told that she will not survive this assault. We still have hope.

We're in so much shock. But, Annie, know that we love you; we cherish you. Thank you for proving that we can become professionals. Annie, thank you for being you.

Megwetch.

#### **Christmas Charitable Contributions**

**Mr. Andrew Smith (Southdale):** I rise today to talk about the importance of making contribution to charities during this Christmas season.

Organizations such as the Christmas Cheer Board, the Salvation Army and Winnipeg Harvest rely heavily on our donations, as they are responsible for giving much needed assistance to thousands of individuals across this province each year.

It is estimated that Winnipeg Harvest alone is responsible for feeding 64,000 Manitobans annually, and the funding they receive is crucial to them being able to sustain adequate warehousing and transportation of these vital goods to families, with the heaviest traffic taking place during this time of year.

In order for them to successfully reach their goals, they need nearly \$1 million in donations during this period.

The Christmas Cheer Board needs everything they can get in order to fulfill the demand for Christmas hampers for families in need. The same goes for the Salvation Army's kettle campaign, which usually raises around \$400,000, of which every penny is required in order to accommodate those in need for food and shelter.

Every little bit counts, so I encourage everybody here in this Chamber to donate \$1, \$20, or even \$100, as it all makes a very big difference. Next time

you pass by a Christmas kettle at one of your local shopping malls, please be sure to give more than just a smile, as there are so many people in need of your generous support, especially at this time of year.

Also remember that these organizations require thousands of volunteers in order to operate successfully, so if you can make some time to give to them, please do so.

Remember that we are proud that Manitoba is the most generous province in Canada, and let's please keep it that way.

Thank you.

### Introduction of Guests

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

Seated in the public gallery from Assiniboine Community College, Brandon campus, we have 21 Canadian government course students under direction of Valerie Frappe, and this group is located in constituencies of the honourable members for Brandon East (Mr. Isleifson) and Brandon West (Mr. Helwer).

And also seated in the public gallery from Linden Christian School we have 26 grade 11 students under the direction of Mark Glor, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable First Minister.

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

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### Methamphetamine Abuse Need for Treatment Options

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition):** The statistics that tell the story of the meth crisis in Manitoba keep getting worse and worse.

We know that there's a 1,200 per cent increase in visits to emergency rooms on account of meth, that there's a 700 per cent increase of people seeking treatment for meth. We also know that there's a 40 per cent—more that 40 per cent increase in the number of babies born addicted to drugs at the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at St. Boniface Hospital.

There's clearly a meth crisis in Winnipeg and across Manitoba, and yet, the response from the

Premier, and clearly in the Throne Speech, has been severely lacking. He is leaving folks behind by not talking about treatment that is needed for methamphetamines.

Will the Premier take action? Will he make investments in detox and treatment beds for people in Manitoba struggling to beat methamphetamines?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** Well, as all members do, Madam Speaker, we here on the government side do understand the human cost of mental health and addictions. That's why we've responded to the initial recommendations of the VIRGO report by improving access, improving co-ordination of services as well as adding staff in important areas.

These steps are being taken to protect and improve the safety of our province and also to address the needs, not only of those directly affected by this situation, but also to assist in alleviating the pain no doubt felt by friends and family members as well.

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

#### Detox Facility in Brandon

**Mr. Kinew:** Brandon has been hit very hard by the meth crisis, and they face a unique challenge, in that there's no detox facility in that city.

I received a letter from a mother whose son is struggling with methamphetamine addiction even as we speak, and she writes that she had—drove him to Winnipeg on October 18th. He was tested, immediately sent to Main Street Project for four days to detox.

\* (14:00)

It doesn't make much sense for people in Westman, for people in Brandon who are trying to get clean to have to drive hours away to Winnipeg. Brandon is a Westman hub. People should be able to detox there. It would help alleviate the severity of the meth crisis in that centre if the Premier were to act now and create a detox facility. Activists in the community are saying it's needed; citizens are saying it's needed.

Will the Premier act to bring it—bring a detox facility to Brandon to help that city fight the meth crisis?

**Mr. Pallister:** Well, as someone who grew up in a rural environment, Madam Speaker, I understand the



challenges of being further away from services and from conveniences and from necessities as well. And I understand the urgency with which one feels they need to have health situations addressed.

And because our government understands that as well, we have just opened a new Rapid Access to Addictions Medicine clinic in Brandon and continue to understand that, although all solutions will not be found with one clinic, that that clinic will potentially offer the opportunity for being tracked faster to detox treatment, should that be the course of action recommended by experts in the case of that individual.

Madam Speaker, I think the important thing to understand here is all of us who know the urgency, we also understand the complexity as well, and so it's important for thoughtful action to be taken, and that's precisely what we're doing.

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

**Mr. Kinew:** Madam Speaker, the Premier's clinic is only open a few hours a week, but so be it. If somebody gets in the front door of the clinic and they're referred to detox, where does that Brandonite need to go to detox? They need to get on the highway and they need to drive to Winnipeg.

We see in this mother's letter, herself, the personal toll. She writes—and I'm quoting here—"It's Russian roulette"—I'll table this document because I'm quoting—"It's Russian roulette everyday for the loved ones of an addict. Will today be the day for recovery or for death? I can fully understand why family members of addicts are being given the diagnosis of PTSD." End quote, there.

Madam Speaker, we hear in that letter the very personal, the very real toll that it's having on families who are struggling with a methamphetamine crisis.

Of course, an entry point is needed for people to access services, but the services themselves ought to be there for people in communities like Brandon.

Will the Premier commit today to adding a detox facility in Brandon as part of an overall, newly revamped strategy to fight meth in Manitoba?

**Mr. Pallister:** I think it's fair to observe, Madam Speaker, that this problem is not a new one and that there were zero clinics before we opened five. I think it's also fair to note that several hundred people have

already been helped in recent weeks as a consequence of the opening of those five.

So when the member criticizes the hours, let's understand the hours when the NDP were in government were zero hours and the number of people helped were zero people. So we're taking serious steps.

I appreciate the member's concerns, I share them, but I also appreciate reasonable suggestions, and I haven't heard those.

We're able to offer—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Pallister:** —great—*[interjection]* If the member would—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Pallister:** —like to ask another question I'll give him leave to do so, Madam Speaker.

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

#### **Municipal Road and Bridge Program Request to Reinstate Program**

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Thank you kindly for your permission to ask a question in the House, Madam Speaker.

Roads and bridges are what connect people in our province. We know that this Premier has ordered cuts to the Infrastructure budget and that these are being felt right across the province.

Of course, \$150 million were cut from the infrastructure budget by this Premier after he specifically promised that he would not do so. That means that roads and bridges right across Manitoba are falling into disrepair. This is a common complaint for people right across the province.

Now, to make matters worse, this government has also cut a specific program that helped municipalities to improve the infrastructure in their localities. The roads and bridges program, a \$12-million cut: \$12 million that won't go towards fixing roads and bridges right across the province. That's the order of this Premier.

Will the Premier stop these cuts, and will he commit today to reinstating the roads and bridges program?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** What I'll commit to do, and what this government will do, Madam Speaker, is invest more in strategic infrastructure during our first term than has ever been invested before in the history of Manitoba.

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

**Mr. Kinew:** You know, Madam Speaker, I'm used to the Premier ignoring questions in question period, but what is new and what kinds of bothers me, is the way that the Premier continues to ignore municipalities right across Manitoba.

Now, they've been raising their voices on this issue, and we expect that that will reach a crescendo next week when AMM comes to town. We know that this issue of the roads and bridges program is one that many municipal leaders right across Manitoba—in the south, in the North—are organizing around.

To that end they've, you know, cut the funding this year for this roads and bridges program by some 84 per cent. They're eliminating it entirely in the longer term.

In response, more than 80 communities have signed an AMM resolution asking this Premier to back off this cut and to reinstate the roads and bridges program. So the question's not coming from me, Madam Speaker, but the Premier owes municipalities an answer.

Will he reinstate the roads and bridges program?

**Mr. Pallister:** Because the previous government chose to invest in infrastructure one year out of four, Madam Speaker, that does not give them the right to claim a record of ever investing systematically in infrastructure in a logical and fair way with municipalities.

So, Madam Speaker, what we've done is replaced the raid, raid, raid-and-then-run-a-parade-just-before-the-election mechanism used by the previous government with steady, regular investments at record levels in infrastructure.

But, Madam Speaker, I must also say we, of course, are under great pressure to clean up the mess left by the previous government in terms of investing in schools that were left in ill repair, hospitals that were left unrepaired. Capital budgets that were claimed by the previous government were not invested. They were taken—the money was taken

away from those things and put somewhere else. It wasn't invested in infrastructure.

We made a commitment to invest in infrastructure. That is exactly what we are doing and will continue to do.

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

**Mr. Kinew:** The Premier uses the words logical and fair, but those are the terms that municipal leaders used to describe the road and bridges program. That's why they like it: because it was logical, because it was fair, because it was predictable, it allowed them to make long-term plans around their infrastructure projects in their own backyards.

Now, what caught many people off guard this year is the Province, without consultation and without prior warning, without even talking to the municipalities first, cut the program. It's been felt in many municipalities. *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** This is coming from the municipal leaders in Thompson themselves, who had to account for a \$200,000 cut simply because this government couldn't pick up the phone and let them know. They were left scrambling for their local budgets.

Now, we know that the Premier doesn't like to listen to voices around the Cabinet table, but will he listen to the municipal leaders themselves? Will he reinstate the roads and bridges program?

**Mr. Pallister:** Well, as far as listening skills, Madam Speaker, we are a government that's demonstrated not only a willingness, but an ability to listen to the people of Manitoba.

When the member speaks about—not so with the previous government, Madam Speaker. When the member speaks about not picking up the phone, I don't recall any municipal person five years ago getting a call from the NDP when the NDP announced they were eliminating a third of the municipalities in the province of Manitoba the night before the AMM meeting.

I don't recall any consultation meetings being held. *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Pallister:** I don't think anybody at the municipal level ever was part of one of those and I don't recall any prior warning being given, either.

We have the most generous relationship with our municipalities in any province in Canada and we plan to keep it that way.

### **Post-Secondary Education Tuition Increase Concerns**

**Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia):** Madam Speaker, yesterday's Throne Speech made one thing abundantly clear: it's full speed ahead for this government when it comes—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Wiebe:** —to education cuts.

The minister is cutting funding to colleges in this province, and his own documents show that college tuition in Manitoba increased by 8.4 per cent last year. That's four times the Canadian average and double the next largest increase across the country. At this rate Manitoba will lose its advantage, becoming one of the most expensive places to go to college in just a few years.

This year things are even worse as tuition has gone up at more than—even more at Red River College and more—by more than 10 per cent at University College of the North.

Why is this minister forcing students to pay more to get less?

\* (14:10)

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Education and Training):** Madam Speaker, unlike what the member said, the Throne Speech wasn't yesterday, it was actually two days ago. So I don't know what he was listening to yesterday, but he clearly wasn't listening to the Throne Speech when it was actually provided.

So he's wrong on the basic substance of his question, but he's wrong even further than that, Madam Speaker. When you look at tuition and you compare it across Canada, Manitoba does very well. Let's look just at the faculty of education. If you're taking your degree in Manitoba, your tuition is \$3,894. If you take it one province to the west of us in Saskatchewan, it would be \$6,598, almost double, Madam Speaker. *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

The honourable member for Concordia, on a supplementary question.

**Mr. Wiebe:** I think it's clear, Madam Speaker, that the minister is doing everything in his power to catch up and surpass those provinces when it comes to the cost of tuition in this province.

Colleges have been under increased pressures just as the funding cuts have been hitting increasingly over the last two years. Red River College and UCN, together, have seen their funding cut by more than \$2.3 million. At the same time, tuition is getting more expensive. Students at University College of the North saw their tuition rise a staggering 10.25 per cent this year. For an LPN student in Swan River, tuition fees, supplies, will be just short of \$8,000 this year, Madam Speaker.

Why is the minister forcing students to pay more while the minister cuts services at our colleges?

**Mr. Goertzen:** Madam Speaker, the member wasn't entirely wrong. We are playing catch-up on a number of things.

We're playing catch-up when it comes to scores for our students in the K-to-12 system. When it comes to science, we're playing catch-up on their scores. When it comes to literacy, we're playing catch-up, when it comes to their scores in math. And we're playing catch-up because for 15 years, the NDP refused to make the decisions that needed to be made to improve the scores for students who are in the K-to-12 system. And certainly that does impact those who are entering our college system who aren't prepared to do as well as we would like them to do.

When it comes to costs, in particular, if you look at arts degrees in Manitoba, for one year, for example, the cost would be \$380. If you got to Alberta it would be over \$5,000, probably because it's an NDP province right now, Madam Speaker. *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

The honourable member for Concordia, on a final supplementary.

**Mr. Wiebe:** Madam Speaker, the reality is that no other province is taking the path that this Pallister government is on. College tuition has increased four times the national average and double the next biggest increase in neighbouring provinces.

I understand the minister is eager to charge students in this province more money to go to

college and universities, like in other provinces, but here that has been an advantage to us.

Pallister government is closing the doors to a good, affordable college education with multimillion-dollar cuts and double-digit increases to our tuition.

The Premier (Mr. Pallister) is out of step. He's out of touch.

Why won't he invest in colleges? Why won't he invest in our students in this province?

**Mr. Goertzen:** Madam Speaker, not only do we have record investments when it comes to the education system, we're also undertaking a significant review to ensure that we're not just having dollars in the system but we're actually getting results for those dollars.

We want to ensure that our young people are prepared when they enter college and university. There might be many young people who want to be engineers, for example, and if they wanted to be an engineer in Manitoba, their tuition in one year would be \$6,000. If they went to Ontario, their tuition for one year would be \$12,000. Double, Madam Speaker, but that's what you get when you have years of Liberal government.

#### **Independent Investigation Unit Review of Authority**

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** Miigwech, Madam Speaker. *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Ms. Fontaine:** We learned yesterday the Minister of Justice only became aware of issues or concerns with the Independent Investigation Unit just a couple of days ago.

It's pretty concerning the minister, and I would suggest the previous minister as well, were not engaged with anything to do with the IIU. Credible concerns have been raised about the effectiveness of the IIU. The minister has a responsibility, Madam Speaker, to uphold justice and ensure that justice is being served here in Manitoba.

Will the Minister of Justice ensure the authority of the Independent Investigation Unit is going to be reviewed?

**Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Certainly we acknowledge the great work that police forces across our province do

day in and day out and the many hundreds of people, if not thousands of Manitobans, they're dealing with.

And, certainly, in terms of the individuals and the people that work at the Independent Investigation Unit—great solid people working over there providing great service to Manitobans—we have complete confidence in the work that they are doing in that particular unit.

As far as justice is concerned, Madam Speaker, we have made it known that we will be reviewing The Police Services Act and legislation. In terms of justice, we will be cleaning up what the NDP left behind.

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

**Ms. Fontaine:** The minister suggested yesterday that maybe something—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Ms. Fontaine:** —and I quote, something could be done. Maybe he'll take a look at the IIU, maybe not. Which one is it, Madam Speaker?

It's not the kind of assurances that Manitobans expect when credible concerns have been raised about the authority of the IIU.

Will the minister commit to a review and provide the date by which he will complete the review of the IIU?

**Mr. Cullen:** We said in our Throne Speech just two days ago that we would have a comprehensive review of The Police Services Act. That's something we will do. We are currently working on, in terms of the terms of reference, what that will look like, and, certainly, it will include a review of the Independent Investigation Unit as well.

So we look forward to releasing that comprehensive terms of reference in the very near future.

