

**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

Wednesday, November 28, 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

**Madam Speaker:** Introduction of bills?

The honourable member for Concordia?

It appears there is no introduction of bills. We will then move on to committee reports.

### TABLING OF REPORTS

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Education and Training):** Good afternoon, Madam Speaker.

I wish to table the Assiniboine Community College annual report, 2017-2018.

### MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

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

Would the honourable minister please proceed with his statement.

#### Testing of the Alert Ready System

**Hon. Ron Schuler (Minister of Infrastructure):** Madam Speaker, today at 1:55 p.m. an emergency alert test will be distributed via radio, cable and satellite TV, web feeds and compatible wireless devices. This will be the second test of the Alert Ready system in Manitoba this year; the first test took place in May 2018 during Emergency Preparedness Week.

It is important to note that not all Manitobans will receive the emergency alert test message on their wireless device. This may occur for a variety of

reasons, including device compatibility, connection to a long-term evolution—or LTE—network, cell tower coverage and individual device software settings.

If you receive an emergency alert message share it with your friends, your family and your social networks, because not everyone will receive the alert.

Knowing what to do in an emergency and being prepared is also important to protect yourself, your family and your community. All levels of government, along with the agencies such as environment Canada, Pelmorex, law enforcement, play a role in getting alerts sent out. However, it is equally important that individuals share alerts with those around them and close to them to ensure that more people have important and potentially life-saving information.

Regular testing of all components across the country is an important part of the national emergency alert system. Regular testing helps to bring awareness of the Alert Ready system in Manitoba and what an emergency alert will look and sound like on TV, radio and wireless devices.

Our government is committed to ensuring Manitobans have the critical information they need in emergencies to take necessary precautions to stay safe.

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood):** I'd like to thank the minister for his statement.

Today a wireless alert message will be distributed in order to test the province's emergency alert procedures and ensure Manitobans' safety in the case of future events.

It's unfortunate to note, though, that not everyone will receive the test alert on their wireless devices. Issues pertaining to device compatibility and cell-tower coverage all affect people's ability to remain informed.

The government needs to take action to correct this problem. All Manitobans need to be able to easily receive wireless alerts, and the government needs to have a contingency plan for people who don't own cellphones or whose cellphones that—are not compatible with the current alert system.

There have been instances of natural disasters in which people were not able to receive emergency alerts in time, leading to serious consequences and even death.

The system has failed people in the past and the government cannot be complacent and let the system fail another person. If cellphone companies are charging consumers for coverage all over the province they need to ensure that coverage is adequate.

Manitobans in rural and northern communities shouldn't be neglected and cellphone companies need to be held to account. Cellphone users in all parts of Manitoba deserve the right to receive public emergency alerts.

**Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook):** I'm happy to rise and speak to the wireless test alert which will be going out to some Manitobans

Today's alert will commence at 1:55 p.m. This is a test of the Alert Ready national public alerting system issued by Manitoba Emergency Measures Organization. It is an opportunity for us all to test our system in case of emergencies like safety threats, weather disasters such as tornadoes and floods, as well as AMBER Alerts and terrorist threats.

I'd like to highlight that the Minister of Infrastructure (Mr. Schuler) did notify Manitobans that not everyone will receive the test alert on their wireless devices for a variety of reasons, including device compatibility, connection to a long-term evolution-LTE-network, cell-tower coverage and individual device software and settings.

I think what the minister forgot to mention was that many rural and northern communities still do not have access to broadband or Internet cell service, and this is directly due to this government's choice not invest in this critical infrastructure for many rural and northern Manitobans.

Knowing that there is a threat of an emergency is critical for all communities across Manitoba. Madam Speaker, I encourage all members to reflect on the importance of ensuring safety is equitably distributed throughout our province.

Megwetch.

#### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

##### George Waters Middle School

**Mr. Scott Johnston (St. James):** I rise today to recognize George Waters Middle

School, who celebrated their 25th anniversary on November the 24th.

The school opened its doors in 1993 and was named after former St. James-Assiniboia trustee George Waters.

John George Waters was born in 1919 and grew up in Winnipeg's West End. He served in the RCAF Bomber Command during World War II.

Joining us today is Principal George Valentim and Vice-principal Robert Bell, as well as George Waters' student council.

Madam Speaker, George Waters is somewhat unique as it is housed in the St. James Collegiate campus.

Due to declining enrolments, Madam Speaker, the St. James-Assiniboia school board found amalgamations needed to take place, but wanted to support a distinct middle school identity in a central location. After two schools were closed it was determined a new school would be created, resulting in the new George Waters Middle School.

\*(13:40)

Madam Speaker, 25 years later the school is flourishing. Its success can only be attributed to the buy-in which has taken place by the staff, the community and, of course, the students.

A healthy enrolment of 325 students, and regular programming continually is enhanced. There is also wide participation in a variety of extracurricular activities such as dance, band, wood shop, computer literacy and sport.

Madam Speaker, please join me in recognizing the George Waters Middle School staff and students as they celebrate their 25th anniversary.

Madam Speaker, I would ask that the names of the students attending today be entered into Hansard.

**Madam Speaker:** Is there leave to allow those names to be entered into Hansard? *[Agreed]*

*George Waters Middle School: George Valentim, principal; Rob Bell, vice-principal; student council members: Kyra Hurley, Natasha Krause, Frances Terichow Parrott, Breanna Walker.*

**Tess Derksen**

**Hon. Ralph Eichler (Minister of Agriculture):** It's a pleasure for me rise and recognize Tess Derksen, a Stony Mountain resident and student of Stonewall

Collegiate Institute, for her participation in the FBI Youth Academy. Tess was the lone Canadian selected to travel to Virginia this past July to attend the academy's Youth and Leadership Program.

The application process started with Tess writing her—a test about her accomplishments, which included—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Eichler:** —academic excellence, volunteer work with the Stony Mountain Community Association and involvement in sports such as soccer, track, cross-country, triathlons.

From here, she was one of four people chosen for interview in Winnipeg, where she passed, and went for the second interview in Fargo. Finally, the FBI executive made the final decision and Tess was one of 60 participants ranging from age 14 to 16 chosen for this sought-after opportunity. The program focused on leadership skills, physical training, truth and honesty, error management and courageous leadership, to name a few.

After a gruelling week-long program Tess's family made a journey to attend the graduation ceremony to celebrate her achievements. She received a certificate after finishing the program, as well as a yellow brick keepsake recognizing her competition in the four-mile Yellow Brick Road obstacle course. This obstacle course was based on the FBI Academy version focusing on teamwork to compete this challenge.

Tess is grateful for a valuable experience, meeting new people with different perspectives from other countries. Whether she pursues a career in law enforcement or not, Tess will still be discovering her options—future as reflects on this experience.

Madam Speaker, joining Tess today is her sister, Serena, brother, Quinn, parents, Shannon and Peter. I ask the House to 'plean' join me in extending a 'gradulations' to Tess not only for being selected for this incredible opportunity, but also participation and graduation from this program. Surely has been a life-long changing experience for her and one she will soon never forget.

### **Breakfast2Go Pilot Program**

**Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley):** Madam Speaker, some people will deny the problems in our society, others will make the situation even worse; many more will decide the issues don't relate to them directly or that they simply can't make a difference.

Thankfully, the people I am proud to introduce you to today do not fit into any of those categories.

Parusia Purohit is a nurse practitioner working on the front lines of our beleaguered health-care system. She was seeing more children with earlier incidences of diabetes, cardiovascular disease and hypertension, as well as a lack of psychosocial development and scholastic achievement. She also noticed these children frequently lacked access to adequate nutrition.

Acting on the social determinants of health, Ms. Purohit set out to address the root cause of the problem, and so was born the idea of Breakfast2Go, a unique program that would give simple, healthy breakfast meals to school children every Friday that they can then prepare over the weekend with no adult supervision required.

Willing partners soon emerged at Winnipeg Harvest, the Winnipeg School Division and Breakfast Club of Canada. On November 8th I was very proud to meet Ms. Purohit and leaders from these organizations in my constituency at Mulvey School, where we all celebrated the launch of the Breakfast2Go pilot program.

Over 40 per cent of food bank users, Madam Speaker, in Manitoba are under the age of 18. That works out to 26,000 children each month that don't have the food they need and deserve. Mulvey School principal, Peter Correir *[phonetic]*, sees the cost of this every single day when he said: When a child is hungry they can experience a lack of concentration, and that can affect their academic success. That's why increasing access to healthy breakfast ensures students are on a path to success seven days a week. End quote.

Madam Speaker, the Breakfast2Go partners want to see this program go city-wide once the pilot project is complete, but I want to take that one step further.

Today I would invite all political parties represented in this House to learn from this pilot project and then make the Breakfast2Go program available to any school across all of Manitoba that wishes to participate.

In closing, I wish to offer my deep thanks to everyone involved, including: Keren Taylor-Hughes from Winnipeg Harvest and Maxine Lam from Breakfast Clubs of Canada, in addition to Peter Correia at Mulvey School, and Ms. Purohit herself for their visionary leadership and compassion.

Everyone can make a difference, Madam Speaker; we just have to do it.

Thank you.

### **Kai Winther**

**Mr. Bob Lagassé (Dawson Trail):** Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce a 101-year-old Dawson Trail resident, Kai Winther.

Kai was born in Denmark in 1917. His parents and three siblings soon made the decision to immigrate to Manitoba and they settled in the small Danish community of Ostenfeld, where they ran a successful dairy and hog farm.

In 1945 Kai married Janie from Dufresne. They purchased her family's century farm, where they raised their five children. To this day the farm is run by Kai's children and grandchildren. Kai is a proud grandfather of seven, great-grandfather of nine and two-times great-grandfather of four. He is a proud Canadian Dane, as his father would say, and is honoured to have an ethnically diverse family.

Throughout his 101-year-long life Kai has made it his duty to participate on community boards, councils, associations and commissions. To name a few: Kai was delegate to the Brokenhead conference for 35 years; a member at large on the Ostenfeld-Lydiatt parish council for 30 years; director of the Anola Over 50 Club for 35 years; and the list goes on. Kai's long-term dedication to the—oh, sorry—long-term dedication to staying involved in the community is why he is today's Dawson Trail hero.

Kai is also a cancer survivor and has recently participated in the Canadian Cancer Society's Relay for Life. He lost both his wife and one of his sons tragically to the disease.

Kai will soon be celebrating his 102nd birthday in the summer of 2019. He possesses a valid driver's licence and still drives his own vehicle. He joins us here today in the Speaker's Gallery along with his brother, three daughters and nephew.

Please help me in honouring the dedication and generosity of Kai Winther.

Madam Speaker, I ask for leave to have all the names included in Hansard of the guests in the Speaker's Gallery.

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

*Kai Winther and family: Karen Friesen, Norman Friesen, Dave Haack, Faith Haack, Jim Schellenberg, Judith Schellenberg, Ernie Winther, Neil Winther, Susan Winther.*

### **Save The Concordia ER Coalition**

**Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia):** Madam Speaker, 24-hour access to emergency medical care is vital in northeast Winnipeg. That is the opinion of medical professionals, of front-line workers and even the government's own experts. It's also the opinion of community members who are angry that the health-care services are being cut to meet budget targets. One group in particular is intent on making their voice heard.

Save The Concordia ER is a coalition of community members working to get the government to overturn their decision to close our community's ER. They are a group of people from all walks of life representing and speaking out for the best interests of their community.

The group was formed soon after the announcement of the ER closure in April 2017, and since then they have held rallies and spoken to people at every coffee shop, library, community gathering and doorstep that they could find across the community. They began by helping to collect thousands of names for a petition that has been submitted to this Legislature.

After realizing that the Premier (Mr. Pallister) still wasn't listening, they decided that they would turn their efforts to convincing local MLAs to stand with their communities and convince the Premier to reverse course.

Since then they've collected hundreds of emails and postcards addressed directly to local MLAs. Over 650 community members have sent messages directly to members in northeast Winnipeg encouraging them to stand up for their community and oppose the government's action. I intend to personally deliver the postcards and emails that I've received to the Premier.

\* (13:50)

It seems like the pressure has started to work. Through the thousands of signatures on petitions, lawn signs, social media action and now hundreds of postcards, this government is starting to waver, but it's not good enough for the people of northeast Winnipeg.

The Save the Concordia ER members are committed to holding the government to account for their actions and to remind them that they work for their constituents, not for the Premier.

Now the question is whether these local MLAs who have so far been silent or toed the party line, will they listen to their constituents and stand up to the Premier?

I'm committed to standing with the community. I hope they are as well.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

### 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 École Lacerte we have 38 grade 4 students under the direction of Carole Danneels and Danielle Beauchemin-Waldner, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Radisson (Mr. Teitsma).

And also seated in the public gallery from Neepawa Area Collegiate we have 25 grade 9 students under the direction of Michelle Young, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Indigenous and Northern Relations (Ms. Clarke).

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

Also seated in the public gallery, we have with us today Ms. Gerry Rogers, leader of the Newfoundland NDP, who is the guest of the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

And on behalf of all members, we welcome her here today.

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### HudBay Mining Operations Closure of Flin Flon Location

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Madam Speaker, we've learned today that Flin Flon's biggest employer plans to shut down mining operations in that city in the very near future, in 2021.

According to a statement from HudBay, quote: The most likely scenario is that mining operations will cease in Flin Flon in 2021. As a result, the Flin Flon mill will also cease operations. End quote.

That's according to Rob Assabgui, VP of HudBay, Manitoba Business Unit.