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

**Ms. Fontaine:** The administration of justice and public confidence in the service of justice are not partisan issues, Madam Speaker.

In the last week, we have learned about preaches—breaches of protocol during investigations and disagreements over the scope of the unit's authority.

The minister said himself he only learned of these matters in the last few days. Certainly, Madam Speaker, I would suggest there's a disconnect here that requires the minister's immediate attention.

So will he commit to the review and when can we expect that review?

**Mr. Cullen:** Well, Madam Speaker, I think, when you want to talk about a disconnect, the NDP had 17 years to correct the legislation around this. They didn't do it.

We have committed to doing a wholesome review of that legislation, and we will do that. We as a government want to make sure that we have an effective and efficient review mechanism in place. Manitobans want that assurance as well. We've said that, we've committed to that and we will deliver on that, Madam Speaker.

#### **Referendum on Tax Increases Inclusion of Fees and Premiums**

**Mr. Dougald Lamont (Leader of the Second Opposition):** I know that the Throne Speech promises to introduce legislation to renew referenda for tax increases. Let's set aside that this is a promise that was—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Lamont:** —supposed to be delivered two years ago. Let's also set aside for a moment that the Premier lost a lawsuit over this case.

But this government was going to introduce a carbon tax without a referendum. This government is also creating a fee of cannabis, introduced just today, and threatened a health-care premium, which are both taxes by any other name.

Is it this government's position that it doesn't have to have a referendum if it just renames taxes and calls them fees or premiums instead?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** Thank you very much for the question.

The referendum legislation which was adopted in the 1990s, and, although modified frequently by the NDP, retained its basic character, was designed to protect Manitobans from increases in three main types of tax: personal sales tax, personal income tax and corporate tax.

The member references a lawsuit. That lawsuit occurred when the NDP took their own legislation to court to try to invalidate it so they could bring in the

PST without a referendum, and so we will—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Pallister:** —reinstate the legislation—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Pallister:** —to give Manitobans the protections they deserve from tax increases which have occurred without their permission under the previous NDP government and are proposed under the federal Liberals as well without the permission of the people of Canada.

\* (14:20)

**Madam Speaker:** The—*[interjection]*—order. Order. Order.

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

#### **Provincial Taxes Government Position**

**Mr. Dougald Lamont (Leader of the Second Opposition):** Under this government Manitobans are paying more for lifesaving drugs, for education, for getting to work, school or appointments on the bus. They're paying more in interest on public debt and hydro rates are all going up. That's because when this government cuts, someone else has to pick up the tab.

This government has cut some taxes, with the biggest cuts for those at the top. But, since we're running a deficit, those tax cuts are all adding to the Province's debt and will have to be paid back with interest.

Some Manitobans have seen taxes go up. This government raised school property taxes for seniors. Recent graduates with student loans are also paying more in income tax.

So the Premier doesn't seem to have a problem making life and business for everyone else more expensive.

Is it just his own taxes he doesn't want to pay?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** Having—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Pallister:** Unlike the member opposite, having had the experience of working in my entire life,

Madam Speaker, I have been paying my taxes—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Pallister:** —all the time.

Not some of the time, not selectively, not asking someone else to do it, not hiding anything offshore. Madam Speaker, making sure—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Pallister:** —that I pay all my taxes all the time.

But I've also made sure—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Pallister:** —to try to keep the taxes low for the working families of our country and province.

That's why I'm proud to say that I was part of a federal government that reduced the GST not once, but twice—which the Liberals raised—and is going to reduce the PST—which the NDP raised—so more money can stay in the hands of hard-working Manitoba families.

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

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

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

#### **Referendum on Tax Increases Constitutionality of Legislation**

**Mr. Dougald Lamont (Leader of the Second Opposition):** In 2014, Madam Speaker, the Premier filed a taxpayer-subsidized lawsuit on the issue of a referendum for the PST.

Now, this referendum legislation was always something of a sham, Madam Speaker, because neither the NDP nor the PCs ever bothered to introduce any laws on how to actually run one, but the judge's finding in that case was significant.

Judge Hanssen wrote that, I quote: Any attempt to transfer legislative power with respect to a money bill away from the Legislative Assembly to the electorate is inconsistent with Canada's constitution.

The court found the law was unconstitutional. The PCs may not have known this when the law was passed in the 1990s, but thanks to the Premier we know it now.

Is this Premier going to abandon this legislation or is he, again, going to pass a law he knows violates the constitution?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** Madam Speaker, if this government has a choice, and we have a choice to stand up for Manitobans or stand up for judge-made law, we'll stand up for Manitobans every single time. And it is particularly—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order. Order.

The honourable First Minister.

**Mr. Pallister:** Thank you, very much, Madam Speaker.

It is particularly ironic that a member who has personally, and now as leader of his party who has consistently advocated for higher taxes, to try to object to a government and a premier and ministers and backbenchers who are all standing up for lower taxes.

Madam Speaker, if he wants higher taxes let him run on it. He seems to want to.

We're going to run on lower taxes instead.

#### **Northern Manitoba Health Services The Pas Clinic and Flin Flon Hospital**

**Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas):** This government cancelled a much needed clinic in The Pas. Last month, the current clinic was closed for half of the month due to understaffing, forcing patients to go to the St. Anthony's emergency room for treatment. I'd like to table the notice of reduced hours for our clinic.

Now, with no extra assistance, this government is forcing expectant mothers who expected to give birth in Flin Flon to travel to The Pas. It's creating more stress for our families and forcing front-line workers to accommodate this government's cuts.

Will the minister stop undermining public access to health care in northern Manitoba, restore birth delivery services in Flin Flon and give The Pas its clinic?

**Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living):** I welcome the opportunity, once again, to make it clear to the members of the opposition that these decisions are made by physicians, by administrators, for the preservation of clinical safety, and in this case, serious concerns were raised by staff, by physicians

and by hospital leadership about the prospects for a negative outcome.

None of those members—[*interjection*]

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Friesen:** —would want to have that on their hands, and they'll stand here and make it sound like it is an easy decision. But it's a decision made by medical experts and it's one that Manitobans understand we're making in the interests of safety.

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

#### **Northern Patient Transportation Program Request to Reverse Cuts**

**Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas):** This minister still hasn't retracted the false information that he's put on record, continuously denying over \$1 million in cuts to the Northern Patient Transportation Program until his own department's funding letter proved that it was true. Those documents show that this minister is forcing doctors to put the bottom line before patient safety and adding further stress on our families, including my family.

Will the minister retract the false information that he's put on the record and reverse his cuts to the Northern Patient Transportation Program?

**Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living):** That's a very unfortunate statement, but let's talk about false statements.

Yesterday the member of Minto rose. Last year he made an allegation that 15 people were cut from a hospital, and when the Free Press retracted that statement he came out yesterday and added 40 more people to it and indicated that over 50 were cut. It was false then; it was false now. He knows it to be false.

Will he set the record straight today and stop agitating and trying to scare Manitobans?

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

#### **Northern Health Services Long-Term Plan Needed**

**Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas):** It was just more of the same in this government Speech from the Throne: plans for plans, more reviews, which we know means more cuts in efficiency, which we know means that front-line workers will have to do more

with less. Just ask the nurses at St. Boniface Hospital.

Nothing about public access to health care for the people of northern Manitoba. The northern economy isn't going to grow and families aren't going to want to live in northern Manitoba if they do not have access to public health care close to where they live.

Will this government produce a plan today for the long-term health-care needs of northern Manitoba?

**Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living):** Madam Speaker, let's talk about investments for northern Manitobans and in the northern regional health authority.

The NDP promised for years to open an emergency department and expand it in Flin Flon, but did they do it? No. Our government is investing in that and we'll be pleased to open that to provide all people in that region with access to health care. Our government is on a plan for better access to health care for all Manitobans regardless of where they live.

The NDP failed to provide that. That is our aim, that is our goal, and we will keep going.

#### **Hip, Knee and Cataract Surgeries Investment Announcement**

**Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain):** Madam Speaker, our government continues to make progress on improving health-care delivery and patient outcomes. After 17 years of decline in our health-care system our PC government is delivering better health care sooner.

Today the Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living was at Concordia Hospital for an announcement of a major investment into our health-care system.

Could the minister please update this House on this announcement?

**Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living):** I thank the member for the question.

I was pleased to be at Concordia Hospital earlier today with the members of the Legislature for River East, for Radisson, for Rossmere, for Transcona, and to announce an investment of more than \$5.3 million for significant increases to the number of hip and knee surgeries in Manitoba and for cataract surgeries in Manitoba. It means an

additional 1,000 hip and knee procedures can be performed in 2019. It means an additional 2,000 procedures can be performed for cataracts, and while the member for Minto (Mr. Swan) continues to wail on in the background, Manitobans know that this is real increases that will make a difference in their lives.

We are finding the efficiencies in the system. We are getting—

**Madam Speaker:** The member's time has expired.

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

\* (14:30)

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

I'm finding the level of heckling is starting to increase a little bit more and we've got a lot of students in the gallery. I am very prepared to start to identify members who are not being co-operative in terms of a respectful work environment. So I would urge members to be very careful with the amount and level of heckling that is currently going on.

#### **Remand Centre Deaths Access to Medical Services**

**Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook):** On October 25, 2016, Lance Harper died at the Remand Centre after being denied medical attention.

Actually, five people died in a span of seven months at that time at the Remand Centre. Four of the five were indigenous men. Errol Greene, a 26-year-old man who was killed on May 1 after being denied epilepsy medication, was handcuffed and shackled and on his stomach after the first two successful—successive seizures.

What has the minister done to address this grave issue?

**Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Clearly, our thoughts go out to the families of those that were involved in these situations.

Any situation is one too many, and I know we have a number of inquiries, reviews going on regarding some of the situations the member referenced. As a government, we certainly look forward to seeing what those reviews are, what the recommendations bring forward, and we will certainly be addressing those recommendations in the near future.

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

**Ms. Klassen:** Lance's mother was told that her son was en route to the hospital because he was in medical distress. Annie had so many questions, yet received no answers as to what happened to her son, but she was in the moment and her primary concern was her son's wellbeing. She arrived shortly, but was told her son had passed.

Minister, a healthy young indigenous man in your care passed, and his mother wasn't even told why or how. The investigation aside, please: What has the minister done to address this part of the issue?

**Madam Speaker:** A reminder to members that, when posing questions, that questions be directed in a third-party manner by referencing specifically the minister and directing it in a third-party manner.

**Mr. Cullen:** I did reference, my first answer, we are reviewing a number of those cases that the member did reference. Certainly, through the Remand Centre, I think we process about 11,000 people a year, and we certainly respect the great work that our corrections officers do there on a day-in-and-day-out basis.

And certainly, we just recently met with MGEU in terms of how we might make some advancements in terms of how we handle people in that facility. I think we've got some good communication with the union in that regard. We obviously are waiting for the recommendations of those particular inquiries, and certainly, we as a government are already taking steps to—in terms of safety in those facilities.

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

**Ms. Klassen:** Madam Speaker, Annie was an RN with 30 years of experience. She received her son's medical files. She's an expert in reading those results.

According to his lab results, he didn't die from what the coroner's report stated.

How is this even possible? Who is covering up for whom?

Minister, I will be picking up where my friend Annie left off. Our people want these unnecessary deaths to stop. We need answers and we need solutions.



What specific processes have been put in place to ensure another death does not occur at that facility?

**Mr. Cullen:** As I said, any incident is one too many, and certainly, we want to address the situations at the Remand Centre.

We certainly have taken steps to—in that particular facility. We've invested quite a bit of money in upgrading that facility, in terms of the cameras, in terms of conference facilities. And certainly, there's a lot of work that remains to be done. But certainly, I think the results of these inquiries will shed some light on what other additional work has to be done.

Certainly, we as a government take safety of both our corrections officers and our inmates up to the utmost importance, and we will do everything we can to protect inmates and corrections officers.

#### **Northern Walleye Inc. Investigation Update**

**Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley):** What's the status on the incredibly overdue so-called investigation into how small-business owners, Manitoba's own commercial fishers, lost \$1 million because they trusted this Premier (Mr. Pallister), this minister and this government?

**Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Sustainable Development):** We have taken many steps as a government to ensure the sustainability of our fisheries for all Manitobans and all commercial fishers and all anglers to use and to enjoy while we're making sure that we're protecting the sustainability of the stock.

If this member was concerned about the fisheries, he would've used his voice years ago when zebra mussels came into our waterways and made such an impact on our waterways that we're feeling the detriment today and well into the future.

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

**Mr. Altemeyer:** I would gently suggest, Madam Speaker, that the fishers are certainly not any better off under this government.

A quick review of the facts: Within days of this rushed privatization job on Manitoba's fishery, that's when the problems began. Fish was loaded from Manitoba into contaminated fertilizer containers with, quote, a brown sloppy liquid in the bottom.

Then the product was exported to goodness knows where. Fishers never got paid. The company that was responsible for it received and still has a licence from this very same minister to continue to operate, and she has done nothing to clear the air on what happened or what is going to be taken to make sure it doesn't happen again.

Will she please commit to telling the public what the heck happened? *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Ms. Squires:** Once again, this member is clearly putting false information on the record, and his entire preamble was false.

But what is not false is that when the NDP government was warned that zebra mussels were going to come into Lake Winnipeg, Gord Mackintosh, his minister at that time, said, you know what? Let's not worry about Lake Winnipeg because we have 100,000 other lakes in this province to celebrate.

The NDP turned their back on Lake Winnipeg. That is not what we're doing. We're standing up for the sustainability of the fishery and for all the fishers in Manitoba.

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

**Mr. Altemeyer:** Well, Madam Speaker, I'm only responsible for the questions. I'm not even going to try to justify what we just heard.

But to the fishers in Manitoba, to all of their families—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Altemeyer:** —to their entire communities, I think you can see the incredible disrespect and disdain that this government has for your culture, your lifestyle and the way you attempt to support yourselves.

At the very least I will ask the Premier to step forward and show leadership and commit that the fish dealer licence for Northern Walleye Inc. will not be renewed next week when it expires on November 30th, and it will not be renewed until the air is cleared on what happened, corrective measures are taken and the fishers are properly compensated, Madam Speaker.

**Ms. Squires:** Well, I can assure the member that action has been taken against the proprietor in question.

We are taking action to protect the commercial fisheries, unlike the NDP. When they were warned by international bodies that the fisheries—that Lake Winnipeg was the most endangered lake in the world, what did they do? They sat on their hands, they shrugged their shoulders and they said, oh, well.

We are taking action on ensuring that we've got the sustainability of the fishers. We're standing up for commercial fishers in this province.

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

## PETITIONS

### Addictions Services— Brandon and Western Manitoba

**Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this position is as follows:

(1) Addictions are a health and social problem that requires co-ordinated responses from the health-care, social services, education and justice systems.

(2) It is well known that the number of people addicted to alcohol, drugs and—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Allum:** —other substances is on the rise in Manitoba, with a notable increase in use of 'methamphetamine' and opiates, two highly addictive and very destructive drugs.

(3) Between April of 2015 and April of 2018—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Allum:** —drug abuse—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

\* (14:40)

**Mr. Allum:** —drug abuse—*[interjection]*—maybe I should start from the beginning. That was really unfair.

**Madam Speaker:** I think the member can start from where he was disrupted by the loud chatter in the House rather than starting at the beginning.

**Mr. Allum:** (3) Between April 2015 and April 2018, drug abuse and alcohol abuse were two of the top three risk factors identified by the community

mobilization Westman HUB when dealing with persons with acutely elevated risk.

(4) Recent Brandon Police Service annual reports show a steady increase in calls for service for crimes against property and persons.

(5) In Brandon and western Manitoba, individuals seeking addictions treatment and the families trying to help them do not have local access to the services or supports they need.