Now, this is a huge blow to an iconic northern community. This could mean the loss of hundreds of jobs, maybe even 900 jobs, as high as that number. That would be a huge impact for a community the size of Flin Flon. Now, this is a very bad piece of news.

I'd like to ask the Premier: When did he first learn of HudBay's plans and whether he has spoken with the company regarding their decision to cease operations?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** Long time ago, Madam Speaker, is the honest answer. HudBay had made it very clear they were shutting down. So I think it may only be a surprise to the member from Fort Rouge.

But the fact remains that the member's concerns conflict rather heavily against his position that in this province we should leave ore in the ground, that we should leave oil in the ground, that we should leave it in the ground and, Madam Speaker, that is the position of the NDP.

So if the member is wanting to express concern in a genuine way he needs to, first of all, change his position and get with the program, because Manitoba is ready to build in the North and elsewhere, and we're going to do it by making sure that we have new mineral opportunities here, not fewer.

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

**Mr. Kinew:** Madam Speaker, it was terrible when Doug Ford and Justin Trudeau would not stand up for jobs in Oshawa when GM announced their closure.

It's terrible to hear this Premier refuse to take action to protect jobs in Flin Flon.

The plans that the Premier was referring to were only—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** —on the mining operation.

What HudBay has now announced is not only will mining operations cease, but also the milling operations. So what was supposed to be a small closure is now a complete cessation of HudBay's activities in Flin Flon. They have also accelerated the timeline. *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** In the earnings call that this company made announcing their decision they made reference to this government being aware of these plans.

So, again: When did the Premier become aware of this new accelerated and dramatic plan to—for job losses in Flin Flon and what will he do to take action? *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Pallister:** I am sure that the Newfoundland NDP will be very, very impressed by the member's rhetoric today, but Manitobans are not, Madam Speaker, impressed with the record of the NDP and—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Pallister:** —its leader when it comes to standing up for Manitobans.

When the federal government announced that it was reducing its percentages of support for health care, we asked the NDP for support. They gave us none. They sat on their hands; they zippered their lips; they cuddled up to the federal Liberal government and said, isn't it great; and it wasn't great and it isn't great because we're losing over \$2 billion in health-care support and the NDP has said nothing about it.

So, Madam Speaker, when the member likes to—although the member likes to, and is presently chirping from his seat, he doesn't like to stand up for Manitobans when it is most appropriate. This government does and will.

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

**Mr. Kinew:** Madam Speaker, it's clear that the Premier has been aware of these impending job losses in Flin Flon. His brutal dodge to that question makes that very apparent. He does not want to talk about this. Perhaps he's just going to roll over like Doug Ford and Justin Trudeau did when job losses were announced in GM.

But on this side of the House we say that's not good enough. We say our role here is to stand up for jobs in Manitoba, Madam Speaker.

Now, what the Premier ought to do is come forward—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** —with real plans and real supports for a community like Flin Flon, perhaps drawing on the Mining Community Reserve Fund so that we can ensure that this great northern community continues to have jobs for many, many years to come.

So the question that the Premier must tell the House today is: Will he stand up for the people of Flin Flon like we will do on this side of the House, or is he just going to roll over in the face of job losses like Doug Ford and Justin Trudeau? *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Pallister:** So much heat, Madam Speaker, and so little light.

The fact is that the member has the chance to stand up for the people of Flin Flon by, for example, admitting that the NDP spent all the money out of the mining reserve, but not on helping communities that have mines.

Maybe, Madam Speaker, he'd like to admit that his plan to tax doctors so they leave the province isn't going to help us get obstetric services in Flin Flon, and maybe he'd like to admit—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Pallister:** —maybe he'd like to admit, because the members from his caucus who are from the North certainly know, that his position on the carbon tax will make life desperately harder for people in Flin Flon.

Madam Speaker, the people of Flin Flon need representation. They need someone to stand up for them and they'll get it in the next election from this party.

### Northern Manitoba Economic Plan

**Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon):** It probably comes as a bit of a shock to the Premier, but the people of Flin Flon have somebody in this House today that stands up for them. In fact, they've got a whole party that's standing up for them.

You know, this government, this Premier—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Lindsey:** —did absolutely nothing when Thompson announced all the jobs that were going to disappear. He said, oh, nothing we can do.

Now Flin Flon is facing the same prospect. The plan has changed and I'm—been made aware that the company reached out to this government and told them that the plan had changed.

So the question is: What is this Premier, what is that government planning to do to protect jobs, to create jobs, to do something for people in Flin Flon and the North?

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

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** Let's set aside for just a little moment, Madam Speaker, the fact that the NDP were in power for 17 years, knew for at least half that time, did nothing.

Madam Speaker—[*interjection*]

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Pallister:** —they just applauded their own inaction, their own ineptitude, their own incompetence and their own blatant unwillingness to stand up for the people of Flin Flon or anywhere else in Manitoba. Every time they had an opportunity to prepare our economy for the new opportunities that awaited it, they failed. Instead they chose to position themselves as the redistributors of wealth.

This government is positioning itself to work in partnership with Manitobans as the creators, the innovators, the entrepreneurs and the absolute leaders in this country of building a stronger economy for all the people of this province.

\* (14:00)

**Madam Speaker:** I'm going to ask for everybody's co-operation, please. There is a high level of heckling going on from both sides of the House, and I know we have guests in the gallery and I would hope that we can show that in Manitoba there is some control on the level of heckling here and that we will show respect and consideration for those that are standing to ask and answer.

So I would ask for everybody's co-operation, please, and I hope I can get everybody's agreement that we have a lot of kids in the gallery today and I would ask for everybody to please heed that and show that democracy can work in a very respectful manner.

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

**Mr. Lindsey:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

We've seen this government make cuts to health care that affect people in Flin Flon. You can't give a baby in Flin Flon anymore, and maybe their plan is that soon there won't be anybody left living in Flin Flon because 900-plus jobs may disappear by 2021.

We've asked repeatedly for this government what their plan is for the North, and so far all they've said is, well, we're going to have a Look North plan someday.

Right now people in Flin Flon need to know that this government is going to do something to help them to help their community survive, not just hang on but to survive, to grow and prosper, and so far this government's done nothing.

What are they going to do for the people of Flin Flon today?

**Mr. Pallister:** Nous avons promis de faire du Manitoba la province où la situation s'améliore le plus au Canada, et nous y parvenons.

**Translation**

*We promised to make Manitoba the most improved province in Canada, and we are succeeding.*

**English**

We are keeping our promises to the people of Flin Flon and to Manitoba of focusing on fixing our finances, on repairing our services and on rebuilding our economy.

Madam Speaker, the member is critical of a Look North plan that we developed—the NDP had no such plan—in consultation with hundreds of people, his friends and neighbours throughout the North.

Madam Speaker, we have optimism about the North. We believe the Golden Boy faces north for a good reason. There are opportunities to explore that have been unexplored for years under the previous administration. The member needs to be respectful of those who believe in the North, even if he does not.

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

**Mr. Lindsey:** The Premier's right about one thing: the Golden Boy does look north; unfortunately, the Premier does not.

So it's time now, we've got three years, for this government to actually do something. We've had advanced warning that job losses may occur in

Flin Flon while this government did nothing. Now we know that the plan has changed and all the jobs in Flin Flon are subject to be gone in 2021, which will be devastating for the community, which will be devastating for the North.

So once again I want to ask this Premier: What is his plan for jobs? What is his plan for the future of the North? What is his plan for people of the North? What is he going to do?

**Mr. Pallister:** While the member was pushing a broom in the warehouse, there were real people mining. They were working hard, and unless the member was asleep while he was pushing that broom, he knew a long time ago—as did the NDP government—about the fate of the HudBay mine. So, Madam Speaker, playing the duck today and pretending he's a saviour for a community he ignored for years isn't going to work here.

Madam Speaker, we are leading the country in exports to the United States over the last year. Our average weekly earnings are increasing at the highest rate among all Canadian provinces. Our capital spending investments in this province in the private sector are the greatest in the country of Canada.

Madam Speaker, this economy is working and it's working because we're partnering with the people who live here and who invest here, and we will continue to do that because we believe in the future of this province even if the NDP don't.

#### **Provincial Translation Services Cuts to French Language Positions**

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Madam Speaker, this government is exporting jobs to other provinces and to America, and it's a damn shame.

Ici, au Manitoba, on voit de nouveau des coupures pour les services en français. Le gouvernement a décidé d'abolir sept postes de traducteurs à temps plein au sein du Service de traduction de la province. L'explication fournie par la province ne mérite pas confiance. Cette décision rend les services plus précaires, et ça met en question leur vouloir de faire certain que les services en français soient toujours accessibles à la communauté.

Est-ce que le premier ministre peut garantir qu'aucun service en français sera réduit à cause de cette compression?

#### **Translation**

*Here in Manitoba, we are again seeing cuts to French language services. The government has decided to eliminate seven full-time translator positions in the province's Translation Services. The explanation provided by the Province is not reliable. This decision makes services more unstable, and it calls into question their desire to make certain that French language services are still accessible to the community.*

*Can the Premier guarantee that there will be no reduction in French language services because of this cutback?*

**Madam Speaker:** Before recognizing the First Minister, I would just like to encourage some caution with language. I don't think there's any need in the Chamber to say some of the words, particularly one that was just mentioned by the Official Opposition Leader.

So I would encourage some caution to ensure that we are using parliamentary language here, and language that is acceptable, especially when we have children in the gallery.

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** Après une décennie de déclin, Madame Speaker, nous renversons notre situation financière aussi. Nous rétablissons la qualité de nos services pour offrir plus de sécurité.

#### **Translation**

*After a decade of decline, Madam Speaker, we are also turning our financial situation around. We are restoring the quality of our services in order to provide more security.*

#### **English**

We are working very, very diligently to clean up a massive mess, Madam Speaker. And we will continue to face that challenge.

The member, in a year of his leadership, has offered really no new ideas. He has simply said we should turn around and go back. And, Madam Speaker, we don't want to go back in this province. We don't want to go back to the days of reckless overspending leading to credit downgrades, leading to tax increases and leading to an unsustainable future for our children and grandchildren. And I'm sure that the member, if he reflected on that, would agree that we need to get our act together here.

And this government is certainly taking that seriously, Madam Speaker, even if he chooses not to.

**Mr. Kinev:** I take your guidance seriously, Madam Speaker, so allow me to correct the record and say this government is exporting jobs to other provinces and the United States of America, and it's a real shame.

De plus en plus, on voit jusqu'à quel point le gouvernement Pallister renonce à ses obligations envers la communauté franco-manitobaine. On a appris dans les médias le fait que le nouveau ministre de l'Éducation ne revisitera pas la décision d'abolir le poste du sous-ministre adjoint responsable du Bureau de l'éducation française.

Cette décision est décevante. C'est une des commandes les plus importantes pour la communauté franco-manitobaine ici au Manitoba, et la réponse que le premier ministre avait juste dite au sujet des traducteurs aujourd'hui n'est pas plus bon que ça.

Est-ce que le gouvernement va finalement écouter? Est-ce qu'il va renverser ses décisions?

**Translation**

*More and more, we see to what extent the Pallister government is abandoning its obligations towards the Franco-Manitoban community. We have learned from the media that the new Minister of Education will not be revisiting the decision to cut the position of assistant deputy minister responsible for the Bureau de l'éducation française.*

*This decision is disappointing. This is one of the most important leadership positions for the Franco-Manitoban community here in Manitoba, and the answer the Premier just gave in regards to the translators today is no better.*

*Is the government finally going to listen? Is it going to reverse its decisions?*

**Mr. Pallister:** Madam Speaker, I am sorry, but the member has revealed the fact that he has never personally been involved in creating a job, does not understand what capital at risk can do to create opportunities for people.

And his vague allegations of exporting jobs are not supported by the actual facts from Statistics Canada, which show that capital spending in new residential properties increased by 30 per cent last year, that is the second highest rate among the provinces; that housing starts increased by

41 per cent last year, which is the second highest among the provinces; that private sector self-employment increased by 6.6 per cent, the second highest among all the provinces.

Madam Speaker, we're No. 2 in those categories, but because of that, we will try harder.

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

**Mr. Kinev:** Madam Speaker, the questions are: why has this government cut seven positions for French translation services, particularly at a time when the Ford government in Ontario is carrying out some very egregious attacks against the francophone community? And for the government leader, for the prime—or, for the First Minister not to be able to answer these questions certainly is very concerning.

Ici, au Manitoba, on voit de nouveau des coupures pour les services en français. Ils ont coupé les positions des traducteurs dans le gouvernement. Nous savons bien l'histoire des—et l'importance des traductions ici au Manitoba. C'était la cause qui—la communauté a agi pour avancer leurs droits de langue minoritaire.

Est-ce que le premier ministre peut garantir qu'aucun service de français sera réduit à cause de ces compressions?

**Translation**

*Here in Manitoba, we are again seeing cuts to French language services. They cut the government's translator positions. We well know the history of—and the importance of translation here in Manitoba. It was the cause that—the community took action to advance its minority language rights.*

*Can the Premier guarantee that no French language services will be reduced because of these cuts?*

\* (14:10)

**Mr. Pallister:** He's trying to ford the wrong stream here, Madam Speaker. We're strengthening the services for our francophone community here. We're working closely with the—and we have a great working relationship with the advisory council—Francophone Affairs Advisory Council, who were notified in advance of these changes to the provision of these services.