(6) There is no publicly available, centralized list of addictions facilities in Manitoba.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To request that the provincial government consider establishing a cross-departmental team to provide leadership on a culturally appropriate, co-ordinated response to the growing addictions crisis in our province that includes an aggressive, widespread education campaign on the dangers of using 'methamphetamine' and opiates, along with addictions education for front-line medical staff in health-care facilities.

(2) To request that the provincial government consider providing additional addictions services in Brandon and western Manitoba across the continuum of care, including acute response, detoxification, long-term rehabilitation, transitional housing and support for managing co-occurring disorders.

(3) To request that the Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living consider establishing a publicly available inventory of all addictions facilities in Manitoba; and

(4) To request that the Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living consider providing supports for the families of people struggling with addiction, including counselling, patient navigation and advocacy, and direct access to free 'nalaxone'.

This petition is signed by Michelle Bessette, Jamie Darling, Rebecca King and many other Manitobans.

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

### Flin Flon General Hospital Obstetric Services

**Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Access to quality health care is a fundamental right of all Manitobans, no matter where they live.

(2) The Premier has slashed budgets and cancelled projects for northern communities, making it harder for families to get the primary health care they need.

(3) The budget of the northern regional health authority has been slashed by over \$6 million, which has negatively affected doctor retention programs and the Northern Patient Transportation Program.

(4) With limited services in the North, the Premier is forcing families and seniors to travel further for the health care they need.

(5) On November 6th, 2018, the northern regional health authority announced that obstetric delivery services at the Flin Flon General Hospital would be suspended, with no discussion regarding when they would be reinstated.

(6) The result of this decision is that mothers in Flin Flon and the surrounding area will have to travel for at least an hour and a half to The Pas, creating unnecessary risk for mothers and babies.

(7) The people of Flin Flon are concerned for the health and safety of mothers-to-be and their babies, including the extra physical and financial stress that will be placed on them by this decision of the provincial government.

(8) There has been no commitment from the provincial government that mothers and their escorts who have to travel to The Pas will be covered by the Northern Patient Transportation Program.

(9) Flin Flon General Hospital is a regional hub that serves several communities on both sides of the Manitoba-Saskatchewan border.

(10) Because the provincial government has refused to invest in much-needed health-care services in The Pas, the hospital in The Pas may not be able to handle the extra workload created by this decision.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to reinstate obstetric delivery services at the Flin Flon hospital and work with the government of Saskatchewan and

the federal government to ensure obstetric services continue to be available on a regional basis.

And this petition, Madam Speaker, has been signed by Lindor Tobar, Bill Blackmore, Julie Bellvue [*phonetic*] and many other Manitobans.

### **Concordia Hospital Emergency Room**

**Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

And the reasons for this petition are as follows:

(1) The provincial government has announced the closures of three emergency rooms and an urgent-care centre in the city of Winnipeg, including closing down the emergency room at Concordia Hospital.

(2) The closures come on the heels of the closing of a nearby QuickCare clinic, as well as cancelled plans for ACCESS centres, personal-care homes, such as Park Manor, that would have provided important services for families and seniors in the area.

(3) The closures have left families and seniors in northeast Winnipeg without any point of contact with front-line health-care services and will result in them having to travel 20 minutes or more to St. Boniface Hospital's emergency room for emergency care.

(4) These cuts will place a heavy burden on the many seniors who live in northeast Winnipeg and visit the emergency room frequently, especially for those who are unable to drive or who are low-income.

(5) The provincial government failed to consult with families and seniors in northeast Winnipeg regarding the closing of their emergency room or to consult with health officials and health-care workers at Concordia to discuss how this closure would impact patient care in advance of the announcement.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to reverse the decision to close Concordia Hospital's emergency room so the families and seniors in northeast Winnipeg and the surrounding areas have timely access to health-care services.

And this petition was signed by many Manitobans.

**Addictions Services—  
Brandon and Western Manitoba**

**Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Addictions are a health and social problem that require co-ordinated responses from the health-care, social services, education and justice systems.

(2) It is well known that the number of people addicted to alcohol, drugs and other substances is on the rise in Manitoba, with a notable increase in the use of methamphetamines and opiates, two highly addictive and very destructive drugs.

(3) Between April 2015 and April 2018, drug abuse and alcohol abuse were two of the top three risk factors identified by the community mobilization Westman HUB when dealing with persons with acutely elevated risk.

(4) Recent Brandon Police Service annual reports show a steady increase in calls for service for crimes against property and person.

(5) In Brandon and western Manitoba, individuals seeking addictions treatment and the families trying to help them do not have local access to the services or supports they need.

\* (14:50)

(6) There is no publicly available, centralized list of addictions facilities in Manitoba.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To request that the provincial government consider establishing a cross-departmental team to provide leadership on a culturally appropriate, co-ordinated response to the growing addictions crisis in our province that includes an aggressive, widespread education campaign on the dangers of using methamphetamine and opiates, along with addictions education for front-line medical staff in health-care facilities.

(2) To request that the provincial government consider providing additional addictions services in Brandon and western Manitoba across the continuum of care, including acute response, detoxification, long-term rehabilitation, transitional housing and support for managing co-occurring disorders.

(3) To request that the Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living consider establishing

a publicly available inventory of all addictions facilities in Manitoba.

(4) To request that the Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living consider providing supports for the families of people struggling with addiction, including counselling, patient navigation and advocacy, and direct access to free naloxone.

This petition is signed by many Manitobans, Madam Speaker.

**ORDERS OF THE DAY  
GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

**House Business**

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader):** Pursuant to rule 33(9), I am announcing that the private member's resolution to be considered on the next Thursday of private members' business will be one put forward by the honourable member for 'flin fon'. The title of the resolution is Obstetric Delivery Services at Flin Flon General Hospital.

**Madam Speaker:** It has been announced that the private member's resolution to be considered on the next Thursday of private members' business will be one put forward by the honourable member for Flin Flon (Mr. Lindsey). The title of the resolution is Obstetric Delivery Services at Flin Flon General Hospital.

**THRONE SPEECH  
(Second Day of Debate)**

**Madam Speaker:** Resuming debate on the proposed motion of the honourable member for Southdale (Mr. Smith), standing in the name of the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Thanks for recognizing me in this beautiful Chamber once again, Madam Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to rise in this esteemed Chamber, though of course the Throne Speech that we're discussing was quite disappointing to many people around Manitoba.

Of course, many people may not have been aware that there was a Throne Speech. I noticed that the gallery was pretty much empty during the Throne Speech being delivered.

**An Honourable Member:** Unlike your speech right now.

**Mr. Kinew:** Hey, when this is what the government gives me to work with, I can't be expected to fill the

gallery on their behalf too. It's bad enough their staff came to me and said, we've got plenty more tickets; can you invite more of your followers from social media down? Can you bring some more of the supporters who got you into the leadership of the NDP? Can you use your tremendous outreach skills to help us pack the gallery here? And we said, sorry, we did that last year, and people didn't want to come back a second time.

And, again, I think it's very telling, Madam Speaker, when the most exciting thing that happened on the day of this government's Throne Speech was the fact that their Premier (Mr. Pallister) asked to take a selfie with me. Again, I said okay, all right, stop begging; we'll do the selfie. Get the Free Press photographer over here; let's document this rare instance of bipartisanship.

*Mr. Doyle Piwniuk, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair*

But all joking aside, mister acting—or, sorry, Mr. Deputy Speaker, rather, I do think that what this is telling you is that this is a government that is out of ideas. You know, just a little over two and a half years into their mandate, they are out of ideas. And we should have known this right away. We should have known this right away. The signs were right there. They were chased out of office in 1999 because of cuts to health care. They languished for 17 years in opposition. They had 17 years to bring together new policy ideas. They had 17 years to redefine what it means to be a Conservative, 17 years to get their house in order. They come back into office; they look at each other and say, guess we'll cut health care.

So we saw the warning signs. But, of course, now we are seeing the impact of people—on Manitoba each and every day.

One of the stories that really stands out to me that I think illustrates the impact that the cuts to health care that this government are making are really having on the people of Manitoba was best illustrated by a young man by the name of Devin Rey. Now, Devin Rey's story was reported in the media, and so I'll share a few of the highlights that are on the public record there. But, you know, I did have a chance to speak to this guy on a few occasions privately outside of this Chamber, and I was really touched by his genuine concern not just for his own health-care struggles, but for the health care of other people in Manitoba.

So our friend Devin is afflicted by cystic fibrosis and, as a result, needs some very targeted, specialized medication, medication which was covered under the special drug program. This is an enhanced form of Pharmacare that tailors to some of the life-saving drugs that people in our province need.

Now, without warning, without consultation and without speaking to the people on the special drug program, the Premier and the minister of Health decided to cut and end the coverage. And the people, like Devin, who are on this program learned about it when they were being told through a letter that their coverage was about to cease.

Now, to the credit of Devin and to others who have formed a community around cystic fibrosis and supporting each other through the prospect of living with such a terrible illness, they were able to organize. They came to the Legislature. They lobbied privately behind the scenes. They lobbied publicly in front of the media. And they made their case quite well, passionately and intelligently, arguing that not only would this negatively impact their health but also that the cut was short-sighted, insofar as this cut would only lead to more costs for the health-care system in the long run, when people with cystic fibrosis who may have gotten coverage under the special drug program would now perhaps need more intensive health interventions and more time in hospital.

But the result of the lobbying that they did was successful to a certain extent; they did encounter a limited success. What happened was they were essentially given a one-year reprieve, a one-year reprieve from having to get their coverage cancelled, though there would, of course, be a deductible that had to be paid.

But what really stood out to me about Devin's story was that he was actually planning to get married this year, and when news of the cancellation of the special drugs program was made public, he and his wife-to-be were forced to postpone their wedding and they had to put those plans off.

Now, with the lobbying effort that took place, that reprieve did come, but what really stood out to me about that was the media did a follow-up interview with Devin after this announcement was made, and it was made clear that this reprieve only applied to the people with this specific condition, not to everybody on the special drug program. If you're on the special drug program for diabetes or perhaps

MS or another condition, you would be having your coverage cut immediately. It was only people like Devin who were able to get a reprieve, which shows, I think, on the one hand that this government was only willing to bend insofar as the media had applied pressure to them and, of course, the loyal opposition had applied pressure in this Chamber. But, on the other hand, it left Devin feeling very awkward. He gave comment to the media after this reprieve was granted. Media's asking him, basically, I guess, so do you feel happy? Are you happy that you got this one extra year of coverage? And he said, I want to be happy, but I can't be happy because I feel like I'm leaving people behind.

Quite perspicacious, quite wise, quite insightful, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I think that some of the health cuts that we've seen, cuts in other services, they're all embodied by that quote.

This young man feels like he's leaving other people in the province behind, and even when he is granted a temporary stay of this impact to him, he is left feeling guilty. And I think that that is quite telling about this Premier's (Mr. Pallister) time as a First Minister, in that many people in this province feel is they're being left behind and even those that are not are being forced to feel some kind of way, perhaps guilt, perhaps jealousy at not being afforded a Halls, like some of their other colleagues might get from time to time.

These are words that'll be recorded for posterity, Mr. Deputy Speaker, words that will persist for all time.

But I guess, at the end of the day, what we're trying to say is that governing is about choices and that every day this government seems to be making the wrong choices and the basic functions of backbenchers in a functioning government are not being properly served. When this government announces that they're closing at Concordia, we don't hear the backbenchers in northeast Winnipeg raising their voices in objection. When this government announces they're closing the Seven Oaks emergency room, we don't hear, you know, the member for Kildonan (Mr. Curry) registering his objection. And, again, when northern health care is cut, certainly we don't hear the member for Thompson (Mr. Bindle) raising their voice.

\* (15:00)

So, again, all of these are very telling about the nature of this government, that the government's

making the wrong choice at the executive level, and then when it comes to those members of caucus or Cabinet to swear an oath to stand up for the people of Manitoba, we don't see them fulfilling their democratic obligation to voice their conscience and to speak out against it.

So we figured hey, what the heck, why don't we do that for them, and so we presented an alternative Throne Speech which I think really outlines some of the important priorities. It's quite ambitious; it will be felt. Once we get a chance to implement these policies people in Southdale will be cheering; people in Thompson, of course, you know, they'll be saying, hey, we got an MLA again. It feels like good times all over again. Thank you so much for bringing compassion and positivity and, hey, just something to the table when it comes to governing Manitoba.

So on health care we think that the most damaging cuts that this, you know, government has made, in addition to closing the ERs and closing, you know, clinics and cutting the Northern Patient Transportation Program, some of the biggest damages that they've made are in the short-sighted cuts that they've made to services in the community, and services that might be called primary prevention.

So physiotherapy, occupational therapy, the special drug program, all of these fall under that category. They prevent further or repeat hospitalizations for people. Again, if an individual like Devin Rey can live in the community with the assistance of a special drug program, that's great for him; but it also helps the health system be more sustainable if he's living at home rather than having to spend his days in a hospital bed.

So, too, with the physiotherapy and occupational therapy program. If people can count on those services then they can return to active living in the community very soon and they won't have to spend their time in hospital facing repeat surgeries or repeat hospitalizations.

Now, we know that part of the reason that the wait times for hip and knee surgeries have spiked dramatically under this government is because they cut physio and outpatient occupational therapy services. I would remind you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that physiotherapy is not optional when you're coming out of a hip surgery. It's mandated, and yet the government cut this service.

So we're committed to reversing that. We would reverse these cuts to outpatient physiotherapy, also

reverse the cuts to sleep apnea machine coverage, and reverse the cut to the special drug program. We know that those cuts have hurt Manitobans. Our vision is a health-care service that is there for you when you need it and it helps you to stay in the community for as long as possible.

But wait, there's more. We know that this government has now turned their attention to CancerCare. They've announced a review of CancerCare; they have put out a request for proposals to conduct this review and so far most of the respondents look like the usual suspects that this government works with: the Deloittes, the MNPs, the PricewaterhouseCoopers, organizations like that.

Now, the CancerCare program is highly rated. CIHI, the Canadian Institute for Health Information, rates it No. 1, tied for first place across the country, say that all the cancer patients who need radiation therapy get it within the target timeline; and it certainly is a successful program, a program that's been built on over the past number of years and a program that is certainly well-loved by the people who get that service.

But the concern that we have, of course, is that whenever this government decides to review something, they just end up cutting the program. Whenever the Premier (Mr. Pallister) shows up to try and fix something, he just ends up cutting that service. And so in addition to being concerned with protecting and preserving and growing CancerCare so that it can be there for our population who will need more of these kinds of health-care services in the future, one of the immediate steps that we would take would be to cancel this review of CancerCare and ensure that that service will be there for all Manitobans.

It was a bit disappointing in—though, perhaps not surprising—though perhaps not surprising it was a bit disappointing to hear the government ignore the meth crisis in their Throne Speech. There was a very passing reference in the law-and-order section of the Throne Speech, but no mention of the need to treat people struggling with methamphetamine addiction, and this is a real missed opportunity. It seems as though perhaps the government just realized they hadn't mentioned meth in the speech and just decided to quickly insert the word during a final draft. But that really misses the opportunity to take action on behalf of the people of Manitoba who are struggling with this issue.

Now time and again, we hear stories of families who are trying to get their loved ones treatment. We also hear the impact of people in communities like mine, who are having their windows broken into, or perhaps garages broken into. In one case, I spoke to a family who drove home through their back lane one day and found somebody injecting in the lane right behind their house. Driving their kids with them at the time. Certainly, you can imagine that was very, very alarming.