I should also mention that under the NDP significant increases in the amount of freelance work that was done for translation occurred. So what the member is criticizing could, I suppose, also be a

criticism of the previous NDP, if one believes that you can't work with people who want to work part-time and at unpredictable hours, but we think we can and we want to accommodate the needs of French translation in our province. We believe we can get more translation done and we believe that we can better serve the francophone population of this province with the decisions we've made.

So, again, he's fording the wrong stream, Madam Speaker.

#### **B & L Foster Care Agency Number of Children in Care**

**Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas):** For nearly a week now we've been asking this Pallister government for answers regarding deeply concerning events that occurred through B & L agency. The allegations are quite serious and now it's been revealed that there's been more than one incident under this very same agency. Six times now in this very House we have asked this government to tell us how many kids are in the care of B & L agency.

Will this minister get up today and tell us and tell Manitobans how many kids are in the care of B & L agency?

**Hon. Cathy Cox (Acting Minister of Families):** Well, first and foremost, Madam Speaker, our government takes the safety and protection of all children very seriously. Our government has ordered a comprehensive review of the service provider to ensure that all children are safe and we've also placed a moratorium on new placements with this service provider.

The review is under way, Madam Speaker, and Jay Rodgers, the deputy minister, will be leading that review.

The safety and protection of all Manitoba children is a priority for this government.

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

#### **Request to Sever Contract**

**Mrs. Smith:** Does this government not know how many kids are actually in the care of B & L agency? Is that why they keep shirking the question, because they actually don't know?

If they were really concerned about kids in B & L they would actually stop all contracts that they currently have and take all those kids out of there, because parents don't know if their children

are, in that agency, safe. Under this government they've allowed abuse to happen not once, but more than once. We've had allegations come out every day since the first one came out.

How many more are going to come out, and when is this actual government going to stand up and start acting and quit the contracts with B & L agency?

**Mrs. Cox:** Our government will always put the safety and well-being of children first. We have also instructed the agencies to meet with every child in the care of the service provider to ensure that they are safe. They will be met in an area outside of the foster home to ensure that the child can speak freely.

Our government will always focus on the best interests of children, Madam Speaker.

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

#### **Number of Children in Care**

**Mrs. Smith:** If the care of the agency is inappropriate for children coming into care, then why is it appropriate for these kids to continue to stay in the care of this agency?

You would think that this—the minister understands that, but I don't think they fully understand the depth of what is happening to children in care in this agency—not one allegation, but more than one allegation. How many more kids are in that agency that aren't being protected? This government's job is to make sure kids that are in care are protected and that they're not being abused, and they're failing.

When will this minister 'enshare' that—ensure that all safety of kids, especially in the care of B & L, are of the utmost importance; and we want to know when did they know and how many kids are in their care?

**Mrs. Cox:** Our government will continue to work together with the agencies, with all of those individuals to ensure that children are safe in care and we've ordered a moratorium to ensure that there are no more placements into that foster care facility or into that place—that service provider.

Madam Speaker, we will ensure that we take all actions necessary so that children will be safe regardless of where they are here in Manitoba.

### Francophone Rights Solidarity Meeting

**Mr. Dougald Lamont (Leader of the Second Opposition):** Madame la Présidente, tout à travers le Canada, les droits des francophones sont menacés. Le gouvernement conservateur de Doug Ford en Ontario a annulé un projet pour une université francophone. Même au Québec, Denise Bombardier est en train de nier l'existence des francophones en Ontario et au Manitoba. C'est honteux.

Ce samedi, à midi moins le quart, à l'Hôtel de ville de Saint-Boniface, il y a—il y aura un ralliement de solidarité avec les franco-ontariens organisé par l'Association étudiante de l'Université de Saint-Boniface et le Conseil jeunesse provincial du Manitoba.

Est-ce que le premier ministre va nous rejoindre pour célébrer les francophones au Manitoba et en Ontario, et pour condamner les actions du gouvernement conservateur en Ontario?

#### Translation

*Madam Speaker, all across Canada, the rights of Francophones are being threatened. Doug Ford's Conservative government in Ontario cancelled plans for a French language university. Even in Quebec, Denise Bombardier is denying the existence of Francophones in Ontario and in Manitoba. It is shameful.*

*This Saturday, at 11:45 am, in front of St. Boniface City Hall, there is—there will be a rally in solidarity with Franco-Ontarians organized by the Université de Saint-Boniface student association and the francophone youth organization, Conseil jeunesse provincial.*

*Will the Premier join us to celebrate Francophones in Manitoba and Ontario, and to condemn the actions of Ontario's Conservative government?*

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** J'ai commencé à étudier français quand j'avais 50 ans à l'école Saint-Boniface—le Collège de Saint-Boniface. J'ai plus—beaucoup d'affection pour l'institution.

#### Translation

*I started studying French at the St. Boniface school—the Collège de Saint-Boniface when I was 50. I have more—a lot of affection for the institution.*

#### English

Madam Speaker, our government, more importantly, is committed to the goals and values of serving our Francophone residents. We'll continue to be so, and if the member wishes to ask questions of Doug Ford, then he should have run for a seat in the Ontario Legislature.

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

### French Language Services Health and Education Sectors

**Mr. Dougald Lamont (Leader of the Second Opposition):** Le gouvernement Pallister est en train d'éroder les droits des francophones ici au Manitoba sans consultation. La question de provision de services en français n'est pas une question de duplication. D'avoir des services en—d'éducation et de santé, c'est une question de droit et de nécessité.

On a entendu que parfois, des âgés, qui étaient bilingues, qui souffrent de démence perdent leur capacité de comprendre l'anglais. C'est essentiel d'avoir des infirmières et des travailleurs de santé qui savent parler français.

Qu'est-ce que fait ce gouvernement pour améliorer les services de santé et l'éducation en français, et est-ce que ce gouvernement a eu des réunions récentes avec la Division scolaire franco-manitobaine?

#### Translation

*The Pallister government is in the process of eroding Francophones' rights here in Manitoba without consultation. The question of French language services provision is not a question of duplication. Having education and health services is an question of right and necessity.*

*We have heard that sometimes bilingual seniors who suffer from dementia lose their ability to understand English. It is essential to have nurses and health workers who know how to speak French.*

*What is this government doing to improve health and education services in French, and has this government had recent meetings with the Franco-Manitoban school division?*

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** Merci pour la question—la demande.

Le Manitoba sera une province plus sûre, plus forte, plus stable pour tous, Madame.

**Translation**

*Thank you for the question—the request.*

*Manitoba will be a stronger, more secure and more stable province for everyone, Madam Speaker.*

**English**

Included in that, of course, is all our Franco-Manitoba population who depend upon good services, and we will continue to offer those.

But if the member wants us to go backward in time to a time when there was an excessive amount of expenditure at the top of the organization and take money away from front-line services to support that excessively large top of the organization, as is implicit in his preamble, then he should state that position publicly and we'll see if Manitobans like it or not.

We don't. Madam Speaker, what we want to do is ensure that the front-line services people count on are there and that they're strengthened. That's going to be our focus.

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

**Mr. Lamont:** Madame la Présidente, ce gouvernement est en train de remplacer des traducteurs de français à temps plein avec des gens qui travaillent à temps partiel. C'est une fausse économie. C'est un autre exemple où le gouvernement prétend que les compressions vont améliorer les services. Quelques individus sont virés; d'autres sont embauchés à contrat. Avec les conservateurs, c'est toujours quelqu'un d'autre qui en paie le prix.

Ce gouvernement promet qu'ils vont réinjecter une partie des financements ainsi économisés en santé, en éducation, mais les faits donnent une version différente. On voit les compressions sans investissements, parce que ce gouvernement baisse les impôts pour les plus riches.

Pourquoi devrions-nous croire que le gouvernement Pallister va réinvestir quand ils ont manqué déjà tellement de promesses?

**Translation**

*Madam Speaker, this government is in the process of replacing full-time French translators with people who work part-time. This is false economy. This is another example of the government pretending that cuts are going to improve services. A few individuals*

*are fired; others are hired on a contract basis. With the Conservatives, it is always someone else who is paying the price.*

*This government is promising that it is going to redirect a portion of these cost savings to health and education, but the facts paint a different story. We see cuts without investments, because this government is lowering taxes for the richest few.*

*Why should we believe that the Pallister government is going to reinvest when it has already broken so many promises?*

**Mr. Pallister:** For the first time in the history of the province we have each department submitting plans for bilingual services, Madam Speaker, to co-ordinate them, and that is evidence, I think, of our commitment to build on those services.

We understand that the Francophone community is a—both a strong community and a vibrant one, and their history, of course, is closely connected to the history of our entire province, and so we are dedicated to making sure that services are there and that they are improved.

We've amended The Francophone Community Enhancement Support Act. That's a significant commitment. We have expanded our bilingual capacity in government to 805 positions last year versus 744 positions when the NDP left government.

\* (14:20)

All of these improvements, Madam Speaker, are designed to achieve the goals which I believe the member shares with our government, and so I encourage him to support these changes because they are changes for the better.

### **Concordia Hospital ER Closure Diversion of Services**

**Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia):** Through the efforts of experts, front-line workers and community action, this government was forced to concede that their timeline to close the Concordia emergency room was rushed and politically motivated. But despite the reprieve, the government seems to be intent on pushing ahead with the closure next year.

In a press release, the government has said that by next month the hospital would, quote, shift capacity and focus to less serious community hospital care. End quote.

At a hospital that has already suffered from disruption because of this government's cuts, can the

minister explain to the people of northeast Winnipeg exactly what services they can expect to lose at their hospital next month?

**Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living):** Well, Madam Speaker, I thought that the member's question was actually going to be on the \$5.3-million announcement that we made just days ago which directly affects Concordia, that takes into account the capacity for excellence in orthopedic work—hips and knees—that we are going to be able to accelerate in respect of the next annual year.

That means an additional 1,000, at the minimum, procedures. Why? Because we're driving down wait times. Why? Because Manitobans deserve it, and Concordia is part of that solution we're bringing.

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

**Mr. Wiebe:** Madam Speaker, this is a serious question.

People in northeast Winnipeg are confused and they are concerned. Some refuse to believe that the government will really go ahead with the closure while others think that the ER is already closed. They don't understand what services are available to them. And this confusion isn't just less efficient, it can be a matter of life or death.

Now, to add to this confusion, the government's own directive seems to indicate that services are forgoing to be further cut this month, and all at a time when wait times have gone up by 20 per cent since this government has started to close ERs. It seems to be full speed ahead on the cuts at Concordia ER.

Will the minister tell us if services available at Concordia's ER are already being diverted in anticipation of its closure?

**Mr. Friesen:** I thank you for the opportunity to reply to the member's question.

I'm just not exactly sure what the reason is for his uncertainty. He is fully aware that the emergency room at Concordia remains open. He is fully aware that other—further investment's coming to Concordia. He's fully aware of that during this transitional phase in Winnipeg, that Concordia is going to have connected care to follow directly on the heels of their current service. So he knows that there will be a continuum of care to make sure that those Manitobans who live in that part of the city have access to good care.

And, Madam Speaker, that's what we need, that's what we've promised, is better care sooner for all Manitobans, because they deserve it.

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

**Mr. Wiebe:** Madam Speaker, it's this minister's own press release that's causing confusion to the people in northeast Winnipeg at a time when wait times have risen by 20 per cent across the board since this Premier (Mr. Pallister) started closing ERs.

People in northeast Winnipeg are angry; thousands have signed petitions and over 650 have now written to their local MLAs expressing their deep opposition to the closure of the ER. The next phase of cuts means even less care for northeast Winnipeg and a heavy burden on the rest of the system.

The minister's own wait times task force projected a 55 per cent volume increase at St. B and 49 per cent at Grace, and urged him to slow down. But he's still moving full speed ahead.

Now, I want to simply know, on behalf of my constituents: What services can the people of—

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

**Mr. Friesen:** Well, Madam Speaker, there he goes again, just repeating the same old falsehoods that his leader repeats.

Madam Speaker, it is clear that, however you are measuring it, Manitobans understand that wait times in emergency departments are falling. They were static or rising under the NDP for years and years while they threw money at a failing provision of service.

We know now that in the time since we took government, we know that the wait times have fallen almost 25 per cent. Tomorrow the CIHI report will come out. We will be judged according to the results of that. Let's see what that report has to say about wait times in Manitoba compared to everyone else.

### **Construction of Outlet Channels Design Contracts Awarded**

**Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie):** Severe flooding in 2011 and 2014 resulted in extensive damage to homes, businesses and infrastructure in the province as well as emergency evacuations in the communities around Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin, relating—costs alone on 2011 have reached almost \$1.4 billion. The flooding resulted in

thousands of evacuations, disrupting families and lives. The solution is improvements to the outlets for these lakes.

Can the Minister of Infrastructure please inform the House of the importance of this project and how soon can we begin the work?

**Hon. Ron Schuler (Minister of Infrastructure):** I'd like to thank the member for Portage la Prairie for that very important question, because as we all know, for 60 years there was talk about building the channels on Lake Manitoba and, Madam Speaker, under 17 years of the NDP they made commitment after commitment after commitment and delivered on nothing.

Madam Speaker, I am very proud to stand here on behalf of our government and announce that two design contracts have been awarded. The first one is to Hatch Ltd. and their partners for one of the channels, and KGS Group and their partners for the other channel.

And I would just like to point out that, under the leadership of this 'preem' and our government, in two and a half years we got more accomplished than the NDP did in 17 years.

#### **First Nations Land Development Government's Duty to Consult**

**Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook):** This government's disrespect and oftentimes contempt for First Nations is completely unacceptable.

I'd like to table the media release dated yesterday in which it states that no formal consultation has been done by both Canada and Manitoba, along with copies of letters requesting for meetings with this PC government.

It's baffling how they can talk about respectful relationships and consultation frameworks and then continue to patronizingly dictate to First Nations leaderships on how their lands will be used.

Can the minister tell us how much notice she and the Premier (Mr. Pallister) gave to some leaders for the casual meet and greet?

Please note, I do not and will not use the word consultation.

**Hon. Eileen Clarke (Minister of Indigenous and Northern Relations):** I'd like to inform the member opposite that we do not have informal meet and greets. That is not part of our process; that was the

previous government and that has been stated by many First Nations that that's all it ever was.

We have had very significant and in-depth meetings, none of them less than one hour, and there has been consultations done—I know several within my department—with many First Nations. There has not been overlooked, and any that have have been suggested by the federal government that this goes further; not by this government.

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

**Ms. Klassen:** One hour, Madam Speaker, they gave some leaders only one hour notice for the meet and greet.

This Premier is currently in court for undoing years of consultations between the Metis and Hydro, yet they ram through two megaprojects that will cause tremendous damage to the fisheries and ecology of the entire zone—and with zero consultation with those affected. Obviously, this government has no intention of fulfilling its promise to develop a framework to consult.

Will this government immediately properly consult with First Nation members and their respective leaderships?

We'd be happy to teach the PCs what proper consultation looks like.

**Ms. Clarke:** I'd like to further inform the member opposite, I don't know who she speaks to, but as this government, we open our doors to absolutely every First Nation, every indigenous community.

Our meetings or consultations are sincere, and they are ongoing. The door is never closed to our First Nations, and we welcome—any time that they have any type of discussion that they want to hold, we are always available and we make ourselves available.

\* (14:30)

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

**Ms. Klassen:** This Premier and his ministers aren't talking to First Nations people. I'll table the document that outlines their Treaty 2 asks and their simpler solutions to the supposed emergent, yet man-made, flooding issues.

This government continues to drain wetlands, develop on riverbanks and clear natural barriers

that hold water back. That's the real issue that needs to be addressed. It was sickening to witness the provincial government unnaturally flood First Nations communities to protect themselves.

Will the minister of indigenous stand with my people and listen to our solutions because we are the truest stewards of our lands?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** I understand the member is confused about this issue, Madam Speaker, because she is failing to listen to those in these communities around Lake Manitoba who have had their lives put on hold for decades in some cases. I understand also that she is confused in the fact that she does not take into account the displacement of families and whole communities for, in some cases, over half a decade.

These people that she speaks about as her people are Manitobans, too, Madam Speaker, and they deserve to get their lives back and they don't deserve to have this happen again. If she goes to the communities and she listens honestly, she'll find that that's what the people of the Lake Manitoba basin want and deserve. They don't want to have to be moved out of their communities again for any length of time. They would like to be protected against flooding. They would like to have a chance to grow their communities and grow jobs and opportunities and raise their children there. They don't want to raise—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Pallister:** —them in motels. They don't want to be forced to move out as the NDP made them do, and they don't want to be kept away from their homelands for any unnecessary length of time.

They'd like us to get on with protecting them. It's long overdue. The NDP never did it. The Liberals should get behind us and support getting this job done for the good of the people of Manitoba.

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

#### **Lake St. Martin Outlet First Nations Consultations**

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** Just a little note to the Premier: the member for Kewatinook (Ms. Klassen) isn't confused about what impacts on our communities. We live it every day as indigenous peoples and, as well, to the minister for indigenous affairs and to every minister on that side: we are not your indigenous peoples. Please stop saying our indigenous people.

The—we've learned that the Premier, as always—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Ms. Fontaine:** —doesn't know how to work with people and are making it difficult like projects like Lake St. Martin outlet.

Will the Premier stop putting important projects at risk? Will he actually engage in consultation with First Nations, in the truest and most genuine sense, for the Lake St. Martin project?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** The member speaks of empathy, but fails to demonstrate it.

Again, Madam Speaker, real empathy would not be offering up money to stop people from testifying to their concerns about projects. That is what the NDP did for years with indigenous people and with non-indigenous people. They are all our people. They are all Manitobans. They all deserve protection against future flooding. All Manitobans deserve that protection.

There are indigenous, non-indigenous and Metis people around that basin who've had their lives put on hold for generations, Madam Speaker, and in terms of mistaken observations, I heard—I did hear the member for Kewatinook say earlier we didn't help with getting access to broadband, and I should remind her that we've invested over \$20 million in getting broadband to 72 rural and remote communities, including over 30 communities which are located in her riding.

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

Petitions.

**An Honourable Member:** Matter of privilege, Madam Speaker.

#### **MATTER OF PRIVILEGE**

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for Flin Flon, on a matter of privilege.

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

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon):** Madam Speaker, I rise on a matter of privilege. I've risen at the earliest opportunity because the matter that I'm going to discuss took place today during question period.

I raised, as did the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Kinew), raise some serious concerns

that people in Flin Flon have about potential job losses, and I watched the Premier (Mr. Pallister) that's supposed to represent everybody in the province laugh in the face of those job losses, basically laughed at the people of Flin Flon. But that's not the most egregious thing that he's done today.

Madam Speaker, it's clear that this Premier has absolutely zero respect for working people in this province when he stands up and makes fun of people who push a broom for a living.

Madam Speaker, he might think it's fun to poke fun at me, and he can poke away all he wants because what he'll find is that's not going to intimidate me and it's not going to cow me into silence. It might work to be a bully with some people; not going to work so good on this side.

This Premier does not respect people in Flin Flon. He's attempted to intimidate, belittle me, their representative, rather than answer questions.

Madam Speaker, the House of Commons Procedure and Practice on page 89 makes clear that members of a legislature shall be free from intimidation or molestation in the discharge of their duties. This Premier's petty insults and cowardly refusal to even address the concerns of tens of thousands of residents of this province show clearly his desire to block the peoples' representatives from doing their duty. The Premier's actions show great disrespect; and this, again, is the first opportunity I've had to raise the issue.

So I move, seconded by the member from Minto, that the Premier—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker, I'll start again.

I move, seconded by the member from Minto, that the Premier be condemned and censured by this House for his refusal to address the concerns of the people of Flin Flon in a respectful manner.

Thank you.

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

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader):** Madam Speaker, I won't comment on the

issue of whether or not the matter's been raised at the earliest opportunity. I will comment on the prima facie case that clearly has not been established by the member.

He did not raise any particular rights or privileges of any substance that have been—he has been impacted on.

I think what he is, of course, most concerned about and upset about, Madam Speaker, is, in fact, when he looks on this side of the House—and he's seen it demonstrated many times—that this is a caucus, this is a government that is made up of people who have for the majority of their lives defended working people. It's a caucus, it is a government that is made up of people who come from extraordinary backgrounds and who've overcome extraordinary challenges to reach the positions that they have.

Madam Speaker, I think of people on our side of the House who were single mothers—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Goertzen:** —Madam Speaker, and who have risen to high positions within government, who take their experiences to this Chamber.

But to take it into the broader part of Manitoba, Madam Speaker, I think of many on this side of the House who didn't grow up with great means—and that would include but not be limited to our Premier, and—who has then spent his entire life, whether that was in public life or private life trying to help those overcome challenges that he himself has been able to overcome.

And we've heard the members opposite on that side of the House belittle those experiences, Madam Speaker, to try to poke fun at people who have done well in life and overcome those challenges and then, in turn, tried to help others.

I think the member opposite, what is really bothering him is he has some sense of guilt, Madam Speaker. He is upset because he looks at this side of the House and he sees people who would have not just made a better life for themselves, but who are dedicating their lives to make their—lives better for other people in Manitoba. That is truly what bothers that member. That is truly what is upsetting that member.

I would ask him not to try to condemn people on this House, but to try—in this side of the House—but to

try to follow their example. He would be a better person if he did that, Madam Speaker.

\* (14:40)

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (Second Opposition House Leader):** Madam Speaker, I have a few comments on the matter of privilege.

Madam Speaker, it is a matter of privilege when MLAs and when people in communities like Flin Flon are not properly respected. It is a situation at the moment which is extremely difficult for people who are living in Flin Flon. They are facing the end of the mining activity in Flin Flon and the associated activity and the loss of many jobs and a great deal of concern about the future of their community.

Added to this, there has been a recent change which has taken away obstetric services.

People in Flin Flon are very, very concerned about the future and they have a right to be respected in this Chamber, Madam Speaker, by all of us.

Those are my comments on this matter of privilege.

We in the Liberal party will support the people of Flin Flon and the members in this Chamber because respect is very important.

**Madam Speaker:** The member for Assiniboia, on the same matter of privilege.

**Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia):** On the issue of timeliness, I think the member from Flin Flon has brought this up as soon as he could.

There seems to be some philosophical thought on this matter of privilege which is beyond our normal practice, but I will just take advantage of the indulgence that has already been taken.

And, yes, intimidation does happen in this place, but if you are intimidated you have allowed yourself to be intimidated. Intimidation in this context, not the context that's in the House of Commons parliamentary manual, but in this context if you're intimidated that's on you—that's on you.

Now, obstruction, that is also an issue, but I think that's generally referred to physical or people obstructing or not having the resources to provide a job—to do job as an MLA.

On the issue of representation of people, you know, Madam Speaker, people talk about Flin Flon. I love Flin Flon. I have friends that work in Flin Flon. I was in the mining industry.

But the issue of mining I brought up as a matter of urgent public importance in the last session. I'm surprised that people are surprised. They've—everyone in this place has known what is coming down the track, and it's not good. I've written about this issue in publications. I'll be speaking about it in my reply to the throne. This is not news. The government has a mining strategy, as we heard from the minister yesterday, of listing off a few elements on the periodic table and saying, yes, this is our strategy. Well, it's not good enough, either.

And the people of St. James have been disrespected with this whole Vimy Arena sale when the government has all sorts of assets all over the province that could be utilized.

But, Madam Speaker, I think the overall tone is what the member from Flin Flon is trying to bring to attention. We are not here to represent ourselves. We're here to represent people, people who vote for us, and if you can't do that, get out, or the people will take you out.

But, really, get out if you—and there's different points of view; that's fair. Represent the people and show the people respect, including, Madam Speaker, at standing committees. Don't pull out your BlackBerrys, colleagues, and play Angry Birds or whatever the heck you do on those things while people are presenting.

And, Madam Speaker, we shouldn't be listening to all the presentations and written submissions and then immediately vote right after the presentations as if nothing ever happened. We need to show respect, we need to demonstrate respect, and if that's the intent of the member from Flin Flon's comments, I'll support that.

**Madam Speaker:** I understand that this is a very difficult issue for members who rightly hold strong views on the topic. But on the matter of privilege raised by the honourable member for Flin Flon (Mr. Lindsey), I would like to inform the House that this is clearly a difference of the facts.

Past Manitoba Speakers have ruled on several similar occasions that a dispute between two members as to allegations of fact does not constitute a breach of privilege. O'Brien and Bosc advise, on page 145 of House of Commons Procedure and Practice, that if a question of privilege involves a disagreement between two or more members as to facts, the Speaker typically rules that such a dispute does not prevent members from fulfilling

their parliamentary functions, nor does such a disagreement breach the collective privileges of the House.

Beauchesne's, citation 31(1), advises that a dispute arising between two members as to allegations of fact does not fulfill the conditions of parliamentary privilege.

Joseph Maingot, on page 223 of the second edition of *Parliamentary Privilege in Canada* states, and I quote: A dispute between two members about questions of facts said in debate does not constitute a valid question of privilege because it is a matter of debate. End quote.

I would therefore respectfully rule that the honourable member does not have a prima facie case of matter of privilege.

### PETITIONS

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for Assiniboia, I think had indicated he wished to speak to this.

#### Vimy Arena

**Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to the petition is as follows:

(1) The residents of St. James and other areas of Manitoba—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Fletcher:** —are concerned with the intention expressed by the provincial government to use the Vimy Arena site as a Manitoba Housing project.

(2) The Vimy Arena site is in the middle of a residential area near many schools, churches, community clubs and senior homes, and neither the provincial government nor the City of Winnipeg considered better suited locations in rural, semi-rural or industrial sites such as the St. Boniface Industrial Park, the 20,000 acres at saint—at CentrePort or existing properties such as the Shriners Hospital or old Children's Hospital on Wellington Crescent.

(3) The provincial government is exempt from any zoning requirements that would have existed if the land was owned by the City. This exemption bypasses community input and due diligence and ignores better uses of the land which would be consistent with a residential area.

(4) There are no standards that one would expect for a treatment centre. The Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living has stated that the Department of Health had no role to play in the land acquisition for the housing project for use of—as an addiction—a drug addiction facility.

(5) The Manitoba Housing project initiated by the provincial government changes the fundamental nature of the community. Including park—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Fletcher:** —and rec uses, concerns of the residents of St. James and others regarding public safety, property values and their way of life are not properly being addressed.

(6) The concerns of the residents of St. James are being ignored while obvious other locations in wealthier neighbourhoods, such as Tuxedo and River Heights, have not been considered for the Manitoba Housing project, even though there are hundreds of acres of land available for development at Kapyong Barracks or parks like Heubach Park that share the same zoning as the Vimy Arena site.

(7) The Manitoba Housing project and the operation of a drug treatment centre fall outside the mandatory mandate of the Manitoba Housing renewal corporation.

(8) The provincial government does not have a co-ordinated plan for addiction treatment in Manitoba as it currently underfunds treatment centres which are running far under capacity and potential.