And yet, if we were to try and clean up the streets in the city, how are we to do so? Well, I would suggest to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we have to clean up the streets with compassion, and that as the police chief has told us and as the former police chief has echoed in very similar comments, we're not going to arrest our way out of this problem. Surely, a police officer needs to be there to break up a crime in progress, but the long-term solution, the medium-term solution and the real lasting solution to those property crimes or to the meth crisis itself and the trafficking which is being stimulated by this crisis is to have addictions treatment. And yet this government has not done enough to respond to this crisis, and they certainly didn't include enough of an emphasis on it in their Throne Speech.

So, where they fail to act, we are prepared to step in. And that's why we're proposing to immediately bring 50 new treatment beds for users of meth. We're also proposing to bring a detox centre to Brandon, a safe injection site to Winnipeg and, of course, to designate a minister for mental health and addictions to be able to quarterback the Province's response to the mental health crisis.

Now, it's no secret that my colleagues and I don't, you know, appreciate the cuts that this Minister of Health is making to the health-care system, but let's say we had a really strong health care—or, really strong Health minister, a really good Health minister under a future NDP government. Even then, that minister would be pulled in many different directions having to oversee such a large department. That's why it makes sense to have a mental health and addictions minister, so that they can focus exclusively on one of the major issues that's confronting so many of our problems—so many of our communities with problems today. And that is the mental health issue that we are all becoming more and more acquainted with.

Now, we heard in question period today some personal testimonial as to why a detox facility is

needed in Brandon. Again, while many people in the community and many folks across Westman are feeling the impacts of the meth crisis, this was one mother in particular who wrote and recounted her story of having to drive her son into Winnipeg in order to detox.

So, again, we can have entry points into a path to sobriety, but we need the services themselves that are going to help people be able to get there. And, while people in Brandon had many great ideas around detox, around second-stage housing, around treatment facilities, I do think that the detox step is the first step towards being able to add those other services. So, to me, it's really important.

And we know that our call for a detox centre has—in Brandon has been welcomed by many people in Brandon. And so we extend our hand in the spirit of bipartisanship to the MLAs for Brandon East and Brandon West to join us in our call to try and get detox in Brandon.

We know also that a safe injection site in Winnipeg is needed. Such a recommendation was included in a previous draft of the government's VIRGO report, though mysteriously on the way to being tabled—but not before it was sent out to all the media—that recommendation disappeared.

And, of course, you know, this government uses the Stephen Harper playbook. So, whenever they attack, attack, attack, you know that they're trying to cover up for something that they made a mistake on. And so to hear them attack and attack and attack anyone who questioned whether they would have deleted that recommendation from the VIRGO report is quite telling, and it simply reveals the underlying truth, which is that this government under this Premier (Mr. Pallister) ordered the removal of a recommendation for a safe injection site in Winnipeg for purely ideological reasons—not because the experts say so, not because the evidence tells him to do so, but simply because that's what Doug Ford, Jason Kenney and premiers like the one we have choose to do. And it's a mistake.

\* (15:10)

Again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you don't have to like a safe injection site, but they work. They reduce HIV transmission; they stop the spread of dirty needles in the street, and they provide an on-ramp into treatment for some people who may be looking for that path to sobriety.

So, again, this is information for the edification of the Leader of the Second Opposition (Mr. Lamont), as well, who believes that he's got more expertise than the people who run Main Street Project or the health experts who say that safe injection sites save lives. But I put those words on the record for their benefit, as well, in the second opposition. No, I'm sure the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) probably agrees with our position since it is informed by the experts and health—public health considerations.

So those are some of our ideas for responding immediately to the meth crisis. Of course, response will have to be broad and will have to include families and justice and health initiatives as well, but certainly these measures that we're talking about here are very important.

Education represents the investment that we are making into our future. And having a strong education system for everyone in Manitoba is a transformative investment that can help people change their lives for the better. We've been very concerned in the announcements to date about this government's upcoming review of education because when my esteemed colleague from Concordia here asks whether they plan to include the organization that represents teachers, the Minister of Education is very evasive. When the esteemed member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe) asks whether they're going to include the organization that represents the parents, again, the Minister for Education is very evasive. And, whenever you ask the minister what his plans are, he likes to pull out spreadsheets and he likes to pull out the different documents—though I would note, in question period, apparently pretty badly misreading the content of those documents.

The one thing I would say, and suggest to you very humbly, that he does not talk about are the comments that he made in the 2016 election in which he said that local autonomy was key and that, you know, these decisions should be left to the educational experts. And we think that the approach that this government is embarking on in this review is going to miss out on some very important experts and some very important knowledge that they need to hear. That's why we are very proud to ask our Education critic here to conduct his own education review and that this one wouldn't have any limits, that he would be free to go and talk to teachers and parents and educational experts. And, in fact, we told him, quite directly, we don't want this to be a road show with a predetermined outcome like the



consultations—and I'm, you know, using my sarcastic sign language here, as my kids call air quotes; my 11-year-old calls that air quotes. But, anyway, the bottom line is not about sarcastic sign language; the bottom line is that our Education critic here is going to travel the province this year and talk to teachers, talk to parents, talk to experts, talk to concerned Manitobans about how we can make this education system work for everybody, but perhaps, most importantly, prepare young people for the future that they are going to live in.

Climate change is a fight for our future. It really is an issue that informs all other issues. If we don't adequately respond to the challenge of global warming, then our children will not be able to live up to the same quality of life that we have enjoyed in our time here on Earth. Jobs will be impacted. The health care of people in our province, the well-being will be negatively impacted by the impact of global warming. The education system, the family system, all these systems will be forced to deal with the ancillary and spinoff effects of climate change as it wreaks havoc on our way of life. And so it really is a question of moral courage and whether we have the political will to act today.

There was a very powerful speaker at committee when Bill 16 came forward towards the end of last session, by the name of Natasha Szach, and she simply asked—I'm paraphrasing here—but she simply asked, how is she to explain to her young son of five or six months why people did not have the political courage to stand up and stop global warming during our time here on Earth.

So the Premier (Mr. Pallister) had the opportunity to show leadership and, unfortunately, he decided to pose for the Maclean's magazine cover rather than put a price on pollution, or he chose to pick a fight with the Prime Minister rather than to force polluters to pay their fair share. Again, if there's no price on pollution, then big polluters get a free subsidy; they get a de facto subsidy for the pollution that they're launching into the environment, which has a very real impact on the air we breathe and on the climate that we all inhabit, and the climate, which, of course, provides for so many of the industries that we are proud of here in Manitoba, most notably the agricultural industry.

So we know it's time for action. A price on pollution is an important step. But even before we ask people around the province to make that adjustment, we think it's important, also, to end the

practice of giving direct subsidies to the oil and gas industry. And so that's why we'd end the practice of subsidizing oil and gas, beginning by ending the tax exemption for oil and gas drill bits which exists in the province at this time.

So these are some concrete steps that we can take to fight global warming, and we're happy to make this stand not just on behalf of, you know, the activists and the dreamers and those who want a province that they can be proud of, but most importantly on behalf of all of our children, because it is all of our children who are going to have to contend with the impacts of global warming over the coming two decades.

Manitoba Hydro is certainly a top priority. At its core, Manitoba Hydro exists to provide affordable electricity to Manitobans. Now, over the years it's been built up into a way that it can deliver that electricity in an environmentally friendly manner. Now, the challenge before us when it comes to Manitoba Hydro is this: we need to continue to build Manitoba Hydro up into a generator and transmitter of affordable electricity that's also clean and green while also reconciling with the impacts that hydro development has had on people across our province, particularly in northern and indigenous communities.

Now, I would ask you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a rhetorical question—posed with the greatest respect, of course—but which sort of organization is better poised to develop clean, affordable hydroelectricity while also reconciling with the past impacts that it has caused: a private corporation or a public utility? Well, it's very clear that a public utility is the best option, both in order to afford—both in order to be able to deliver on affordable bills for people around the province, but also in order to be able to contend with the very complex and nuanced challenge of reconciliation that is laid in front of our important Crown corporation here.

So we know that the Premier has been flirting with the privatization of Manitoba Hydro on many fronts, in addition to causing chaos with respect to the utility that culminated with the entire board walking out on him, including Sandy Riley, who was certainly a long-time and loyal Conservative. It must be very telling that such a staunch Conservative and party lion would walk out on the Premier.

But, in addition to that, as I was beginning to say, now the Premier has also proposed a two-and-a-half-million dollar retirement gift for Gordon Campbell, who himself, as premier of British

Columbia, helped to privatize BC Hydro. And they've made several other steps: bringing in one of the people who helped privatize BC Hydro, removing from the terms of reference the requirement that Hydro deliver on affordability, on the environment or even the public interest.

And now we know that in the Throne Speech this government announced that they plan to change the referendum act. But our concern, again, is that they're playing out of the Stephen Harper playbook—a government at the federal level who is very, very familiar with the idea of passing omnibus legislation; in effect, using big ticket pieces of legislation to try and pass backdoor changes to important laws. Concern with the changes to the referendum act are, of course, that while the Premier (Mr. Pallister) tries to spin a tale about taxes and referenda, that, in fact, what he will be seeking to accomplish is to remove the requirement to hold a referendum on the partial or total privatization of Manitoba Hydro.

However, we were on to him, and in advance of that promise we committed ourselves to bring in legislation this session which will protect not just Manitoba Hydro as a whole, but also to protect against the privatization of any subsidiary of Manitoba Hydro.

And so, again, a public utility is the best way to ensure that Manitoba Hydro stays affordable on the bill front, that it continues to deliver clean electricity and that it begins to continue its reconciliation effort with the communities and people across the province whom it has impacted in the past.

\* (15:20)

But affordability goes a lot further than just your hydro bill. Of course, many Manitobans today are forced to contend with higher and rising cellphone rates. Now, we might ask, like, why is this happening? Didn't Stephen Harper try and bring more competition into the wireless space?

*Madam Speaker in the Chair*

Yes, that may have been true at the federal level, but then the Manitoba Premier here decided to sell off one of the, you know, private telecom companies here to one of the big national telecom cop-operators. And rather than standing up for the bill payers, rather than standing up for affordable rates here in Manitoba, the Premier has chosen to be a cheerleader for Bell as they seek to expand their domination.

Now, an interesting fact about the telecom space is that, of course, a large part of telecom communication, or telecommunications are regulated at the federal level. However, contracts are legislated at the provincial level, and over the past number of years some of the steps to make cellphone bills more affordable, including making those big, early cancellation fees more affordable, that was accomplished through provincial legislation.

So it used to be a flat cancellation fee of \$400, but now it's become a pro-rated fee based on the number of months that you have left on your contract, and that is a result of provincial legislation.

So we do have the ability to act at the provincial level, to take action, to make cellphone bills more affordable and it's easy to see why. Manitobans pay much higher cellphone bills than people do in the States, we pay twice as much as people do in the United Kingdom and so there certainly is room for these telecom companies, which are massively profitable, to be able to make rates more affordable for people in the province.

And I'm talking to people in rural Manitoba; they're beginning to get wise to the fact that these telecom companies are selling rural Manitobans telephone packages beyond what they need, and they're profiting off that.

Seniors are getting wise to the fact in Winnipeg that they're being sold more data than they need and that, again, the companies are profiting off that. And students, of course, are wise to the fact that they're being sold smaller plans that they need and that the big telecom operators are cashing in on the overage charges that they face when they go over their data cap.

And then if you're a parent, such as myself, you have a few kids on your cellphone plan, maybe you're paying your spouse's plan as well. Well, pretty soon your cellphone bill can be higher than your Manitoba Hydro bill. So this is something that a lot of families in our province are feeling the crunch on and it's certainly not an issue that needs to be partisan. We could all gather together into this House and make a stand for affordability and do the right thing and make cellphone bills more affordable.

So I have many ideas on this front. Chief among them is to bring in a bill that'll force companies to disclose their more affordable options to consumers when they sign a contract, but also each and every

month, when you get your cellphone bill so you could compare their fee that you're charging to what the cheaper alternative plans are. That would be an incremental step that we take and, of course, as we are on the march back to that side of the House, the government side of the House, this will be a—  
[interjection]

Well, I hear the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) singing the marching tune that I love to hear so well when I set out on my daily march back to that side of the House.

Again, the reason that I march is because this government has failed so, so much to deliver programs that would benefit Manitobans and, of course, to even bring forward any new ideas to Manitobans.

But, on the cellphone front, we're going to work on a lot of other stuff, too. The issue of emergency alerts is something that was brought to our attention over the summer with the, you know, tragic situation in Alonsa, so we need action on that front. And, of course, there's other steps that could be taken as well that we'll reveal in due time.

So, when it comes to health care, when it comes to education, when it comes to affordability, we know that these are the priorities that Manitobans hold dear and that we're working hard each and every day on behalf of the people here to advance those things.

On health care, we know that this government is making cuts and we propose that we need to focus more on people's well-being.

We know this government is conducting a review on education but they don't want to listen to the people who know best. They're walking away from the responsibility to act on the environment while we're willing to step into that leadership vacuum, and where this government is ignoring a lot of the affordability challenges that Manitobans face, we're working hard to put those on the top of the public discourse and on the agenda for the people of Manitobans.

So these are some concrete—these are some real steps that illustrate the choices that we would make in government and we humbly submit them for your consideration here today and we'll be working very hard this session to advance them, Madam Speaker.

Now, of course, if it's not clear to our colleagues on all sides of the House, we cannot support the

Throne Speech as it is currently presented. I know many members were sticking around today to hear whether or not we would support the Throne Speech, so here it is, Madam Speaker, the official confirmation: we will not be supporting the Throne Speech as it was tabled.

However, with some amendments—A to zee really. Running through some amendments A to zee—

**An Honourable Member:** Zed.

**Mr. Kinew:** —zed. My esteemed colleague from Minto offers a gentle but very wise correction. It's A to zed. My mother would, of course, hang her head in shame if I said zee in public and was not quick to correct myself. It is zed, being the descendant of a member of the Canadian grammar police that I am.

So I'm going to move this amendment here for your consideration and, by extension, the consideration of all members of the House.