\* (14:50)

(9) The community has been misled regarding the true intentions of Manitoba Housing as land is being transferred for a 50-bed facility, even though the project is clearly outside of Manitoba Housing responsibility.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to take necessary steps to ensure that Vimy Arena site is not used for an addiction facility.

(2) To urge the provincial government to take the necessary steps to ensure the preservation of public land along Sturgeon Creek for the purposes of parkland and recreational activities for public use, including being an important component of the

Sturgeon Creek Greenway Trail and the Sturgeon Creek ecosystem under the current designation of PR2 for the 255 Hamilton Ave. location at the Vimy Arena site, and to maintain the land to continue to be designated for parks and recreation activity and communities.

This has been signed by many Manitobans.

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

#### **Concordia Hospital Emergency Room**

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

And the background to this petition is 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 and 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 who 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 closure—sorry, 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 that families and seniors in northeast Winnipeg and the surrounding areas have timely access to quality health-care services.

And this petition is signed by many Manitobans.

#### **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 slashed budgets and cancelled projects for northern communities, making it harder for families to get the primary 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 6, 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 will be reinstated.

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

(8) There has been no commitment from this 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 this 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 Flin Flon General 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 Lindsey Ballantyne, Victoria Bounier, Sarinal Penner and many other 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 use of methamphetamine 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.

(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 Ron Brown, Ron Wilson, Jeanette Wilson and many other Manitobans, Madam Speaker.

#### **Gender Neutrality**

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

Gender, sexuality and gender identity are protected characteristics of human rights, both federally and provincially, in Manitoba, Ontario, Alberta, British Columbia, and soon will be in Saskatchewan, Yukon and other places in Canada. These governments have realized the need for this option on identification for the benefit of people who identify or who are identified by others as intersex, third gender, transgender, genderqueer or non-binary.

Identification and government documents should reflect gender neutrality to prevent issues that may arise from intentional bias on gender, and misgendering. The people described above face anxiety and discrimination in many aspects of day-to-day life, such as interactions with health-care professionals, interactions with persons of authority, accessing government services, applying for employment.

\* (15:00)

Gender neutrality describes the idea that policies, language and the other social institutions should avoid distinguishing roles according to people's gender or sex in order to avoid discrimination arising from impressions that there are social roles for which one gender is more suited than others.

Many newcomers to Canada may already have gender-neutral ID. Many indigenous persons are coming to identify as two-spirit as the effects of colonization are lessening, and this needs to be addressed in the process of reconciliation.

Being forced to accept an assigned gender affects children and newborns as they grow and become part of society. There are many psychological benefits for transgender and non-binary people to be allowed to develop without the constraints put upon them by having their gender assigned based on purely physical attributes.

The consideration to have a third option like X or Other on documents was on the previous provincial government's radar for several years, but the current provincial government has not taken steps to implement it.

The City of Winnipeg is actively making its forms reflective of gender neutrality in respect to all persons who work for or come into contact with that government.

The federal government now issues passports and is educating personnel about the correct language and references for non-binary persons.

An Other option existed on enumeration forms for Elections Manitoba in 2016, was easily accepted and provided a framework to provide accurate statistics of those who do not identify under the current binary system.

The foresight, along with training and making changes on required forms, acknowledges and accepts persons who fall outside the binary gender so that governments and people can more effectively interact with one another and reduce the anxieties of everyone involved.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

1) To urge the provincial government to immediately begin implementation of plans to convert systems and forms to be more inclusive of

two-spirit and other non-binary individuals, whether it be to include a third gender option or no requirement for gender on forms unless medically or statistically necessary, including health cards and birth certificates.

To urge the provincial government to immediately instruct the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation to offer a third gender option or no gender requirement for licences or any other form of provincial identification.

To urge the provincial government to instruct Manitoba Health, Seniors and Active Living to offer the option of Manitoba Health cards with no gender in order to reduce the anxieties of transgender and non-binary persons accessing the health-care system as a first step.

To consider revisiting legislation that may need updating to meet the needs of its citizens in this regard.

Signed by Leadam Engel, Blair Peters, Rob Ferguson and many others.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

### THRONE SPEECH (Fifth Day of Debate)

**Madam Speaker:** Resuming debate on the motion of the honourable member for Southdale (Mr. Smith) and the amendment and subamendment thereto, standing in the name of the honourable member for River Heights, who has 17 minutes remaining.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Madam Speaker, I was talking about our community forums, and the second and third community forums I held in River Heights dealt with preventative care. This is an area which, sadly, has lacked attention under the current government.

It is an area where the government continues to lump prevention with acute services, a scenario where acute care always wins. We need a separate provincial preventative services plan which involves other departments to address the underlying causes of ill health like poverty and homelessness, as well as looking at preventive of specific diseases. We are still waiting for the government's plans to address poverty and homelessness. These are clearly not priority areas for this talk and all—and no action government. Furthermore, into its third winter, this

government still has no plans, even for warming shelters.

The preventative services plan also needs approaches for specific diseases. We now have about 120,000 Manitobans with diabetes and many more with pre-diabetes, one of the highest rates in Canada, but a plan to prevent diabetes is still missing in action. Support for insulin pumps for adults with type I diabetes to prevent complications is also needed.

Manitoba and Saskatchewan have far higher rates of HIV than other provinces as a result of poor planning and action by the former NDP government and the present Conservative one, yet a plan to prevent HIV and AIDS is still missing.

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

With lung disease there is great potential to save dollars by preventing COPD and decreasing the need for hospitalization. Here, again, the government is missing in action. Preventing dental caries—government missing in action.

The Throne Speech talks about the government's much-delayed approach to addictions and brain and mental health. While in opposition, the government took no time to develop plans to be implemented in their first 100 days of government. Instead, we have to wait more than 100 days before even having a plan at all in so many areas.

There's also underspending on mental health and a lack of attention to the needs of additional psychological services and a lack of attention to the needs to employ peer-support workers.

The meth epidemic is having a widespread impact. In many areas, we're seeing the increased number of newborn babies showing signs of drug intoxication and drug withdrawal. We're seeing dramatic increases in costs related to the increase in syphilis in Manitoba, much of which is now being attributed to the unchecked meth epidemic.

We need a comprehensive approach involving more detox facilities, more treatment services, and stabilization 'services' to ensure continued support for meth addicts after treatment so that they don't immediately return to using meth.

There's also little focus on prevention in the meth epidemic, a lack of education in schools, a need for mental health and addictions education to be integrated with the K-to-12 curriculum, as the Manitoba Teachers' Society's pushed for. And,

of course, this government has opposed safe consumption sites.

Brain health: Bringing together mental health, addictions, neuroscience, neurodevelopmental disorders, is being forgotten by this government. This year, we worked with families of individuals at the Lions Prairie Manor to address the problems that have come to the forefront there. I keep in touch with the families. They tell me that not much has changed.

Recently, a resident had to call for help in being toileted, and he called for an hour before there was any response. Another resident got very cold feet because his reclining chair was left unplugged for hours, so he couldn't raise his feet.

It seems the Conservatives are good at cutting and talking and privatizing, but not very good at getting positive done—things done for Manitobans. It's too bad, because the Lions Prairie Manor is in the Premier's (Mr. Pallister) former home community, and it should have had more and better attention than this.

Too many forced mandatory overtime at the Lions Prairie Manor have meant some staff are leaving. Overall issues with the management of personal-care homes, including ensuring that there are sufficient beds with the development of new bed spaces, is not happening.

The Conservative government appears determined to make the mistake of privatizing the Lifeflight Air Ambulance service without considering the quality of emergency services that people have had and should continue to have. The government should do better.

We have numerous contaminated sites: Weston, St. Boniface—new results almost every day showing continued contamination. It's unbelievable the neglect shown by previous governments dating back to 1988, neglect with respect to the prevention of health issues in citizens in the area.

Lead's been associated with neurological consequences as well as cancer. It's important that we are doing better in this—addressing contaminated sites more quickly and notifying residents more quickly.

We are seeing mandatory overtime for nurses not only in the Lions prairie lodge, but causing stress and putting patients at risk at St. Boniface. Morale is low in newborn nurseries at St. B and the Health

Sciences Centre. There's poor management of human resources.

There's also a lack of attention to nurse practitioners, who could be very helpful in addressing many of the issues we're concerned about.

In regard to emergency rooms, what we're seeing is identical to what happened under the NDP. There was a short-term decrease in emergency room wait times and then a levelling off and then an increase in wait times. And what we're seeing now is that increase in wait times already with the government only having been in office for two and a half years.

At CancerCare Manitoba, the government should build on the successes of CancerCare and put in place other 'effeshtive' specialty networks rather than seeking to cut and cut and cut with CancerCare as it's doing elsewhere.

\* (15:10)

It's a mistake to cut programs which work. The government has cut sleep apnea supports, outpatient physiotherapy, occupational therapy services, obstetric care in Flin Flon, special drug supports for those with cystic fibrosis and diabetes, lactation services, IV services, mature women's health centre—time and time again, instead of looking at the quality of what's there, the government has cut. The government, in its Throne Speech, didn't even mention Pharmacare and a national—supporting a national program.

In education, we've had a review coming, but it's been delayed—in fact, delayed so long that it must have one of the lowest priorities of all areas. Instead of working with school trustees, however, to improve learning, the government is considering option to disrupt and cut the ability of school divisions to provide good education services. When it came to agreeing to have a disability education standard, the government has not yet said yes. It is behind.

We have had poor quality in the budget consultation questions related to Education. The questions are all about cutting spending and nothing about the quality of education services. So far there's no vision for the future of education in Manitoba by this government at a time of considerable technological change. At a time when students need to be inspired, students are being left behind.

We have areas of need. For example, we heard this morning of requirements for standards for education and training for individuals looking after

children and adults with intellectual disabilities. Instead of advancing positively, this government has cut services to those in the francophone community. It has cut the health care coverage for international students. It has cut the tuition income tax rebate for students. Education under this government is suffering rather than prospering.

In sustainable development, it is of great concern that there was no mention of Lake Winnipeg in the Throne Speech, and the need to address the removal of phosphorus from Winnipeg sewage and any provincial-municipal co-operation, which is badly needed, to reduce the dumping of raw sewage from Winnipeg into the Red and Assiniboine rivers.

Commercial fishers have indeed raised concerns about the algae and sewage, which have been inundating the waters of Lake Winnipeg near Grindstone. The fishers talk of the lake being as thick as soup, or part of the lake being like a sewage lagoon. Fishers describe not even being able to get their nets up, there's so much algae in them. Further, fishers talk of the fact that when their nets fill up with algae, there are no fish caught and they lose money. And yet this government has not been acting. And, rather than acting, have engaged in the politics of delay and stall, for which the government is known so well.

They have delayed the deadline for reducing phosphorus in the city's North End sewage treatment plant from 2014 to 2019. Delayed for 27 years, the timeline for fixing the problem of ending the dumping of Winnipeg's raw sewage into the Assiniboine and Red rivers through the combined sewers—the Pallister has done everything it can to delay rather than to act, and the result is a major threat to—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order. Order.

I just want to remind the member to 'alther' use the First Minister's name—or, for—First Minister's—as the individual or the constituency or the title.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Mr. Speaker, it is a well-known custom in this House to refer to a Pallister government or the Filmon government, or various other governments—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** I just want to remind the member that it wasn't—there was no government after the Pallister. So—that's what we all heard. So.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

There are concerns about the walleye and the sauger populations—Pallister government is delaying eco-certifying the fishery. It is delaying making sure there's good management of the fishery.

We know that tourism is important. Indeed, one of the major reasons for the increase in tourism—\$100 million in 2017—was the increase in anglers visiting Lake Winnipeg. If the government is not looking after the walleye and the sauger, we're not going to have the same tourism that we have been having. And we won't see the benefits, however much the government supports tourism; if there are no fish there, it won't bring people.

The government has talked and talked in the election and for two and a half years after the election about putting a price on pollution. But after all that talk, there's been no action. In fact, the Conservative government voted against a made-in-Manitoba climate change plan—indeed, tearing up two thirds of their own bill 16.

In contrast, Liberals voted for a made-in-Manitoba climate change plan. The government has flip-flopped on a tax on pollution, even when others are arguing that they more free-market approach would use the tax on pollution as part of this and Nobel economists are saying this is the way that we need to go.

In agriculture, the climate change plan has been missing in action. 'Infeed'—deed, the government appears afraid to even mention the words nitrous oxide, one of the important greenhouse gases accounting for 15 per cent of the greenhouse gas emissions in Manitoba.

There's also a lack of a plan to quantify adequately the carbon stored. Farmers could be getting major benefits if the government acted. But we need the science, we need the commitment, to be able to monitor the production of nitrous oxide and the storage of carbon so that we can claim the credits, we can claim that we have actually made a difference to the climate here in Manitoba. And, without action in this, we are left, you know, swinging in the wind rather than being in a place where we can effectively act on climate change.

There are no mentions, indeed, of efforts to work with farmers to remove—reduce emissions from agriculture and to increase storage of greenhouse gas and how this will be monitored.

When it comes to Child and Family Services, this government is continuing to claw back the

Children's Special Allowances. Day after day, we hear continuing issues around B & L Homes and other areas.

When it comes to infrastructure, the Heavy Construction Association has cried out, as have many municipal leaders, that this government is underinvesting in bridges and roads. It has frozen the transit budget, has removed the provincial commitment to cost sharing of transit funding, indeed, is going backwards rather than forwards.