I move, seconded by the member for Minto (Mr. Swan),

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

But this House regrets that the provincial government has:

- (a) refused to invest in resources for addictions, such as detox beds, treatment beds or a safe injection site for families suffering the effects of the methamphetamine crisis which is gripping Winnipeg, Brandon and other areas of Manitoba while spending hundreds of thousands on an advertising campaign to warn of the dangers of cannabis with no corresponding campaign for methamphetamine; and
- (b) continued to undermine the front-line health-care services that Manitoba families and seniors rely on by pushing ahead with the closure of emergency rooms and urgent-care centres, ending obstetric services in Flin Flon, eliminating outpatient physiotherapy and occupational therapy services and coverage for sleep apnea supports while threatening important services like CancerCare with the prospect of further cuts; and
- (c) put the health-care system at further risk by refusing to invest in nurses and

- instead forced nurses and other front-line health-care workers to the brink of exhaustion and fatigue through the Premier's plans for cuts and consolidation; and
- (d) continued the attack on women's health care in Manitoba by refusing to provide real access to necessary reproductive health services like the abortion pill for all Manitoba women and girls, closing the mature women's health centre and cutting lactation support services and the midwifery program; and
- (e) ignored the needs for vulnerable seniors by failing to build one new personal-care-home bed for another year; and
- (f) cut supports for life-saving medication through the special drug program for those suffering from diabetes, cystic fibrosis and other debilitating diseases while making no effort to support the creation of a real, publicly and universally accessible Pharmacare program; and
- (g) failed to acknowledge that the Premier's cuts have exacerbated the wait times for hip, knee and cataract surgeries, which have worsened by significant margins since 2016; and
- (h) failed to apply a gender-based lens to its policies and to help increase representation of women across society; and
- (i) disrespected the message clearly stated by climate science, as no plan or initiative has been presented to fight climate change or global warming, nor has there been any offer to provide real protections for lakes and rivers, especially Lake Winnipeg, or to help lower and middle-income Manitobans access green options, on top of a failure to remove subsidies for big oil and gas polluters; and
- (j) continued to pick fights with municipalities, including the City of Winnipeg, by refusing to work collaboratively or co-operatively and making unilateral cuts such as the ending of the Municipal Road and Bridge Program, dictating massive cuts to the infrastructure budget while freezing transit budgets and ending historic partnerships to support transit; and
- (k) failed to offer a jobs plan which can address the challenges facing the province as Manitoba's unemployment rate rises, an unconstitutional wage freeze is imposed, front-line public sector jobs are cut and private sector companies move good-paying jobs to other jurisdictions, including the United States; and
- (l) ignored the needs of northern and rural Manitobans who are looking for an economic plan that keeps education affordable and accessible, by cutting important programs like the Northern Patient Transportation Program; and
- \* (15:30)
- (m) failed for another year to put forward a comprehensive poverty reduction strategy that raises families and children out of the cycle of poverty has—and instead decided to attack the most vulnerable in society by cutting Rent Assist and freezing the minimum wage for two years while giving multimillion-dollar contracts to high-priced consultants instead of listening to regular families and front-line workers; and
- (n) cut small class sizes for early learners, failed to properly fund or create a truly publicly accessible high-quality child-care system while refusing to fund K-to-12 education at the rate of economic growth while engaging in a review which will set the stage for more cuts; and
- (o) continued to increase tuition for post-secondary education, especially colleges, while cutting training spots in colleges, making it more difficult for regular families to get the education and training they need to secure good jobs close to home and ending the tuition income tax rebate, which helped make university and college more affordable; and
- (p) pushed ahead with a plan to privatize Lifeflight Air Ambulance services in spite of front-line doctors warning the Province of the dire consequences of that plan; and

- (q) eliminated health coverage for international students at the same time as instituting a new \$500 fee for participants in the Provincial Nominee Program; and
- (r) failed again to present any commitments to build new social or affordable housing or a provincial housing strategy despite having promised to do so repeatedly while having sold off affordable housing or eliminated requirements for affordable housing in projects; and
- (s) failed to meaningfully consult with indigenous peoples and their representatives, made offensive and divisive comments regarding indigenous groups and has ignored the pathway to reconciliation laid out by The Path to Reconciliation Act, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission calls to action and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; and
- (t) broken its promise to deliver real reforms to families in Manitoba after cutting support for restorative justice programs while making cuts to services that help families 'navigate' difficult court proceedings like family conciliation services, all while crime rises in Winnipeg; and
- (u) failed to make any clear commitments to invest in needed health-care services in Brandon and Westman—oh, I'd like to correct what I just said there: Brandon or Westman; and
- (v) continued to lay the groundwork for the privatization of Manitoba Hydro while refusing to keep rates affordable for regular Manitoba families; and
- (w) failed to offer any plan to keep cellphone rates affordable for regular families while cheerleading corporate mergers of big telecommunication companies; and
- (x) failed to condemn the federal government for its approach to climate change, which allows big coal polluters in Saskatchewan to avoid a price on pollution while the federal government makes cuts to health-care transfers; and
- (y) failed to implement the recommendation of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner's report; and

- (z) hurt young farmers with the provincial government's changes to the Crown lands program, making it harder for small family farms in Manitoba to access Crown lands.

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

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

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

It has been moved by the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Kinew), seconded by the honourable member for Minto (Mr. Swan),

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

But this House regrets that the provincial government has:

- (a) refused to invest in resources for addictions, such as detox beds, treatment beds—

**An Honourable Member:** Dispense.

**Madam Speaker:** Dispense? Dispense.

The amendment is in order. Debate can proceed.

**Ms. Janice Morley-Lecomte (Seine River):** Good afternoon, Madam Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly. It is with honour that I rise this afternoon and speak to the Fourth Session of the 41st Legislature of the Province of Manitoba.

As I reflect on the past two years, I am pleased with the progress that has been made thus far. On being elected, the beginning of a new government and the responsibility for those who voted and put their faith in us weighed heavily on my mind. Many people had spoken about what they were frustrated with and where they wanted to see change. Our government was faced with a huge task, and we were prepared to take on this challenge.

Madam Speaker, we ran on the province that we would make Manitoba the most improved province in Canada. This was no simple task. There was no insight into what we would be inheriting or what we would be working with. The commitment began by engaging with many front-line workers, civil servants and staff and reviewing issues that were noted by our constituents as we were door knocking. The truth is: we inherited a mess. We inherited a province that had the highest emergency room wait

times in Canada and a failing education system that left out province 10th out of 10 in education rankings. Furthermore, our most valuable asset, our children, were living below the poverty line, as Manitoba had the highest child-poverty rate in Canada.

I could go on about these issues, but, thankfully, we are not there. We have progressed over the last two years, and I am proud to say that we have accomplished a lot. Madam Speaker, this was no easy task, as we were prepared to face the challenges that were before us and to keep our promises to the citizens of Manitoba. As a team, we have kept our word and are making progress. This progress has been *[inaudible]* in the lives of individuals in the form of more money being taken home at the end of the day, shortened wait times at the emergency rooms in our province, investments in our education system to support children from the time they enter kindergarten all the way through to secondary education and by helping families out of poverty.

I begin first by looking at some of the improvements to benefit families and their ability to bring home more money. The departments of Families and Education and Training are collaborating to maximize resources that connect Manitobans to work and increase the readiness for work. Furthermore, improvements to employment assessments, for instance, will help employment income assistant participants identify employment opportunities sooner. Skills can be grown in home to assist individuals as they access the workforce.

Education is key when it comes to helping individuals break free from the cycle of poverty. The ability to be educated will change the lives of many individuals and their families. This makes me think of many individuals who have moved to Canada for a better life or those who are able to seek the support of an agency and get the help they needed to graduate with a degree.

I relate to the story of a young mother who had moved to Canada with her partner and young child. She had been a nurse in her home country, and when she arrived in Canada was unable to work in her field. She was a stay-at-home mother while her partner was working. Unfortunately, life does not always have happy endings, and her life was not easy; she ended up leaving her partner due to the stress of the relationship and the abuse she endured from his anger and living on employment income assistance. This young mom and her son received the

necessary resources and support they needed for their situation to improve. She qualified for financial support which provided the opportunity for her to return to school and upgrade her degree so it would be recognized in Canada. She and her son are thankful for the opportunities like the ones available through programs our government offers. She earns a great income and can provide a good quality of life and a safe life for her son.

Madam Speaker, to adapt to changing demographic, socio-economic and regional housing landscape, our government is developing a new provincial housing strategy. The needs of people are diverse, to say the least. The ability to offer housing for individuals in different socio-economic and age groups is important. Unfortunately, not everyone can own a home and there are many factors that cause this not to happen. The uniqueness of our population and the demands for each of those in diverse areas is important to our government. We want to be able to assist all who are struggling, and the new housing strategy will support the uniqueness and diverse needs of Manitobans while being fiscally responsible and calling for strong collaboration with other levels of government.

\*(15:40)

Madam Speaker, education can transform lives and is key to opening doors to areas in many different academic fields and work. As parents, teachers, community leaders, we are all responsible for shaping and building the basis for our children's futures.

Our government takes this seriously and is focusing on improving the educational outcomes of our children through establishing a commission to review kindergarten-to-grade-12 education in Manitoba.

The commission will engage with parents, education professionals, international experts, students, stakeholder groups and any Manitoban willing to share his or her idea for improving kindergarten-to-grade-12 education in our province.

Our children need to be given the skills necessary to be able to compete not only locally, but globally in both the academic field and in the workforce. Ensuring a strong education base and following up with proper measures to demonstrate their success in secondary education facilities will empower and strengthen our children's future.

Manitoba is blessed with many dedicated and talented professionals in the education field and a strong francophone population. The joint efforts of everyone will continue to support our goal of making Manitoba a leader in education supports and skills for our children. Our promise to adopt a multi-year strategic plan for French language will be implemented to ensure Manitobans are able to access services and information in French.

As a parent, I know I want the best for my child and their future, and the policies that have been put forth will ensure all opportunities are available.

Madam Speaker, families can be faced with many challenges. Challenges can sometimes be resolved easily, but at other times, it requires time and outside assistance to reach this goal. Manitoba offers supports and resources for victims of violence. Every year, Manitoba has many families who seek the support of services away from their home. Violence in the home is destructive and can tear a family apart.

In the many years that I worked with families who were experiencing domestic violence in the home, the one common theme I heard was: how can I get my partner the help they need? They aren't a bad person.

Sometimes this was a woman wanting to have a father for their child. Other times, this was a family that had been experiencing outside pressures and seeking support that could help with the healing process. And at other times, it meant the ability for them to both move on but still have a way to relate to each other for the children's sake.

Our government understands the importance of being able to move forward after a crisis and is enhancing supports for victims of domestic violence through two new pilot programs that, if successful, will be expanded throughout the province.

The first program will see an expansion of the Domestic Violence Support Service. The family support worker program will provide more comprehensive support to victims of domestic violence. Too many times, victims are left to navigate the courts on their own and do not benefit from the supports that their partners receive through the many programs offered to offenders. The program will offer support to victims as they go through the complex and often scary court process.

In addition, the development of group counselling programs for victims will offer support

and counselling for individuals. Victims can seek further support through a group network which supports them as they begin their healing process.

Secondly, victims of domestic violence, as well as offenders, need assistance to move forward with their lives. Individuals will be provided with support to participate in the restorative justice processes and the opportunity to take programming that will provide meaningful and healthy tools to help them process their experience.

Many times, individuals are caught in a cycle and do not realize what resources are available to them. The ability to seek emotional and mental support helps them reacquaint with the person they were and the supports available to them in their community. They learn how to deal with situations in a healthy and safe fashion and how to seek supports to deal with the stress and life situations that cause them to feel overwhelmed.

Madam Speaker, our government is dedicated to helping families. We are reforming our family law to make it more accessible, efficient and effective for families and children by giving them an alternative to our adversarial, complex and expensive court-based system. Families need support as they navigate the many areas while going through a difficult time. Parents and children are—all too often—are impacted by the ongoing process and time required to go through the court process. To remove some of the stress, expenses and lengthy court costs, our government is looking at introducing legislation to pilot a first-in-Canada resolution service in Winnipeg.

To facilitate this process, there will be a mandatory facilitated resolution to help families reach consensus, referral services tailored to individual couples and families, support to finalize and file an agreement, and the assistance of an adjudicator to make prompt and fair decisions. The program is being tested to quantify the time needed and to qualify the need for supports to facilitate the ongoing process. The less time a family spends in the court system, the more they can spend healing and moving forward with their life. Everyone knows the importance of family and the time that they are all able to spend together.

Madam Speaker, for too long children have been taken from their families and placed in care. In keeping with our mandate to focus on keeping children and their families together, our government is committed to overhaul child-protection programs.

The focus is for children and families to remain together. The emphasis will be on community involvement and reunification. To further support this, our government will bring forward legislative amendments to The Child and Family Services Act to facilitate better outcomes for children.

Manitoba has a wealth of resources and a diverse population. The theme for growth in a healthy province is family. Family is key to our future. Families are comprised of many different components. To better understand what impacts and influences family dynamics, one needs to focus on the strength of the immediate environment, socio-economic factors and the risk factors in any area. Our government has committed to the future of our families through their support in education, social services, child welfare, court supports and health. We have just discussed a few of the many investments our government has made into strengthening and supporting our future. We understand that a great tomorrow begins with a strong today.

Madam Speaker, when I reflect on the first two years, I see how committed our government has been to follow up on its promise to make Manitoba the most improved province in Canada. We are two years into our mandate and we have already seen the noticeable changes to our health care, education, families and economic sectors. The ability to grow our economy and to see opportunities for families and their children's families is key to ensuring a solid future for our province.

As we go forward, there are many regions in our province that can be explored and developed to ensure all areas of Manitoba are viable and economically stable. Look North is a long-term strategy to tap into the economic potential of Manitoba's North for generations to come. Northern Manitoba has many resources which can be developed into viable and sustaining investments in the North. Our government will continue to implement the mineral development protocol framework with willing First Nations communities to achieve clarity for both communities and industry with respect to consultations preceding exploration and development projects.

\* (15:50)

The Look North committee will offer advice on land use planning, regulations, consultations and other challenges. Improved communication and

co-ordination will help create jobs and opportunity in this sector.

Manitoba has great potential to ensure people living in all regions of our province are able to invest in their future. Growth in tourism in response to the plan 96-4 tourism investment program is encouraging. The increase in revenue from tourism was \$100 million in 2017.

A new strategy plan will be implemented, which will build upon the success of 2017 and incorporate the many consultations with tourism agencies and individuals involved in the tourism industry. Modernizing the existing petroleum production tax will remove some of the burdensome administration and update the existing petroleum database.

These are some of the investments going forward which will help to build and sustain our economy. Growth attracts capital and people to our province. Manitoba is diverse and has many opportunities to grow and expand into markets outside of the province.

Madam Speaker, we as Manitobans have a lot to be proud of. Lonely Planet ranked Manitoba as the eighth best place to travel in the world. Manitoba offers northern lights, polar bears and beautiful lakes for tourists to visit. This is a huge award, as only 10 places make the list of places to see.

Our licence plates read Friendly Manitoba, which reflects the willingness of our citizens to help others. Winnipeg is known for its generosity and ability to support many of the less fortunate.

These are a few of the many reasons why our government has invested in a promise to make our province the most improved in Canada. We have the resources, the landscape, and the diversity, which welcomes everyone to our province. Job growth and family values ensure generations will be able to call Manitoba home.

It is an honour to be a part of this great province, and to be a part of a government that is striving to grow and build a sustainable economy. I continue to work on behalf of the residents of Seine River. I am proud to support the Throne Speech and our government's commitments to Manitoba.

Thank you.

**Mr. Dougald Lamont (Leader of the Second Opposition):** Well, one of the central tenets of this government's Throne Speech is that this government is fixing the Province's finances, but, given that this



government has seen two credit downgrades, this is not credible.

The first downgrade in Manitoba's credit rating occurred when this government announced they would run seven years of deficits without a plan to balance the budget. It was also because the deficit was misstated as being higher than it actually was.

So that first report said Manitoba could face a second downgrade but that the majority this government had meant it had the political ability to move the budget towards balance, either through spending reductions, revenue increases or a combination thereof. That second downgrade took place, despite warnings that it could happen, because the government did aught—did not act.

They did not, and they still do not, have an actual plan to balance the budget, and the second downgrade warned that the government was focusing only on cuts and had no plan to increase revenues. They were proceeding with tax cuts while running a deficit, meaning that we are adding to the debt and borrowing with interest to give tax breaks to people who—benefiting people at the top of the income scale the most.

I wrote an email to the Standard & Poor's analysts who downgraded Manitoba, and they said their judgments are based on whether a particular government shows they are sending the signal that they are, and I quote: unwilling or unable to pay their debts when they come due.

So this government sent a signal to markets and to borrowers twice that Manitoba may be unwilling or unable to pay its debts, with the result that all public debt in Manitoba has a higher interest rate. That's true for the Province of Manitoba, as well as Manitoba Hydro, so we're talking on the scale of more than \$40 billion.

And, again, the reason that this is such a concern is that S&P also said that achieving balance is based on this government's economic projections panning out. So, if there's an unexpected downturn, the goals will be out the window, and we'll be faced either with a much greater deficit and debt or more austerity.