When it comes to disabilities, this government is behind in moving forward on the disability standards, and when it comes to housing, the government is not adequately including building codes and addressing that area of housing.

We are not seeing a realistic economic plan for the North, for First Nations, for Inuit, for Metis people. There have been cuts to the northern transportation program. In child care, we still have very long wait-lists and waiting times, and there's not been a substantive effort in this area to really address in a way that would be effective.

There's been poor management of the Provincial Nominee Program. Yesterday I heard that it was being made—managed so that it was more difficult for manufacturing businesses in places like Winkler to attract the staff that they need.

We are not moving forward sufficiently with reconciliation. Indigenous issues—First Nation, Metis, Inuit—are on the backbench rather than on the front bench in terms of being able to work effectively in these areas.

We're seeing cuts to restorative justice program. We're seeing inadequate attention to the Conflict of Interest Commissioner's recommendations. We're seeing poor management of Manitoba Hydro. We're seeing rising costs in seniors care programs. We're seeing many other broken promises, for example, the promise to reduce—increase the personal income tax exemption. We are not seeing the effort we need to make sure that every First Nation community in the boreal forest has an effective fire prevention plan.

And we are seeing that communities in the North, like Flin Flon and Thompson, are threatened in terms of their future. People in Flin Flon are feeling in very difficult straits, in very difficult times. They are lacking their obstetric services now. They are not seeing what the future is, because this government is standing on the sidelines and not being respectful, at least of people who are hurting.

There needs to be not only these plans, but plans for many other communities in the North, and those plans could make a difference.

\* (15:20)

So, in summary, Mr. Speaker, we've seen a government which is fond of talking, but does little in terms of real action except when it comes to cuts and reviews—cuts and reviews. That is the hallmark of this government. It's too bad, because Manitobans should deserve much better.

Thank you, Madam—Mr. Speaker. Merci. Miigwech.

**Mr. Mohinder Saran (The Maples):** I rise in the House today in response to the Throne Speech.

First of all, I thank my constituents who gave me the opportunity to serve them. My constituency office is one of the busiest MLA offices. My constituency office was the only office of any elected official in Canada which is also open on Saturday. Now a few others have followed me.

Every day at least between 10 to 15 people drop in to get help. I appreciate the CAs, Mr. Gurbax Brar, Mrs. Sanjit Sidhu, Mrs. Aman Gill, Mrs. Manpreet Sidhu and volunteers who are always enthusiastic to help the constituents and beyond. When I say beyond, that means people come to our office from all over Manitoba, especially immigrants or newcomers. Being myself an immigrant, I can understand their problems better as I have gone through those kinds of problems when I came to Canada. I came as a visitor, applied for immigration, got rejected and got successful during appeal.

Being an immigrant, when you come over here, it doesn't matter what your qualifications are, you do whatever you have to do. And I was never ashamed of pushing a broom because I come from the culture whose—our first teacher said work honestly and help the others. I think democracies are—and—the best in the world. That principle is being followed. You work and tax is deducted, and that is used to help the needies.

When I read this Throne Speech I did not find specific solutions of basic problems. I looked on this speech on a few different angles. I thought instead I should bring in the attention of government to some important issues of constituents and newcomers, issues like: Seniors' School Tax Rebate; immigrant seniors' live-in caregivers' needs; washrooms in the parks; constituency's local issues like speeding up

construction of new schools, the need of a new community centre in the area; developing Maples Community Centre for the needs of a diverse community; and twinning of Leila Avenue. Also, quite often I am made aware of the issues of health coverage for people on super visa and students.

Now let me tackle those issues one by one which are missing partially or fully in the Throne Speech.

Let me talk about super visa visitors. When those visitors come over here, they come either sponsored by their children and they come under a super visa. That means they can at a time stay over here for two years, but their insurance is only for emergency purposes, and because of that their sponsor—they are under stress because they cannot get proper health care—regular—which other immigrants can get, although those children are paying taxes. So I think in this Throne Speech our—could be added to the Throne Speech that issue can be tackled.

I don't care, even those people under super visas—they have to pay some kind of fees, but they should be covered. And that way their children will be stress-free, and they are being taken care of. Because those people can stay 10 years and two years at a time, so it's quite expensive to have emergency insurance. And all of them pay \$2,000—\$3,000 a year, but still they are not applicable.

So that's why I think that's important and, under the health, I think this government should consider—make this part of their Throne Speech so that those people under super visas, even the students, they could be covered.

Further, I raised this question a few times. I—we need culturally sensitive personal-care homes and senior residences. It's very important. People in their old age are in their last days. They are not bound to houses, their homes, and they are—don't—get bored at home, because their family is there working and they are alone.

It's better they have people like them and they can talk to them. They can have control, kind of—they can reduce that isolation. And it's very important people are able to speak the language—some seniors, when they come from the other countries, they are not able to speak English. And, if there's not culturally sensitive personal-care homes or residences, they are not able to communicate.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, today I was listening about how important that French people—that

there are people serving them who speak French. Similarly, it's very important that people come from other countries, and their language also could be taught in the schools. A few times, I emphasized that there should be, other than French and English, there should be a third compulsory language.

And, for example, those children, if they learn a third language, for example, Punjabi or Tagalog, so, whenever they get professional and—in health care, they will be able to communicate with those seniors. Those seniors will be able to communicate with them.

So it's very important that portion is added to the school curriculum, but that's not happening. And I—a few times, I pointed out to the Education Minister, and they talk about expenses. And money is not everything. We have to take care of the people, and that's not happening.

And there's another thing I noticed. There's—when people immigrate from other countries, they leave behind their family, their parents and other relatives. And, also, they have some kinds of legal obligations, because back home they may have property. And, in the court system, it takes so long.

And, over here, if a person is working, he gets only two hour—or two weeks' paid vacation. And, if they go overseas, it takes about—go and come back, it takes about four days just for travelling. They're not [*inaudible*] for that much time, so they can take care of their parents' situation or legal situation. So that, again, should be part of the—this Throne Speech. They should add this item so that that problem can be solved.

\* (15:30)

What I suggest, this government should make some improvement in the labour law. In the labour law they should put in, if somebody has to go for those kind of situations and it should be four extra weeks at least, a leave of absence without pay so those people may not lose their jobs.

Also I noticed the employers who hire and train people off disability, they are doing a great job. Those people of employ should be given some incentive like training expenses on the job or some tax rebate. That's I think very important so people on disability can be taken care of and employers should be awarded for doing that.

Other problem I see which we are not—government is not providing child-care facilities.

People are—child-care facilities, child care in workplaces are available in daytime, but on the other side—shift at night, evening, they are not available. Perhaps government should create this kind of system where in one particular area there should be a child-care place for 24 hours so the workers who want to—who work on odd jobs, odd times, they can be worry-free. They can drop their kids over there and they can contribute to the economy.

This speech mentioned about pausing the gaming expansion, and this will be solved if government provides funds to culturally sensitive the get-together places. People will receive socialization by sitting and talking together and they won't need gambling games. So this is very important that government provides such funds so that different cultural groups, they can have their own community places where they can have—where they can have their own community places so they can go and socialize with each other and that's another important item.

Also, I already talked about Seniors' School Tax Rebate. Our previous government provided a—started the school tax rebate. It was \$235 to first year, then \$470 to second year. Then the government promised to provide a \$2,300 school tax rebate for the seniors, and this way the seniors can stay longer in their houses and it will save lots of money to the government and other sources.

But this government, PC, also promised they are going to do the same thing the first previous government was doing in case they are in power, but they did not do that. So—but after the election the Premier (Mr. Pallister) clawed the seniors' rebate back to a mere \$470 annually, and that small amount is only relevant to seniors making \$40,000 per year, per family—about \$40,000. It decreases as income increases. At \$63,500, family income, it becomes zero. Less than \$40,000, there's also clawback.

So this is not helping Manitoba seniors at all. I have spoken with many senior constituents after the election in 2007, who need more to be able to afford to stay in their family home or to keep up their social, mental and physical wellness activities, which actually reduces their use of the provincial health-care system.

So that's a very important issue, to take care of the seniors. I hope this government rethinks it and provide that rebate to the seniors.

And other—they also—I introduced one resolution to take care of immigrant seniors because we know immigrant seniors, sometimes they have communication to communicate in English, so—and also they have kind of 'considerancy' to have live-in care workers over here. So they should be allowed to bring their relatives or anybody whom they can trust.

So the resolution was to ask the federal government to remove the Labour Market Impact Assessment, which is called LMIA, and a relaxation in income requirement to bring in the foreigner live-in care worker to take of a senior. Still, training and experience was supposed to be the same for foreign live-in care workers what is for the Canadian resident workers. So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was hoping that it will be passed unanimously, but the government MLAs talked it out. They made the excuse that we should not rush in this matter.

I don't think that is a valid argument because we were suggesting to the federal government if we had passed the resolution, then the federal government was further to think about it. This was simply an excuse. They won't—they don't want to understand the immigrant senior situation. They ignore the fact that immigrant seniors have culture and language barriers.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that was disappointing. Actually, it could have saved money to the government if the seniors get a live-in care worker from a foreign country, they will be paying their wages, and I also suggested, even if the senior not able to pay their wages, then their children or other relatives should be able to pay it. So it was a win-win situation, but I think because the majority of the MLAs not—I—maybe one or two could be immigrant on the government side. So they don't understand the situation. If they don't understand the situation, that's okay, but I am willing to sit with them and we should find the solution, and that's very important.

So I hope this government will think innovatively and they come up with the solution that start—they should start understanding the immigrant people situation. They left their country. They want to succeed over here. They left their culture and now their needs—they go through a very tough time, and they need understanding; they need help from this government, and this government should listen—immigrants carefully because they're contributing to the economy and they are one part of the—this culture and this society. They should not be ignored. And

they are willing workers. They don't mind to push the broom. Whatever they have to do, they will do it.

\* (15:40)

Thank you very much.

**Mr. Ted Marcelino (Tyndall Park):** It is always a good opportunity for me to vent my anger and, at the same time, my hopes and my dreams whenever I stand up and speak in these august chambers.

This forum is the only place where we could speak our minds and, of course, take everything that we see and hear as something that's allowed in the expression of our faith in the type of government, which is what we call democracy. At least, nobody's trying to shoot me down yet.

And coming from a background of law enforcement when I was younger, and then becoming a lawyer in the old country before I arrived in this God-given piece of heaven which I call Manitoba, my greatest pain was to see the destruction of most of the infrastructure and framework of government service delivery, in the sense that the current government, in its Throne Speech of a week ago, tries to give us an agenda—an agenda that says: continue with the dismantling of our health-care system. It is a shameful attempt on the part of this government to keep undoing what they know, or at least what they feel, is wrong morally.

The—I would say that from the time that the Progressive Conservative government took power, they wielded it and they used it like a sledgehammer to our health-care system. It involved the closing down of Misericordia hospital at first, then Victoria hospital. And then, by next year, we are told that it will be Concordia Hospital, and then Seven Oaks General Hospital.

And it's as if the war has been declared on the residents and populace of Winnipeg. But if I were to be a little bit more cynical about it, I see that most of those medical facilities that are being closed are situated in constituencies that are represented by New Democrat MLAs. Concordia—Concordia Hospital, its planned foreclosure. Victoria hospital, I think it's in Fort Garry-Riverview and Fort Rouge—

**An Honourable Member:** And Fort Richmond.

**Mr. Marcelino:** —and Fort Richmond. But Misericordia, it's in Wolseley, and Seven Oaks is in the northwest corner of our city, and that's where I grew old. And it's just hurtful and very cruel that

those members or residents of those areas are forsaken, in the sense that we have not really done too much to oppose this government's dismantling of the health-care system.

I say that there was an orchestrated attack by the band of Conservatives against the poor and the vulnerable. It began during the first budget that was presented in this House, and the attack that was initiated, the war that was declared against the poor and the vulnerable, it was done with a callousness, a viciousness and cruelty that we have never seen in our lifetimes.

Those who are working in those facilities have complained that instead of being told that they are being cut, they were told that their job is being deleted. And when we come to think of the English word delete, it is a—it is an—a word that really shows the unfeeling and the callousness of the way that those jobs were treated.

And I remember clearly that during the leaders' debates during the 2016 campaign, the then-candidate, now Premier (Mr. Pallister) of our province, promised that there will be no front-line job losses, that front-line people in our service-delivery systems will be protected. And, apparently, they are not protected. Somebody lied during the campaign. Somebody misled during the campaign—and I'd say that taking a broader view in what's happening with our province, we are doomed. We are doomed because the government programs that work were set aside or given a new name, or relabelled and chopped on the side.

Where there used to be programs that deliver more services to our people, those programs, because they do not bear the imprint of the Pallister government, were, well, set aside, thrown in the garbage. And people who were recipients of those benefits of being a Manitoban who is in dire need were ignored, set aside like garbage.

\* (15:50)

And I strongly would suggest that that's wrong. It is wrong. I think it is never the intention of the Progressive Conservative Party to be the party that really hurts people. I think it's just that the approach has been very cruel and hurtful.

We are suffering from a lack of compassion from this government and its leaders. All that they are worried about is how much they are going to cut from the bones of the skeleton of the health-care system that they have targeted. From cystic fibrosis

to CancerCare, the range of cost cutting is ad infinitum, and it hurts people. And I could hear the member from Fort Richmond chiming in. *[interjection]* And, when Victoria hospital was being closed, no peep—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Marcelino:** —nothing from that member. *[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Marcelino:** But we will survive. We know we will survive. We have seen this before, and we have survived before.