And there are many serious problems here. One is that if the economy turns—that—because this government has already predicted the economy is going to slow down next year and slow down even more the year after that. And, despite some bright spots, there are serious indicators of rough waters

ahead for the economy. The stock market is currently in turmoil; the price of oil has dropped again, and Canadians' and Manitobans' own debt is incredibly and worryingly high. Manitoba small businesses and entrepreneurs often can't get access to the capital they need to grow, and they have to leave the province in order to find it.

When these concerns have been raised in the House, the Premier's (Mr. Pallister) answer has been that Manitobans are buying a lot of cars. In his next breath, he will then talk about how fragile Manitoba's recovery is, then change again in a boast about the size of the rainy day fund.

But it is a problem because one of the things this government has been doing is using budgets and accounting not as plans, but—or as truthful indicators of the state of government finances, but really for the purpose of political theatre. This government's accounting has basically merged with the PR and communications department, because, in August, the Auditor General condemned the practice of using not one, not two, but three definitions of deficit.

And the real problem is that so much of what this government is doing and promising is actually making Manitoba's economy more fragile and slowing growth when what we need to do is accelerate it and build and grow our way out of our troubles. The pure definition of deficit is that it could be caused by too much spending or too little revenue or both. This is a simple statement of fact. So a deficit can obviously be addressed either by spending less or increasing revenue or both.

In an almost daily basis, the PCs argue that Manitoba's state of fiscal and economic troubles are because the NDP continually raised taxes while spending recklessly; therefore the response is that—is—to fix the problem means cutting taxes and reducing spending. And when faced with the NDP criticism of cuts, the PCs correctly point out that the NDP privatized land titles, did not invest significantly in infrastructure, jobs, business; there were cuts and freezes to social services and cuts for cultural industries, housing and poverty reduction.

So the question is: what did the NDP spend on? There were two areas where spending under the NDP increased by more than double. One was in the number of children taken from families under CFS, and the other was building and staffing jails because Manitoba has twice the national incarceration rate.

I have met with many stakeholders—sometimes in post-secondary education, social services, arts and culture—who have not seen an increase in provincial funding in decades. But one of the areas where I believe the government is stubborn and actually dangerously wrong is on the issue of the NDP and taxes, because one of the single great expenses that has added to Manitoba's deficit over the last decade was \$1 billion a year in tax cuts under the NDP, mostly for the highest income Manitobans. So, between 1999 and 2009, the Manitoba NDP cut property taxes, business taxes, income taxes. And this ultimately ended up creating a massive hole in revenues the NDP plugged partly with money borrowed from markets and from Hydro.

While I will say it is popular on both sides of the House to blame the NDP alone, we should recall that from 2006 to 2015, there was a federal Conservative government in power in this country, and while Manitoba had many Conservative MPs—including the Premier (Mr. Pallister)—they continually voted against the interests of Manitoba. After the single greatest financial crisis since 1929, the federal government played the smallest role ever in recovering from the crisis, leaving provinces to do most of the heavy lifting.

This Premier voted in 2007, as an MP, to change the health-care funding formula in a way that every single province but one lost out, meaning Manitoba lost \$31 million a year every year. That same federal government slashed transfer payments, froze funding to First Nations, veterans, infrastructure, and the funds flowing from—to Manitoba from the federal government dropped by \$500 million a year. And so, Madam Speaker, Manitoba endured a one-two punch from the provincial NDP and the federal Conservative government.

But there's a fundamental problem with this government's assumptions, which is that if government simply gets out of the way, the private sector will naturally step in to fill the void. Sometimes all that is left is a void. And, when I travel across Manitoba, I've met a lot of people who feel abandoned by government, because they have been. They've seen businesses close; they've 'see'd' hospitals and schools be closed. And they can live anywhere in Manitoba; it may be a fly-in reserve, a northern mining town, Brandon, Westman, southwest, southeast Manitoba, or it can be right here in Winnipeg—in downtown Winnipeg.

\* (16:00)

And one of my great frustrations is I feel we are neglecting and wasting resources—not just the environment, but our own people. And the idea that we can accomplish everything we need to through cuts is wrong, because what really needs to be done to make change is invest. We actually need—it takes resources and energy and, frankly, money in order to make change. Cuts don't treat diabetes. Cuts don't treat addictions. Cuts don't build roads. Cuts don't create jobs. Cuts don't build new businesses. Investment does.

Madame la Présidente, c'est fou de croire que la seule solution est d'avoir encore plus et plus de compressions. Le problème avec le discours du trône, et avec ce gouvernement, n'est pas seulement une absence de vision : le gouvernement propose beaucoup de plans pour planifier, beaucoup de nouveaux rapports, mais très peu d'actions positives. Ce gouvernement est toujours en train de faire des annonces et parler des idées qui semblent progressistes, mais pour lesquelles il n'y a pas de ressources financières et pas d'appuis véritables.

Les compressions ne peuvent pas soigner les malades. Les compressions ne peuvent pas traiter ceux qui ont des addictions. Les compressions ne peuvent pas bâtir de nouveaux ponts ni de construire de nouveaux rues. Les compressions ne créent pas de bons emplois, ni de fortes entreprises manitobains. Ça nous faut l'investissement.

#### **Translation**

*Madam Speaker, it's crazy to think that the only solution is cuts and more cuts. The problem with the Throne Speech, and with this government, is not only an absence of vision: the government proposes lots of plans, lots of new reports, but very little positive action. This government is always making announcements and talking about ideas that seem progressive, but for which there are no financial resources and no real support.*

*Budget cuts cannot treat patients. They cannot treat people with addictions. Budget cuts cannot build new bridges or new roads. Cuts do not create good jobs or strong Manitoba businesses. What we need is investment.*

#### **English**

And there's so much in here that is astonishingly short-sighted, because this government's motto seems to be: if it ain't broke, break it. And, if—they can't get their story straight on whether these are great economic times or whether we're in recovery,

because a lot of what this government is asking for is short-term pain for more long-term pain.

And there needs to be a recognition, which I don't think is there, that local investment and local ownership matters to local jobs and to local communities. There's a lot of faking left in this Throne Speech, of making progressive noises when this government's actual actions are anything but.

And, again, this is a government that complains on a daily basis about everything the NDP did wrong for 17 years, but they appear to have spent virtually no time at all actually preparing to govern themselves, because there are more than two dozen reviews and reports which often reveal this government has no plan.

Sometimes they just pull old NDP reports off the shelf, dust them off, and then boast at their courage in implementing NDP ideas. And they're here—just some of the reports this government has engaged in: a clinical and preventive services plan to be released next summer; a plan to implement the VIRGO reports recommendations; a four-year review of The Accessibility for Manitobans Act; a gambling strategy; police services; The Funeral Directors and Embalmers Act; K-to-12 education; college education; an economic review—again; committee on mining and exploration; petroleum production, taxes and Crown royalties; a review for the Winnipeg Metropolitan Region; a review of the tax increment financing process; the Health System Sustainability & Innovation Review from KPMG.

There was: the VIRGO mental health and addictions review; the Manitoba Fiscal Performance Review; the PricewaterhouseCoopers procurement modernization strategy; a KPMG P3 business case; an economic development strategy; a fairness report; a report on Manitoba Hydro from Boston Consulting; report on Manitoba Hydro to be conducted by Gordon Campbell; a report on horse racing; another colleges review by the higher education associates; a review of the social impact bond strategy; a review of CancerCare; a review of fisheries; a review of the workplace harassment, sexual harassment policies, practices and procedures, which didn't seem to have worked out particularly well for the caucus; and then a constitutional opinion from Bryan Schwartz on carbon pricing, which was ignored; Look North consultation; and, of course, the health times task force—the health wait times task force.

This is presented as talking to experts, but it's really because this government doesn't seem to know

what to do. Ninety-seven per cent of the \$16 million in contracts for these reports went to companies outside of Manitoba.

And, when it comes to the details of the Throne Speech, there is so much that is vague. They're—many of these plans are too little, too late, and a lot of it is driven by empty hype instead of any specifics with action.

And so there's lots of questionable proposals in this Throne Speech, and the only comfort for Manitobans is that this government is so bad at getting anything done that it may actually mitigate the damage this government can do.

There's a fair bit of lip service on issues that the government is posturing where they've done actual damage. Talking about the value of the Francophonie in consultations while gutting the Bureau de l'éducation française is a slap in the face.

Talking with international students when the government has cancelled their health coverage and there are international students here who can't pay for their mental health care. Talking about helping students when the government has cut bursaries. These are all at odds with reality.

The Manitoba Liberal caucus prepared an alternative Throne Speech who seems to get out in front of Manitoba's problems instead of just reacting them—reacting to them, because, as we've said, Manitoba should be focused on investment and growth, but the Pallister government won't invest a dollar to save two or make three.

This is one of the areas where there are long-standing—where there are agreements that could be signed and could have been signed with other levels of government. There could be money flowing into Manitoba and it's simply not happening.

But one of the things we've said is we need honesty in budgeting. We need to end the practice of overpromising budget commitments and then immediately demanding across-the-board 15 per cent cuts. We should—there should be a focus on matching funding to guarantee that the government can double their money or more so that they're contributing where matching funding applies; restoring funding to Manitoba businesses looking to start up or scale up here in Manitoba; and review—and launch a review into revenues lost due to tax avoidance and tax evasion.

We've also proposed measures that specifically target prevention so that we can prevent diabetes and keep people healthy so they don't face the tremendous suffering as well as costs when it comes from complications of diabetes. But, again, this government has cut from—\$6.7 million from primary health care, which is how our provincial health system's actually identified people with diabetes. We said that we should restore funding to—restore funding to the special drugs program as well as lower the costs of insulin and supplies related to diabetes, including test strips and insulin pumps.

We also said that we need to focus on prevention because there's been no talk at all of prevention when it comes to the meth crisis. They could use funds from the legal—in legal cannabis revenue to launch a province-wide public awareness program, create drug stabilization units so people can detox in a safe, secure setting; provide transitional housing with mental health supports; work with the federal government and municipalities on longer term housing so addicts can stay clean and resume independent lives; and expand harm reduction across Manitoba and work with municipalities to fund diversion and employment programs in communities to prevent youth from ever taking meth in the first place.

And I have to say, even in the last two days, Madam Speaker, that I have received emails from people whose—who have—whose families are in crisis for one reason or another. Like the leader of the opposition, I received an email from Kim Longstreet in Brandon. I first met with her a year ago, in November, and she told me at that time her son—and she's very open about this, so I don't think I'm being indiscreet—but that her son, who was at that point 30 days clean, and that her one job was keeping her son alive because the most likely outcome for an individual who's addicted to meth is death, and she is once again struggling to find detox and care for her son. I received another letter from a gentleman in Lorette who has been trying to help his daughter who has a terrible meth addiction, and when they were at emergency, they couldn't get treated. They couldn't be admitted.

So there are extremely serious concerns and huge gaps in how we are dealing with this meth crisis, but it also starts with—at the beginning with preventing people from ever getting it in the first place.

We also made a number of other recommendations when it comes to greater independence and support for seniors and—as well as education. One is restoring and enhancing the Bureau de l'éducation française, restoring funding to post-secondary bursaries, because, ultimately, as one of my constituents said, put it very simply, if we're spending in health care, we're investing in our seniors, and if we're spending on education, we're investing in the next generation.

So—oh, and the one other thing, actually, when we talked about fiscal responsibility and what we see as one of the largest—or the most important issues is that for many years Hydro has been treated, as we put it, as an ATM.

There has been such a focus on creating the appearance of a balanced budget for the government that we've really taken our eyes off what that means to have huge amounts of debt on Hydro's books. And there have been—there are a number of charges for Hydro, which we see as basically being perverse incentives that have meant we've taken away the concerns of—the real concerns of the risks we're putting on Hydro, one the capital tax, which means that the bigger the dam we build and the more that government gets out of it. The other is the debt-servicing fee, which, again, the bigger the debt that Hydro takes on, the more money comes out of Hydro, and the water rental fee, which, again, is not used in any way to—for environmental reasons, for anything to do with water. And, ultimately, as we feel, is that Hydro is being larded with more and more debt, that really, one way or another, should be paid for and be a responsibility of Manitobans on the government books because it makes more sense, it's safer and we can—even though it might be challenging in some ways, it is nothing compared to the challenges that would come with a default on the part of Hydro, which would then—which could easily lead to a default on the part of the Province, a basically 20–20-some billion dollars coming due that Hydro would not be able to pay.

\* (16:10)

*Mr. Doyle Pivniuk, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair*

This, again—this is the reason that the board of Hydro quit, because, as Sandy Riley put it, that it's not just—it's not a question of privatizing Hydro, it's an existential question for Hydro, whether—basically, whether it continues to exist.

So we do not support—the Manitoba Liberal caucus do not support the Throne Speech, but we will offer to make the following subamendments.

Is that everything?

**An Honourable Member:** I move, seconded by.

**Mr. Lamont:** I move, seconded by—which one wants to do it? All right, the member—the MLA for Burrows—we're making this all up as we go along, Madam Speaker, sorry—I move, seconded by the member for Burrows (Ms. Lamoureux),

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

- (aa) failed to commit to stop charging Manitoba Hydro exorbitant fees which increases the debt level and prevents the corporation from returning to financial health; and
- (bb) failed to commit to strengthen government revenues and develop a credible plan to balance the budget based on growth and investment instead of cuts; and
- (cc) failed to commit to raising standards for ethics, integrity and conflict of interest; and
- (dd) failed to commit to investing in prevention to help keep Manitobans healthy and independent; and
- (ee) failed to commit to create an addictions strategy to address to the methamphetamine and opioid crises; and
- (ff) failed to commit to spending local and stop hiring consultants from outside the province; and
- (gg) failed to commit to not dismantling Manitoba's school divisions and keeping community input in education systems; and
- (hh) failed to commit to restoring le Bureau de l'éducation française; and
- (ii) failed to address the issue of contaminated sites in St. Boniface and Weston in Winnipeg after years of reports which were not disclosed; and
- (jj) failed to commit to reversing the decisions to dismantle collaborative health-care teams and increase senior management positions in health by creating another bureaucratic arm of the government with Shared Health Services; and
- (kk) failed to commit to improving issues relating to supportive housing, independent living, hospice and personal-care homes or reversing the decision to raise costs on senior care programs; and
- (ll) failed to commit to community and employee input and evidence based outcomes for health-care changes and placing insulin pumps and hearing aids under medicare; and
- (mm) failed to commit to ending the practice of clawing back the children's special allowances from kids in CFS, particularly those who are in unpaid care; and
- (nn) failed to commit to recognizing the role of agricultural producers and support them in reducing Manitoba's carbon footprint; and
- (oo) failed to commit to improving the outdated technology systems utilized in government departments; and
- (pp) failed to commit to reversing the decision to close health care facilities such as the Corydon Primary Care Clinic and the vital rural EMS stations; and
- (qq) failed to commit to fulfilling the 2017 provincial budget promise of releasing the poverty reduction plan by the end of 2017; and
- (rr) failed to commit to addressing the urgent need for First Nations housing or developing emergency management protocols for northern and remote communities; and
- (ss) failed to commit to implementing, together with First Nations and Metis people in Manitoba, a plan to improve nutrition and to decrease diabetes in the province; and
- (tt) failed to commit to developing strategies to work with the federal government to ensure that all Manitoba First Nation communities have better access to improved nursing stations, health care, clean running water, Internet and phone connectivity, teachers and land and air transportation; and
- (uu) failed to commit to fulfilling the 2016 Throne Speech promises of creating a new provincial housing strategy, providing for self-regulation for Manitoba's paramedics, reforming conflict-of-interest laws or the

Look North recommendation of updating and releasing the duty-to-consult framework for indigenous communities; and

- (vv) failed to commit to fulfilling the provincial government's election promises of raising the personal tax exemption to the national average; fast-tracking the construction of 1,200 personal-care-home beds; opening a dedicated stroke unit; developing a mental health and addictions strategy; and to work positively and respectfully—respectfully with indigenous people and communities; and
- (ww) failed to commit to implementing the eco-certification of the fisheries of Lake Winnipeg, Lake Manitoba and Lake Winnipegosis and to ensuring sustainable fisheries of walleye, sauger, whitefish, tullibee and perch for these lakes; and
- (xx) failed to commit to ensuring that full fire prevention and community protection plans are in place for all First Nations communities, including firebreaks where needed; and
- (yy) failed to put a priority on addressing learning disabilities to help children in the K-to-12 education system to do well; and
- (zz) failed to co-operate with the City of Winnipeg to implement an accelerated process to address sewage discharge into the Assiniboine and Red rivers in order to improve the health of Lake Winnipeg.