During the 2011 flooding and when the Hoop and Holler junction was opened up—

**An Honourable Member:** Do you know where it is?

**Mr. Marcelino:** Yes, I know where it is. The Minister for Growth, Enterprise and Trade—

**An Honourable Member:** Just woke up.

**Mr. Marcelino:** —tries to chirp in, waking up from his deep slumber.

At the count of 1, 2, 3, go back to sleep, please.

Resiliency is characterized—has the capacity to bounce forward—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Marcelino:** —and not bounce back from a position of dire straits, to a stable platform where you could grow again. It is one that allows the human spirit to feel the pain and the hurt and use that same pain and hurt as symbols and words of the soul in order to grow again.

We will survive. All of this program cutting, all of this bare-bones delivery of service, all of this will come to pass maybe in two years, I hope. Two years is too long. I hope that somebody decides to run for federal leadership and win. I was hoping and praying that our current Premier becomes the Prime Minister of Canada and leave this province alone.

We have hope, we provide vision and we have ambitions, and we have dreams, and this government has not done anything to help us achieve those dreams. What they talk about is always, how much are we saving, how much are we cutting, how much are we earning? *[interjection]* And, when the member from Morris chirps in, it's always about money.

And they're a—they are really good. I think the Progressive Conservative communications staffers are good. They have attempted to come up with slogans that really appeal to the emotions of their core supporters. And they use most improved. Sounds like Tide. You know that commercial for the detergent? Most improved detergent. And they happen to have, also, that approach to governing, with language that appeals to those who use the four D's. You know what I'm talking about, Mr. Deputy Speaker? They use decline, and then they use decay and then decay and then—what else was the other one? I can't remember any more. But it is all slogans, no substance, all advertising, no substance.

What we see is austerity measures that come directly from a one-man show. During those days and during those times that we were supposed to be hearing a Throne Speech that provide vision, goals, solutions and bridges to fill the gaps that exist in government programs, what we hear is propaganda. It is propaganda in the sense that they keep on repeating, even when they speak about wait times. The statistics say that wait times are growing longer. What they say is, no, they don't—repetitively and incessantly—so that people will believe, no matter what, for as long as they keep on saying it, even if it were not true.

And one of my beefs against what has been happening—*[interjection]*—not pork, but beef—is that they have targeted CancerCare Manitoba. CancerCare Manitoba is the one that's situated right in the constituency of Logan. It is a facility adjacent to the Health Sciences Centre, and it is—it was one where they used to call it the Manitoba Cancer Treatment and Research Foundation. And I used to volunteer as a driver. I used to volunteer as a driver for patients who need chemotherapy or radiation treatment. And it is a facility that's close to my heart because it's the same facility that treated my mom, that I lost to liver cancer. It is the same facility that is currently treating one of my sisters-in-law for breast cancer.

And, when they said that they will review CancerCare, its operational details, it really scares me, and scares me stiff, because I know what is in their mind. The mind of the Conservative government is to cut. And when they do that, they hurt as many people as they can and not care about them. And that hurts.

\* (16:00)

And I just hope that they will back off in those cuts and those plans because I see that the type of governance that this Premier (Mr. Pallister) has been doing is push the envelope a little bit further and when there's resistance, back off, flip-flop and say, oh, I won't do it because I don't think—

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

**Ms. Flor Marcelino (Logan):** In the past, to speak in this Chamber in response to the speech from the throne was something I have looked forward to doing. For over a decade I have considered those throne speeches affirming and heartening.

Then I was energized and delighted to hear the many programs lined up by the sitting government to make life better for all Manitobans—the young, the old, regardless of their social status, gender, ethnic origin or political persuasion.

Best of all, the past speeches from the throne have thoughtfully and intentionally invested in programs especially for those Manitobans who needed help to overcome challenges they were facing, be it in mental health, opportunities for advancement or physical handicap, among others.

I was delighted to find out, on behalf of my constituents from Logan, that the government's vision and plans have included them in mine, and for those reasons there was joy for me to participate in the deliberations in this Chamber after a speech from the throne.

That is not so today. I am speaking today with a heavy heart, never mind a congested chest due to a recent bout with flu.

In the past throne speeches I was happy to report to my constituents in Logan that there will be investments to be made in affordable housing, child care, education and training, seniors care, support for multicultural communities and new immigrants.

During the years the NDP were in government in Manitoba, our province ranked second lowest in unemployment rate because of the government's record investments in infrastructure, job creation, programs which stimulated the economy, along with programs which advanced the health, safety and welfare of workers.

Today our unemployment rate is above 6 per cent and we are still losing good paying jobs to the United States.

Likewise, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the past, after a throne speech, I was happy to report to my constituents that there was to be an increase in the minimum wage. That happened each and every year under an NDP government.

Sadly, under the present government, the minimum wage was only increased by three nickels after two years. Many of my constituents are minimum-wage earners because they were students, new immigrants, women who have just entered or re-entering the workforce.

Last week's Throne Speech had no mention of minimum wage increase.

Also, in the past—also, the past throne speeches provided support for the marginalized members of society so they can live with dignity and realize their full potential. This government has failed to complete the review of The Accessibility for Manitobans Act on time. The government refers to a strategy that doesn't exist and commit to moving people to work from welfare after eliminating the transition support program.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the throne speeches under the NDP government always included support for students and educational institutions. Speaking of students, in my visit to constituents, I met—a few years ago, I met two young ladies walking in the Logan area. We had a nice chat, and I urged them to drop by our office so we can visit longer. They were high school students then.

In one of my visits in the downtown neighbourhood several years later, I met the same young lady in her apartment. I readily recognized her, and I was surprised she did remember me as well. She looked like a young lady then and was still younger looking, but you knew there were years in between.

I learned that she was enrolled in sciences at the University of Manitoba and was graduating soon, the first from her family of refugees from Africa to finish post-secondary education. She and her family lived in one of the Manitoba Housing buildings in the Logan constituency. I told her I was very happy for her and stated that, with the program she was pursuing, her prospects for a successful, meaningful career are very bright.

I suddenly recalled this incident of years past because yesterday morning on my way to work, I heard on the radio the latest Rhodes—Cecil Rhodes Scholar is a young U of M female graduate who

came to Winnipeg as a refugee from Congo with her family when she was two years old.

*Madam Speaker in the Chair*

The news item included a voice clip where the student spoke briefly and expressed appreciation and gratitude for the support she has received to finish her studies. I reckon her family benefited from the many programs supporting refugees and new immigrants who were starting a new life in Manitoba under the NDP government.

Among the supports then was low university tuition fees under the NDP government. In contrast, under the Pallister government, university students are facing over 8 per cent tuition hikes on average. Because of reduced funding from the Pallister government—the college from—UCN has raised its tuition this year by 10.25 per cent.

Over the last two years, the Pallister government cut over \$60 million to the advanced tuition fee rebate, and that's \$500 per year—excuse me—and the Manitoba Tuition Fee Income Tax Rebate of up to \$2,500 per year, up to \$25,000 after graduation.

\* (16:10)

I remember very well this tuition fee rebate, because not only were the graduates from Manitoba institutions able to access—were able to access this rebate, but even if you graduated from outside Manitoba, provided you have decided to transfer to Manitoba, live and work in Manitoba, you too could apply for this rebate. And I know of a few out-of-Manitoba graduates who came over to live in Manitoba because of this.

Sadly, this government is not investing money to make life better for students. Instead, this government is making cuts here and there. Cuts this year will hurt. Tuition at many Manitoba universities is rising by 6.6 per cent, the fastest hike in all of Canada. And that's according to Brandon Sun in their news article, dated September 6 of this year.

For a student at the University of Manitoba, this means an increase just this year of \$257. And college tuition at the University of the North is rising even faster, as I've mentioned earlier, a staggering 10.25 per cent. Also, the Pallister government has cut funding for bursaries and scholarships. Manitoba bursaries and funds were \$25.6 million in the years 2015-2016. For the year 2018-2019, it is \$22.2 million.

The Manitoba chair of the Canadian Federation of Students called the Pallister government's moves quote, regressive, unquote, and says students are being really hit hard, and that the government is putting costs on the backs of students.

We believe that tuition costs should be affordable and that education should be accessible. We believe that Manitoba needs to remain an affordable place to live and raise a family. But rising tuition will make it hard for our young people to get ahead. We believe that parents of university students need a bit of help when they are supporting their kids through school. These massive hikes—hits to students hurt parents, too.

Under the NDP government, tuition fee was frozen to the rate of inflation. And they were provided—students were provided a tax rebate, and interest payments to Manitoba student loans were frozen. This is not the situation now. Instead, the Pallister government took over \$60 million out of the hands of students with their cuts; then they made changes to bursaries that won't keep up.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, for those in the Logan constituency hoping to do—stay in an affordable dwelling place, they will find it much, much more difficult than before because, under the Pallister government, there were no additional investments made in social and affordable housing. To add salt to the wound, one centrally located existing high-rise affordable housing that had welcomed and had benefited thousands of Manitobans, provided homes to thousands of those from the Logan constituency—that high-rise building was sold to private investor.

I have visited several constituents at that Manitoba Housing building on 185 Smith. I have lost track of them now. I wonder where they are after they were asked to leave that place. That is one less affordable place to live for needy families in the Logan constituency.

Still about my constituents in Logan, which I'm very honoured and humbled to serve, many seniors in my constituency were dismayed when the Pallister government took over in 2016 and supports for seniors living in their own homes were taken away.

Mr.—Madam Speaker, I believe all of us who were elected to the—to this Legislature desire the best for our constituents and the rest of Manitobans—or for all Manitobans. We have duties to fulfill to Manitobans as well as we appreciate and honour our constituents' sacred trust. But why were the speeches

from the throne by the Pallister government clearly missing very important elements that will make life for many Manitobans meaningful and affordable? I wonder if, in their caucus deliberations, there were members across the way who have told the Premier (Mr. Pallister) that they should not close emergency rooms in hospitals nor cut funding to universities so that tuition fee increases will be reasonable and affordable.

I wonder if there were members across the way who have told the Premier that affordable housing, workers' welfare and minimum wage should be increased so those who are working do have a chance to escape poverty. Maybe there were some, or maybe there were none, because the members across the way come from constituencies whose residents and constituents live comfortable lives. They have beautiful homes, secure employment or some of them are employed or owners of big businesses and are—and, to them, working long hours in hard labour, earning low wages are totally alien experiences. Hence, they do not feel the pain of ordinary, struggling workers.

Speaking of workers, their contribution to the economy is enormous, though the effort they put—through the effort they put into producing goods and services. It would require a very long discussion to touch on labour economics, and 20 minutes is hardly scratching the surface. Suffice it to say that workers bring prosperity to companies they—that—and that they should be treated and justly compensated, and raising the minimum wage need not be a discussion over a two-year period.

So why am I not so delighted to speak today? Well, it is because the Premier's Throne Speech made one thing clear: His government's priority is to make further cuts to health and education. The Premier's Throne Speech was yet another missed opportunity to invest in the services Manitobans rely on every day in health, education, jobs, infrastructure and the environment.

What wasn't said speaks volumes. There was silence on some of the most important issues facing our province. No substantial commitment and really nothing new means more cuts and chaos for health and education and million-dollar contracts for consultants.

\*(16:20)

But what's more important than the words of this Premier is his actions. He is cutting nurses and

teachers while making life more unaffordable for regular Manitoba families.

I would like to go back to the story on the value of supporting and welcoming diversity. I have said in the past, and I will say it again, that I speak on behalf of many immigrants to this beautiful country that we are thankful for the generosity and help of First Nations people who welcomed the first European settlers to Canada. Were it not for the help of the Mi'kmaq in the Maritimes or the Ojibway, Inuit, Cree, Dene and Metis people in the Prairies, along with many First Nations—

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

**Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas):** It gives me great honour to get up and speak on behalf of Manitobans because on this side of the House we're listening and, clearly, they aren't listening.

They don't give two cents about people who are struggling in this province. All they care about is profit before people. Shame. You know, I know you don't want to hear that on this side—that side of the House because, you know, you don't ever have to worry about having \$2.75 to put into, you know, a Manitoba transit bus because all of you drive cars. You know, I'm sure your family members all drive cars.

But, on this side of the House, we're sticking up for Manitobans who don't have that luxury, who don't have the luxury to get on a bus, to go all the way to Health Sciences Centre because their hospitals are being closed because this government is putting money over patients.

How long is this government going to wait until, you know, they open back up these hospitals? And, yes, they do have to go to Health Sciences Centre.

I represent the constituency of Point Douglas. Members opposite doesn't know what the nearest hospital is. Well, the nearest hospital for the constituents of my riding is Health Sciences Centre. Where else would you like them to go? To Concordia? Concordia's going to be closed. They can't afford the bus fare it would take to go to Selkirk, which we're hearing they're being told to go because wait times in this province are so long.

And the members opposite can say that they haven't increased all they want, but according to the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, and that's where the statistics came from, 20 per cent increase—20 per cent, and, you know, I know the former

minister for Health is chiming in over there, and maybe he'll get up later and speak to, you know, this Throne Speech that should be—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mrs. Smith:** —actually—it should be shredded. You know, shame on this government for continuing to put profit over people.

You know we on this side are listening to people in the northeast and the northwest. They want their hospitals to stay open. These hospitals have been serving Manitobans for years on years, something that this government clearly doesn't appreciate. They're putting people out of work.

How many nurses—we heard 90 nurses lost their jobs, and then they chimed in, said, oh, but we gave 30 nurses back jobs. Wow. What about the other 60 that lost their jobs? Where are they?