Thank you. Ending on a strong *[inaudible]*  
Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** It has been moved by the honourable Leader of the Second Opposition (Mr. Lamont), seconded by the honourable member for Burrows (Ms. Lamoureux),

*THAT the motion be amended by adding—*

**An Honourable Member:** Dispense.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Dispense.

The subamendment is now in order.

The 'bate' is open. Any speakers?

**Mr. Len Isleifson (Brandon East):** It's—it is always a pleasure to rise in the House and put a few words on record. And responding to the Throne Speech makes it even more special as it provides me with an opportunity to not only talk about the great things of

the past but the things that we look forward to in the future.

And I do have to say right off the hop that I was impressed with some of the comments. I met after QP today with the 27 students from Assiniboine Community College's Canadian government course—year 1 students—and got some feedback on their perspective of question period and what happens in the House. And they're right on the ball. And we certainly have—our future is going to be well looked after with these students.

It really is hard to believe that here we are, 31 months into our first mandate already. Each and every day—and I mean each and every single day—I wake up and feel blessed that I have the distinct honour of representing the great constituents of Brandon East. Every single member of this House—and twice on Tuesdays—we should feel as the—what we're doing in this career is the best that we can do. We're doing what is right. We're putting constituents first and we're ensuring that we, their elected officials, work hard on their behalf to fix the finances, repair the services and rebuild the economy.

This year's Throne Speech continues to set forth the government's commitment to put Manitobans first. We know that good governments make the difficult decisions necessary to ensure the protection of sustainable, quality services for our citizens. We also know that during a decade of debt, decay and decline that the NDP never made a difficult decision.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this type of governing changed 31 months ago, as our government answered the call of Manitobans. They spoke loud and clear that a new government was needed, and they wanted a government that was not afraid of hard work and was not afraid to make a commitment to repair the damage, correct the course and move towards balance in a sustainable way.

Manitobans understand that we inherited a tremendous debt burden that resulted from unsustainable spending, growth-based on unwise, politically motivated spending and poor decision making by the previous government. For example, I witnessed the previous government spend more money on health care at that time while recreating—creating, pardon me—some of the longest wait times in Canada.

Manitobans have been—asked for an improved system for years, and they have every right to expect

a government to act on their behalf. Change was asked for and change was made.

Manitobans realized that their new government, the Pallister government, is taking steps to implement improvements and investments that will improve patient care with a system that is both integrated and sustainable. Our government's consultation of—consolidation, pardon me, of emergency departments here in Winnipeg is proving to be successful, as we continue to witness the reduction of wait times. This is, however, just the beginning, as our government will be bringing forward a plan to further reduce wait times in areas such as cataracts, diagnostic imaging and joint replacements. As a matter of fact, just earlier today, Mr. Deputy Speaker, our government announced an investment of more than \$5.3 million to achieve this goal.

Our government is committed to helping Manitobans who may be struggling with drug or alcohol addiction. Investments are being made in prevention and early intervention activities—that these are critical to minimizing harm and reducing costs associated with substance abuse.

The needs of constituents in Brandon and Westman are being heard loud and clear by our government, with the installation of a new Rapid Access to Addictions Medicine clinic in downtown Brandon. This clinic provides services for patients, including treatment programs and primary care physicians. I want to and need to thank Vicky Legassie and her team at the 7th Street Health Access Centre for their work in this area.

\* (16:20)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, my passion in the field of health care is quite evident, and I'm excited to see that our government's quality, patient safety and accreditation strategy is in the final stages of development.

This strategy will ensure common standards of care and clear accountability for health delivery across all services—do exist. This is what good governance does. It listens to the people and makes decisions based on practicality and common sense.

Tuesday's Speech from the Throne outlines an important pathway for the government as we move into our new session, but also allows some further reflection on the work of the past 31 months. Our government continues to be committed to the important work of fixing our financing, repairing the

services and rebuilding the economy. We have made some tremendous advancements over the past two and a half years, but as I said previously, we do have a lot more work to do.

We embarked on a plan to make Manitoba the most improved province in Canada, and we're well on our way in doing just that. We continue to make progress on balancing the budget while providing tax relief for Manitoba families and small businesses.

The Throne Speech provides us with a vision of the government moving forward. Since the 2016 Throne Speech, our government has continued to engage Manitobans in focused discussions about the future of our province. Tens of thousands of Manitobans have told us that they want a government that includes the very citizens it was elected to serve. We have always welcomed the input and advice of all Manitobans, and as mentioned last year, we continue to pursue an open, transparent government that Manitobans have come to expect.

Consulting with the public has led to many beneficial improvements in our economy and in our environment, and I'm very proud to be a part of a government that has such great foresight into the future of our province.

Procurement practices have been modernized to ensure fair and transparent tendering practices are followed. This new approach to 'procurement' is now in the—known as the category management, which means that the Province of Manitoba will be able to plan more effectively. As stated, the old practice of different parts of government shopping for the same products and services without co-operation will end.

After a decade of debt, Manitobans are realizing a decrease in the provincial deficit as we continue to fix the finances. After a decade of decay, we now see improvements in services, as is evident with the decrease in wait times in health care. And after a decade of decline, we are rebuilding the economy.

Change in Manitoba is the key to ensuring our path to improvement continues throughout the province. Yes, change is hard to do at times, and it is definitely a challenge for many Manitobans. Along with my colleague from Brandon West, we work hard to ensure our constituents are heard. We are their voices in the Legislative Assembly, regardless of political affiliation.

We know that Brandon is the second largest city in the province of Manitoba and, under the leadership of Mayor Rick Chrest, plays a very crucial

role ensuring the success of our province. At a population of almost 49,000 residents within city boundaries, we all realize the potential of not only the city, but the entire Westman region.

This Throne Speech verifies the work our government is doing—for example, in the co-operation with the City of Brandon and the Provincial Exhibition—to create sustainable funding and a new governance model for the Keystone Centre. These partnerships create benefit for the entire area, as opportunities are made to attract not only local, but national and international events.

I have heard from a number of folks in Brandon regarding the keystone being featured prominently in the Throne Speech. Our government has been working closely with the leadership group—that being the Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba and the City of Brandon—to ensure that the Keystone Centre is well positioned for continued success in the future. We know that the Keystone Centre is a large and important economic generator for both the Westman region and the province.

We are working with our partners to finalize key changes to the existing governance structure that will enhance the Keystone's growth in the years to come.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, again, I am pleased to work for the government and the people that recognize the importance of all types of health, including mental health. Manitoba has undertaken the development of focused provincial mental health and addiction strategies that will look at ways to improve access to and co-ordination of mental health and addiction services in our province.

We launched surveys on mental health, substance use and addiction challenges as part of a development of a Mental Health and Addictions Strategy. These surveys have allowed Manitobans to share their views, helping us develop a focused provincial Mental Health and Addiction Strategy that will improve access to and co-ordination of mental health and addiction services in our province.

We know that providing mental health services in Manitoba have incredible valuable input that will help us develop a focused provincial mental and addictions strategy plan as our government moves forward. We're taking steps in the right direction by listening to residents and front-line providers, and we want all Manitobans to be aware of the supports and services available here in Manitoba.

For the 2017-18 fiscal year, the federal government provided Manitoba with three point—pardon me, \$3.63 million for initiatives to address mental health and addictions. Over the next 10 years, the federal government will provide Manitoba with a total of \$399.6 million in targeted funding for home, community care, mental health and addiction initiatives.

We all need to thank the Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living (Mr. Friesen) and the former minister for their efforts to bring these much-needed supports to Manitoba.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Throne Speech outlines and continues to support what Manitobans have come to expect from this government in regards to improving our province.

We know that the NDP did nothing about emergency room wait times, as facts are in record that under the NDP government, Manitoba had the longest ER wait times in the country. In fact, under the NDP, Manitobans could fly to Toronto and back faster than being seen in a Winnipeg ER.

According to the Canadian Institute for Health Information, the average ER wait time in Manitoba was 5.13 hours under the NDP, compared to a national average of only 3.1 hours. As I have already mentioned, the average wait times in Manitoba are finally on the decline, but we do have a long way to go.

When we continue to look back, we realize that Manitoba also had the displeasure of being the owner of the longest ER length of stay, to admittance to discharge in the country of 4.1 hours, compared to a national average of 2.5 hours.

Our government is committed to working with professionals and front-line staff to realize quality improvements for persons utilizing the system. Patient care is a top priority, and this Throne Speech continues to support those improvements into the future.

Despite the growing strains on resources and stresses on health-care workers, the NDP government allowed problems to grow. They promised to get rid of hallway medicine, but instead turned it into highway medicine, where too many Manitobans traveled elsewhere to get the care they need.

The NDP allowed physician recruitment to stall. More doctors left Manitoba than anywhere else in



Canada. Worse yet was the fact that they had no plan on how to fix it. On the other hand, we heard loud and clear in the Throne Speech that the PC government's 'ficient' recruitment efforts in both rural and northern Manitoba have improved.

We have seen 89 new primary care physicians beginning practice within the last year. We are also working to provide better health-care here in Manitoba, to recruiting more doctors to practise in rural Manitoba, co-ordinating medical services for all Manitobans, and broadening access to mental health, addictions and chronic care treatment spaces.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are setting a new course with a broad and ambitious plan, one that will focus on long-term, sustainable measures that, again, will fix our finances, improve our services, and rebuild the economy.

We know that change is never easy, but our government is not losing sight that this work needs to be done to make our province better, and in the long term we will become, again, Canada's most improved province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in addition to the much-needed improvements in patient care, our government also understands the need to improve educational outcomes and opportunities for the youth in our province. Thanks to the Minister of Education and Training (Mr. Goertzen), along with the hard work of the member of Portage la Prairie, our government will be establishing a commission to review K-to-12 education in the province of Manitoba.

This commission will engage the parents, educational professionals, internal experts, students, stakeholder groups and any Manitoban willing to share his or her ideas for improving K-to-12 education in our province. Yes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we even encourage all members of this House, regardless of a political affiliation, to be involved and help the process by providing their thoughts as well.

\* (16:30)

The scope of this review will focus on improving student outcomes, education governance, management of financial resources and accountability.

I cannot leave the area of education without applauding the work of our government for their dedication to the families in my constituency of

Brandon East. Our government recently announced that we'll be preceeding with public tenders to construct five new schools in the province, with an initial capacity for 3,300 students and 392 child-care spaces. One such school is already at the table of the Brandon School Division where they will see the construction of a K-to-8 school in the southeast area of Brandon.

Our government is fixing the finances of the province by restructuring how our province attracts investments, by restructuring our economic development efforts and by ensuring the key economic indicators that show optimism remain that way. As we all heard last year, we are committed to ensuring value for money for Manitobans. This includes enhancements of the role of the Public Utilities Board, encouraging new capital project construction through private-public partnerships and utilizing new funding models such as social impact bonds.

We are working to further reduce the number of children in care through new partnerships and new programs with our newly launched CFS reforms.

Our government is committed to improving Manitoba's justice system by reforming family law in the province and by eliminating delays in prosecutions.

We are also focused on reducing the number of domestic and family violence cases here in Manitoba through the Status of Women Secretariat, and the minister will lead a Cabinet committee focused on ending such violence.

We are proud to work with indigenous people here in Manitoba to renew our duty-to-consult framework, to encourage and engage on issues of mutual importance. This is the tandem-in tandem-pardon me-with the reconciliation strategy that sets the stage for meaningful engagement and collaboration.

On a number of other fronts, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we can certainly look—and I want to talk just a little bit more about supporting victims of domestic violence—our government is enhancing supports for victims of domestic violence through two new pilot programs that, if successful, will expand throughout the entire province. The Family Support Worker Program will assist complainants who have been in abusive relationships to navigate through our family courts process. Expansion of the Domestic Violence Support Service will provide

more comprehensive support to victims whose partners are involved in restorative justice proceedings through the development of group counselling programs for victims.

Victims of domestic violence, as well as offenders, need assistance to move forward with their lives. They will provide, with support—be provided with support to participate in the restorative justice process and the opportunity to take programming that will provide meaningful and helpful tools to help them process their experience. We'll continue to support victims through funding to non-profit partners such as the Canadian Centre for Child Protection, Candace House and the Manitoba Organization for Victim Assistance.

Our government will also introduce legislation to pilot a first-in-Canada family resolution service in Winnipeg over the next three years. We are reforming our family law to make it more accessible, effective, efficient and giving them an alternative to our 'adversarial,' complex and expensive court-based system. There'll be mandatory, facilitated resolutions to help family reach consensus, referral services tailored to individual couples and families, support to finalize and file an agreement and the assistance of an adjudicator to make prompt and fair decisions.

In closing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have received a number of calls and visits from individuals in my constituency of Brandon East who are extremely pleased with the direction of inclusiveness that our government is taking. My doors are always open to hear all concerns, bouquets and complaints, and I listen. I am so deeply honoured to represent the great folks of my constituency, and after 31 months in office I remain humbled at the opportunity to serve, and look forward to another session of this Legislature that will continue our efforts to make Manitoba the most improved province in Canada.

Thank you.

**Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto):** It's always an honour to stand up in this House—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Swan:** —and listen to the very sad and sorry backbenchers opposite who can't have their voices heard in the caucus room, who certainly are never going to see the inside of the Cabinet room, who feel it necessary to shout down members of the opposition—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Swan:** —getting up to speak.

And I'm really proud to speak on behalf of the people of Minto, people of the West End of Winnipeg, who've elected me four times to come to the Legislature—*[interjection]*

Well, and there I hear the member for Southdale (Mr. Smith) and the member for Morris (Mr. Martin) making fun of the people in Minto. That's what we've come to expect from those members. And I'll move on; I'll ignore them because that really isn't a very respectful way to treat people that I represent in this House.

And it is truly one of the most fascinating areas of the province. Great diversity. One in every three people that I represent in this Legislature was actually born outside of Canada, from really all over the world. And those people come to make their first home in the West End of Winnipeg. And it's something I learn from each and every day.

Now, in terms of the Throne Speech, it's certainly been interesting to hear the responses, the comments from the government backbenchers on the Throne Speech so far. You know, it was just—it was two years ago, of course, that they broke the Internet. Is that dress gold or is it blue? And everybody had their own view. And then, of course, last year on the Internet it was: is it Yanny or Laurel? And different people heard different things. The real question is whether the speeches that have been delivered so far by the government backbenchers—are they grey, or are they beige?

And I have never—I've never experienced—in the 16 or 17 throne speeches that I have had a chance to hear, I've never seen a Chamber so devoid of energy. I've never seen the gallery so empty. I've never seen the Rotunda so empty of people who actually wanted to come down and engage with the provincial government. It is incredible that in a province as incredible and as diverse as Manitoba, we are now hearing speeches that really give no credit to the amazing people of this province, that have no joy, have no excitement, have nothing. And, you know, it's only this government that could take a happy event like the upcoming 150th anniversary of Manitoba and even turn that into something completely devoid of joy and interest.

And, you know, there's many, many different areas that one could go on at length. I'm going to focus most of my comments on the health system as the opposition Health critic. And this Throne Speech

shows that it's full speed ahead with this government's plans for cuts and closures in the health-care system. And it's clear. Obviously, it's clear to us, but it's clear to all Manitobans. Even those who say they are Progressive Conservative supporters, they know the decision that are being made now in the health-care system aren't about providing better care to Manitobans. They're about saving money. And, you know, maybe the Health Minister and the Premier (Mr. Pallister) one day will actually just admit that. I might have more respect if they did just say, no, we're not going to do this, because we're trying to save money. We're doing this because we're cutting money, because we think that's more important than providing Manitobans with great care as close to home as possible.

And I'm going to start with the methamphetamine crisis. It would be hard to imagine a provincial government doing less to deal with this issue than this government has in the two years that meth has been ravaging communities like mine, but communities frankly all across this province. And methamphetamine—and we know we had to deal with this about a dozen years ago. And at that time, there was an increase in methamphetamine. There was a lot of concern. And steps were taken by the government of the day. At that time, we took steps. A lot of the meth was being made here in Manitoba, so action was taken to do away with the precursors to prevent people from being able to make that drug.

Now fast-forward a decade, the threat is still there, but we know from speaking with the police, from speaking with others, that meth is now coming in from far outside Manitoba's borders.

You know, it's not a government's fault when situations arise. But it is a government's fault when a situation arises and they do absolutely nothing to prevent it. I can't tell you how much time we spent in Estimates and questions trying to get either the former minister of Health or the current Minister of Health to tell me what they were doing to actually prevent Manitobans from trying and using this drug in the first place. And now, after two years, there is still absolutely no answer. There is nothing this government has done to prevent. And one would think if a government is really concerned about saving money and being thoughtful, preventing somebody from using this drug would be the best dollar you can possibly spend.

\* (16:40)

But the answer has been zero spending, zero interest from this government in an issue. And we've said many times, and our leader today talked about what it's like when meth comes to your community. What happens when meth comes to the community? Well, people who get addicted to this drug are unwell. That's pretty obvious when you see people in the community. It also means that they are doing things that they would simply not do if they weren't addicted.

The number of people in my community that have reported having their garages broken into, having their homes broken into, having things stolen out of their backyards, things stolen out of their cars, it is almost hard to believe the number of people that are now reporting what is happening.

And, you know, there's a couple different ways you can deal with it, and, unfortunately, in this Throne Speech, we heard the extent of this government's interest. The only time that methamphetamine was mentioned in the speech was with respect to criminal justice.

Well, our view is that you have to deal with the issue before it becomes a criminal justice issue, before you have an addict, before you have an offender and before you have a victim.

And we know that it is not an easy path, and all this Health Minister will say is, well, look, we now have a couple hours every week, so if you're having a meth psychosis, you plan your week accordingly for a couple of weeks there will be a clinic, all which are operating, of course, in community health clinics that the New Democratic government supported and opened. You can go in and I suppose you can now find out just how long the time is going to be for treatment.

And I heard the member for Brandon East (Mr. Isleifson) and other members have talked about the RAAM clinic in Brandon, and we've got a lot of respect for the 7th avenue clinic that operates that, but we hear that if you go there and you're diagnosed, there is nothing in this Throne Speech, there's been nothing this government has done that actually gets you treatment any faster even in the face of the opioid crisis and the methamphetamine crisis. There has been no additional resources for the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba or for any other organization in this province that actually provides treatment.

So we're not seeing anything in terms of prevention; we're not seeing anything in terms of intervention; and we're not seeing anything in terms of treatment.

And what is going to happen? We are all going to pay the price. We are all going to pay the price in increased justice costs, increased health costs, increased family services costs, and a lack of people being able to enjoy their community the way they should.

I know the member for Brandon East (Mr. Isleifson) just spoke. I heard him call out when our leader said that we would fund 50 treatment beds as a first–first–step on the way to getting in front of this, and I heard the member for Brandon East call out: How are you going to pay for that?

I would ask the member for Brandon East: How are we going to pay for not dealing with a crisis that is before us that is affecting every single community? That is a cost that no Manitoban, frankly, can afford to pay.

So we know that there are other steps this government has taken as they've pursued the path of trying to cut as much money out of the system as they possibly can, and, you know, we've heard them talk a lot about emergency rooms. The fact of the matter, based on the documentation that the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority is posting, is that since October 2017, which was the time that they took off in the dead of night, took off the Urgent Care sign from Misericordia Health Centre and took down the sign from Victoria General Hospital as an emergency room, we know that since that time emergency wait times have not increased—have not decreased at all.

They've achieved absolutely—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Swan:** —no success and, if anything, those wait times—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Swan:** —those wait times have increased. There has been no progress by this government and now—well, and there's the member for Radisson (Mr. Teitsma) who wants to have—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Swan:** —and the member for Radisson, I wish he would go and knock on the doors of people in his community and say, hi, I'm going to stand up and I'm

going to support my government that is shutting the emergency room at Concordia general hospital.

Well, he's not going to do that because, you know, I know there's members in this House, like the member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), the member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe) who are standing up for people in their area who say they want to protect their community emergency room—*[interjection]* And I hear the member for Radisson is now saying that that's fear mongering. Is he suggesting there's something different? Is he now saying they're not closing the Concordia emergency room? Because, if that's the case, I will yield my place and let him stand up and say that he raised his voice with the Premier (Mr. Pallister) and the Minister of Health and actually made that change.

And it sounds—*[interjection]*—oh, I'm not so sure—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Swan:** —we're going to hear anything positive—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Swan:** —on that front.

The fact of the matter is that this government has stopped in its tracks any progress that was made on wait times, and we know that they are going to make it worse the day the Concordia emergency room closes and the Seven Oaks emergency room closes. They are going to be moving tens of thousands of Winnipeggers into facilities that are not ready and not prepared to handle those—that influx.

And where do I get that from? Because I know what they say: Any time we stand up and we raise concerns, they say, well, you're fearmongering. Well, where do we get that from? The wait times task force that this government took commission. And what did they say? They said that the existing emergency rooms, the three that we left, will be overwhelmed with the next phase of emergency room closures. During phase 2, which is the euphemism for closing Concordia's ER and closing Seven Oaks' ER is that patient volumes will increase 55 per cent at St. Boniface, 49 per cent at Grace general hospital and 39 per cent at the Health Sciences Centre. And St. Boniface, in particular, and I quote from this report—*[interjection]*

Well, I'll read the quote for the member for Southdale (Mr. Smith) because he's going to have people in his community that need to get to

St. Boniface general hospital for care because Victoria General Hospital across the river is not going to have an emergency room anymore.

And what did they say? That St. Boniface, in particular, and I quote, lacks the physical infrastructure and does not currently have in-patient capacity to safely accommodate these increased numbers. With the current space and patient flow, a 55 per cent increase is not possible. That's page 152 of the wait times task force.

And all this government had to say in response is, well, we're going to—we're going to spend \$3 million at St. Boniface, because I'm sure that'll do the trick. Well, the wait times task force, at page 152, said, no, that is not going to do it. It will not meet the long-term needs and a much larger project, quote, a new or completely renovated emergency department is urgently required. End quote.

Now, there's absolutely nothing—I thought maybe we'd either hear in this Throne Speech that there would be steps taken to pave the way for these closures, or perhaps even that this government, which likes to falsely put on the record that they listen to people, were actually listening to people and that we would hear that the Concordia ER and the Seven Oaks ER would not be closing. But, of course, we didn't hear that.

**An Honourable Member:** No, wishful thinking.

**Mr. Swan:** It would be wishful thinking; it's absolutely true.

And you know, what did they talk about in the Throne Speech? And what are the members now standing up and somehow trumpeting as a success? Well, three areas that they have dramatically messed up in the two and a half years since they've been in government and it was just back in April of 2018 that the CIHI organization reported to tell us that a growing number of Manitobans are waiting longer than recommended for hip, knee and cataract surgeries. And after only two and a half years of this government being in power, Manitoba fell to the bottom.

And what does that mean? Well, in those three areas—hip replacements—the number of surgical procedures completed within the guideline actually dropped by about 40 per cent from 2015 to 2017. The number of Manitobans getting knee replacement within the guideline time dropped almost in half. And the number of Manitobans receiving cataract

surgery within the guideline dropped by more than a third.

So this government can pat itself on the back, which seems to be all they do, about doing nothing more than trying now to cover the mess that they have made in the last two and a half years when they've been standing still when Manitobans' health needs have been continuing to grow.

So they tell us that \$5.3 million will somehow do it. What it's going to do is probably get us back to about where we were when they were in power. I mean, perhaps in George Orwell's 1984 that was something Big Brother would make an announcement about. I would think this government would be a lot more cautious, but maybe they think that people just aren't going to pay attention.

\* (16:50)

And that's what we see with this government's approach to health care. It is crisis management. They will wait until the very last minute, when they think there's actually going to be the prospect of people coming forward, of the media picking up on things, and that is the only way we're going to get action.

You know, my leader talked about Devin Rey, young man with cystic fibrosis. It was only through his courage and the courage of others actually physically coming down to this Legislature that this government relented and gave that one particular group of people covered by the life-saving drug program, they gave that one particular group a reprieve of some time.

Now, they know that a lot of other people that rely on that special drug program aren't healthy enough, they're not well enough to come down to the Legislature and advocate, so everybody else is out of luck.

And I look at another area where this government is dealing in crisis management, and that was with—and that is with the neonatal intensive care unit at St. Boniface Hospital. Nurses and we in this Legislature started sounding the alarm back in the spring. The number of mandated overtimes has been through the roof under this government's watch.

And what does mandated overtime mean? It means that a nurse can't go home at the end of her or his shift because they don't have anybody to come in and look after babies in the NICU. And then—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Swan:** –we asked questions about it, and all the minister would say is that, well, overtime is down.

Well, that's true. Overtime is down in the health authority because they've stopped authorizing overtime. So, if a nurse is sick, she's not getting replaced. If somebody working on a ward in a personal-care home injures themselves, they're not going to get replaced. So maybe overtime is down, but mandatory overtime is up by a huge factor.

And what did this government do in response to this? Well, just the other day they tried to make a big deal of the fact that they went and hired 30 more nurses. But, once you look behind the curtain, you saw that of those 30 nurses, 24 of those nurses are doing nothing more than filling vacancies that this government allowed to remain open in the NICU at St. Boniface.

We also are learning just what difficulties the NICU is experiencing. We heard just the other day that a much higher number of babies are being born with addictions issues because their mother has been using while pregnant. And what kind of pressure does that put on nurses working in the NICU?

Well, the answer is a huge amount, and yet this government had so little respect for those nurses and so little concern about our most defenceless, most vulnerable Manitobans, that they allowed this problem at the St. Boniface general hospital to fester.

And now their backbenchers are going to stand up and say, well, they're heroes because now they've filled 24 vacancies that they allowed to come open. And that's just not acceptable.

So, you know, there's many, many places where this government has dealt with crisis management when it comes to health care. And, when I say crisis management, it's not just crisis where there's actually something bad happening in the health-care system.

For them, crisis management, it has to be happening that's bad in the health-care system, but they actually have to fear that there is going to be enough anger in the community for them to do something about it. And that's not the way to operate as a government. That's not the way to show respect to Manitobans.

You know, we're talking a lot more about the North and health care, and the way the North has been treated in Flin Flon, in The Pas, in Thompson and other communities is not acceptable. And we'll

be continuing to raise those issues in this House, in our communities, in their communities and elsewhere, because we know there's a better way to do things.

So, on behalf of people living in the West End of Winnipeg, but on behalf of all Manitobans who care about their health-care system, who believe that every Manitoban's entitled to proper health care close to home, I will be opposing this government's Throne Speech, and I will be supporting the very reasonable and very wise amendments put forward by my leader.

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

**Mr. James Teitsma (Radisson):** You know, I was ready to get up 10 minutes ago when the member for Minto (Mr. Swan) invited me to do so. He seemed to think—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Teitsma:** –that I would not be inclined to stand up and defend my government and the work that they're doing, the improvements that they're making in the health-care system, but he's wrong about that. And he's wrong about a good number of other things, and I'll be happy to use my limited time today to tell you about a few of those things. But, you know, while I disagree with the member for Minto about, well, it seems like quite a few things these days, almost everything, I am going to—I'm going to throw a little olive branch to the member who sits right next to him, the member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Kinew). You know, we don't often agree either. But he did say something that I think I can agree with, and that is governing is about making choices, and he's right about that. He is right about that. And I think that's, in fact, what we're up to in this House.

Now, I, as an individual member, as a backbencher, upper bencher, as we like to call ourselves every once in a while, you know, I have an obligation to my caucus, I have an obligation to my constituents, not to mention all the obligations that I've had before I even came into this place, to my family and my church and so many other groups that I can help out with. Now, there's choices we have to make, and I, for one, made a choice to be a Progressive Conservative, part of this government. Now, I made that choice. Certainly, the member for Fort Rouge and a few of the other members opposite have clearly made a different choice, and what does that really getting to, because when you look at the

members opposite, they're making choices that often are directly opposed to the kinds of choices Progressive Conservatives and my colleagues here in the House would make.

So I want to tell you that I choose to be part of a government that's fiscally responsible. Now, the members opposite, they seem to choose to be people who think that we should borrow from our future, that we should take money away from our children, from our grandchildren, we should push the problems down the road onto them so that they can suffer so that we can have comfort now. Now, that's not the kind of life that I certainly want to lead, and that's not the kind of life that I was raised to lead either.

You know, I had a great example in my father and mother. When they came here—they were not born in Canada; they're immigrants to Canada, as so many Canadians are, that they either come here or their parents have come here, and I meet immigrants and children of immigrants all the time in my constituency, and I—as I move about the province. And I have to say, they set an example for me of fiscal responsibility, and I carry that example into my role as an MLA, and our government is taking that same example to be prudent, to not borrow from the future, to work hard. So I choose to be part of a government that's willing to work hard, that is willing to make difficult choices, that is willing to do the hard work of changing our health-care system so that it'll be here functioning not just today, not just for the people who are alive now, who are adults now or sit in this House, but for our children, for our grandchildren because under the previous

government those costs were growing at a completely unsustainable rate.

Now, the members opposite, oh, they'll talk a pretty talk. They'll talk a pretty talk about, oh, you just have to spend, spend, spend—spend, spend, spend. And, while I have a great deal of care and compassion for all the various needs in our province, I also recognize that if I want to be in a position to help those in need, not just today, not just next year, but in a decade, in two decades, so that my children will, and their children will, be able to continue to help those in need, and we hope that there is less and less of that as our province moves forward. That's the way I govern. So that's the way—that's the part of—or that's the part of—that's the kind of government that I choose to be a part of. Thank you.

Now, I always take advantage of the opportunities I have to write in our local papers. And, certainly, the member from Elmwood, I think I've seen him write a few times, you know, a slightly different message, but I just want to share a paragraph from a previous article that I just wrote a few weeks back. And it's about the interest that we owe as a government. Now, the interest payment this year was \$1 billion—\$1 billion. I want that to sink in, and I want it to sink in for the rest—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** When this matter's before the House, the honourable member for Radisson (Mr. Teitsma) will have 15 minutes left.

The House—the hour being 5 p.m., the House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow morning.

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, November 22, 2018

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