Guess what? They've probably lost—left the province, which, actually, you know, is a detriment to this province because they actually pay into the economy, and this government is continuing to push people that are getting high quality education here in this province out of Manitoba because they're taking their jobs away.

We just heard today about people in the North and we'll continue to bring that up, and I know the members opposite don't like to hear about, you know, people in the North, but they actually have to represent people of the North as well. They are Manitobans. Just because they don't live here around the outskirts of Manitoba doesn't mean that they are not contributing members of this province.

And shame on this province for taking—or this government, for taking away the rights of families to have their babies in Flin Flon. You know, think about it. If you're a mother—and, Madam Speaker, I know you're a mother and, you know, a grandmother—would you want your daughter driving an hour and a half to the nearest hospital, if there was a risk of, you know, to her health?

You know, I had gestational diabetes with my daughter. I was at high risk. I had to go to the hospital and have fetal ultrasounds every two weeks. Well, these families don't have that luxury of doing that. They don't have the luxury of being in their own community to give birth in their own community. What is it going to say on their birth certificate? Not Flin Flon, Manitoba. Wherever they have to go to and—you know, they've cut patient transportation,

so, you know, what are they—going to get on a Greyhound bus and, you know, get driven to Winnipeg and, you know, possibly lose a baby before this government actually—

**An Honourable Member:** Because there's no buses.

**Mrs. Smith:** Oh, actually, thank you to the member from Fort Garry rouge. There is no buses anymore, thanks to this government and taking away the Greyhound, you know, buses from this province.

So, when you look at families and the ability to have the care in their communities, this government continues to have a failing grade. Families deserve to be able to access health care in their communities. You know, we don't even have doctors in Flin Flon. You know, I know, even at the hospital in Pine Falls, they had an emergency room—no longer open, because there's no doctors. You know, what is this province doing to—this government doing to retain the doctors and nurses so that they stay in this province and they're not being, you know, having to leave this province to get jobs? Does this government care about that? No, their bottom line is let's save money; let's close hospitals; let's, you know, have people waiting in waiting rooms, because we don't have enough hospital beds to have people actually in those rooms, nor do we have enough nurses to be seeing these patients or doctors to be seeing these patients in a timely manner.

This government can change the metrics all they want in how they count patients. But I've actually gone into, you know, the emergency room, and I've told this story before. We were in a car accident. You know, we were T-boned. We waited four hours to get into a room. We were in a room, then a nurse came to see us. She checked us out, make sure we didn't have a concussion. My daughter went for X-rays. Soon as she went for X-rays, she was no longer on that waiting list. Well, we didn't sit there for 10 minutes. We didn't sit there for 20 minutes. We didn't sit there an hour. We sat there for another two hours before she got her results. So add that on to the wait list. That's six hours that we sat in that emergency room.

So this government can say that the wait times have gone down all they want, but, as soon as someone goes for an MRI, they go for blood work, any of that, they're no longer on that wait list, even though they're sitting and they're occupying a room in that hospital. So, you know, this government is, you know, doing a lot of 'shenagling' with these numbers.

People are being told at these RAAM clinics—RAAM clinics, wow, this is this government's glorified response to the meth crisis. Well, Madam Speaker, these RAAM clinics are only open a couple hours a week. You're going to tell me that 25,000 people—and this is according to Main Street Project that are on the front lines, that are working with families, that are dealing with this crisis, every day, every minute of every day while this government sits idly by and does nothing while families are being torn apart, while lives are being lost, while people go deeper into addictions. They are doing nothing. Twenty-five thousand people; that's what they estimate. And that's a low estimate. So—and what's this government doing? Their idea is to—let's open some RAAM clinics for a couple hours a week so that someone can go in, they can get assessed. And, apparently, they're streamlined.

Madam Speaker, do you know where they're streamlined to? Nowhere, because there's no beds. There's nowhere for them to go. But you know what Main Street Project did, because they understand and they actually care about people and they will not turn people away? They've actually opened up some beds that they get no funding for from this government. So that's taking resources away from the people who are already in there getting some treatment. That's taking food away from people who are there, you know, to get treatment. That's taking resources away.

\* (16:30)

They've asked this government for more funds, for more beds, to be able to expand the work that they're doing to address this crisis, to address this pandemic that's gripping Manitobans. And this province—or, this government is doing nothing. What are they doing? They're sitting over on the other side reading a newspaper, looking on their phones, you know, having side conversations while people are dying from this.

Madam Speaker, there are 50,000 needles that are being picked up from this—from the Bear Clan.

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

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mrs. Smith:** You know, has this Province stepped up? No. If the Bear Clan was not out there picking up those needles, if the Bear Clan wasn't out there addressing this issue when they see someone on meth and helping them get—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mrs. Smith:** I'll—I could talk louder. I mean, I have a teacher voice. I just disassociate anyway with what—anything this opposite side says because it's all, you know, nothing that pertains to anything in my constituency, because everything in my constituency seems to be cut by this Province. You know, they don't care about the most vulnerable.

And meth is something that grips this whole province. It's not just the North End; it's not just the West End; it's not just central. It's happening all of over our province. Brandon's been asking for a detox centre. What has this government done? Nothing, absolutely nothing. You have a Brandon East and you have a Brandon West member that—who is representing, doing nothing. But who do you have as their voice? You have someone like Lonnie Peterson [*phonetic*] that is actually raising the alarm, that is actually calling on this government, that is actually doing something while they sit by and do nothing. [*interjection*]

And, you know, I hear the member from St. Vital chiming in. Maybe she'll get up and speak for people in St. Vital about the meth crisis. But I doubt it. She seems to be sitting on her hands and plugging her ears lately. We don't seem to hear anything from her. But, you know, we're talking about meth here, and they can chime in all they want, but they're doing nothing—nothing—Madam Speaker. They continue to do nothing. Shame on them.

So, let me tell you, Madam Speaker, when you go into detox at Main Street Project—Main Street Project is a short-term detox centre. They don't keep people long-term. And, if you talk to Tahl East from Main Street Project, she'll tell you that, you know, the serotonin in your brain is, you know, depleted when you're on meth. And that's depleted for about six months. You don't feel good about yourself. You know, you have no hope. And, you know, to have six months of your life with no hope and feel like, you know, your life is worth nothing, that you have nothing—and she'll tell you this, that she sees so many people come into her centre that stay there for 14 days, that have to leave—and they've actually extended it to 28 days. And that's all they can do. They've been asking this province to, you know, step up—this government to step up and do some long-term beds. Put some long-term beds that are going to have a lasting effect for people who are on meth.

Six months—six months—Madam Speaker, before people actually can start to see the light, can actually

start to see hope, can actually see that, you know, they're—they can come out of this, that they can actually kick this drug. That's how hard this drug has a hold on people.

And these are real people's lives. I see it. I mean, I was just in my local 7-Eleven, which is on Flora and Salter, yesterday, and, you know, someone was in there, and they were on meth, and they were just taking a whole bunch of stuff. And they have no idea, like, what they're doing. They have no cause and effect. And, you know, they have a security guard in there, and this guy is just, like, opening stuff and eating it, and he's like—has his arms up, and he's just kind of talking and, like, going crazy. [*interjection*]

And the member from Lac du Bonnet, I hear, is getting up. Maybe he can tell us why the emergency room in Pine Falls is still closed, when he has the time, and what he's doing about the meth crisis in his area of Lac du Bonnet.

So, anyway, long story short, you know, the Bear Clan was called; the police were not called. And this is called, you know, caring about our community and taking, you know, this wraparound model.

That 7-Eleven store, they could've called the police. They could've, you know, detained this man. They could've stopped him from what he was doing. But, instead of doing that, Madam Speaker, they called the community together. They brought the community together, they got this man to the detox centre, you know, somewhere safe, because this Province what they think—this government thinks that they should do is they should police their way out of it.

Well, Danny Smyth from the Winnipeg Police, he'll tell you, you're not going to police your way out of the meth crisis. You're not going to put people in jail and expect them to change their behaviour.

They're doing these behaviours because they've had crisis in their lives. They need support. They need long-term support, and they need support from this government today, and they're doing nothing. Shame on them.

Well, let's talk about education, because I know the member from Lac du Bonnet was a former educator and is not even standing up for any of the cuts—0.5, this government gave to educators. You know, and they expect to increase outcomes for

students when they're taking away supports? Like, more, it means more. Less means less.

And I know the members opposite don't get that. They think, oh, we'll give them less and they'll give us more, but doesn't actually work that way. And they're all business owners. They should know; the more money you invest, the more you get. But, you know, somehow, when it doesn't—when it's not their money, they don't really care.

So, you know, these are Manitobans. Parents have been speaking up and saying we need more supports for our kids, not less. This government, in fact, got up when the class sizes were reduced from K-to-3 to under 20 students. They got up and said, Madam Speaker, this is a great thing. We support this. We want smaller class sizes so that kids will get the supports they need.

But what did they do when they got into government? They cut that. Wow. They stood up in this very House and said, we support smaller class sizes—until they became government, and then, of course, it's no longer, you know, something they support. That's kind of their MO. Like, it's, you know, let's call on them when they're in, but, when we're in, you know, everything's kosher.

And the bottom line for them, you know, is money over people. They lack heart. They lack, you know, on the front line, actually getting in there and knowing what people are going through. You know, I'm sure none of the members on the other side have ever had to worry about having \$10 in their pocket. Ten dollars—and, you know, you wouldn't think that's a lot, but Madam Speaker—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please.

#### Point of Order

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable Government House Leader, on a point of order.

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader):** You know, we had this discussion a little bit earlier today about, sort of, respectful discourse and reflecting on members' pasts. I grew up in government housing. I am offended by the member opposite's comment—that I'm sure there are other members who've had difficulties in their lives. I'd ask her to apologize, Madam Speaker.

**Mr. Matt Wiebe (Deputy Official Opposition House Leader):** I know that members, obviously, have the ability in this House to express themselves

as they see fit, so I'm sure that you will certainly rule this out of order.

But, just to the minister's point—to the House leader's point, you know, I certainly know that members of their caucus are fond of bringing up similar issues and similar concerns in their comments. We could go back and check Hansard. I think the member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon) was always fond of saying that members in this House had never missed a meal, was his comments.

You know, I know that if we went back through Hansard, I'm sure we would find many members who have said—had similar comments. But, as I said, Madam Speaker, I think this is probably a dispute over the facts.

**Madam Speaker:** I would just point out that I think we do have to pick our words very carefully, and we should always demonstrate respect for members. It would always be appreciated.

And I do agree with the member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe) that this is a dispute over the facts. It is not a point of order. But I would urge caution with members, as we do debate, that we always do try very hard to be respectful in what we're saying, and put accurate facts on the record.

\* \* \*

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for Point Douglas, to—

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

\* (16:40)

**Mrs. Smith:** Clearly, I've hit, you know, some very emotional spots for the members opposite, but I can tell you, in my riding, people do not have \$10 in their pocket to spare. You know, they cut Rent Assist. That meant 10 less dollars in their pocket—\$10 is a lot. You can buy, you know, a loaf of bread, you can buy a dozen of hot dogs, you can buy a couple of boxes of Kraft Dinner and, you know, something to drink. That's a meal for a family. Maybe even two meals, if you stretch it.

And I can tell you that, you know, I've certainly had to worry about having \$10 in my pocket. And I can certainly, you know, empathize with those who don't have the funds, that, you know, because of the austerity of this government and their continued cuts and the continued things that they're doing to people of—with disabilities, our seniors, our people that are low income—that they are putting them further,

further behind. They say, oh, we're trying to help all Manitobans; we're trying to give them a hand up and make sure that they have all the needs they need to survive and to thrive in this province. Well, I can tell you some people are at the point where they're not even able to survive. They're getting deeper and deeper into poverty while this province—or, this government continues to, you know, take things away that mean things to them.

We have a woman's centre in our community, the North Point Douglas Women's Centre. You know, \$120,000 was cut from their budget. And this government can say all they want that, oh, it came through United Way, but I can tell you today that they don't even have any United Way funding. They don't even have one cent from this Province. That's \$120,000 that helped women who were being possibly abused in their homes. And this government talks about, oh, we want to support all women, we want to stand up for all women, we want to make sure women are safe, that women have access to all of, you know, the resources they need. This is a resource that was on the front line that was supporting women, that were helping them to, you know, overcome some of their life issues.

And these women went from being women who went to the centre to being board members to being workers at the centre. If that's not a hand up and showing that the leadership that they're showing—that this government needs to take some lessons from that centre and start investing in Manitobans and start listening to them and, you know, shred this document that they have and, you know, start investing. Start listening.

Miigwech, Madam Speaker.

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood):** I'm pleased to follow the member for Point Douglas (Mrs. Smith) and speak to the amended Throne Speech that we—is before us now.

You know, thinking about the hospital reorganization situation in the province when the Conservatives announced it, I guess it was March or April of 2017—you know, I think they look forward, they can see a lot of open fields in front of them. And that field just isn't there anymore. You know, the member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe) and I were at the foundation—Concordia Foundation dinner, and I think we would agree that the mood at that dinner was totally different from what we've seen in past years. In the past, we saw and had optimistic gatherings, great plans to build big edifices here and

there and big fundraising plans—and none of that's there anymore. You know, there was talk of converting, you know, a couple of rooms for hospice situations, but that was the limit. And there was no excitement there.

And, you know, I think we talk to a lot, at least I do, talk to a lot of Conservative voters, you know, in my constituency.

And, you know, they are wondering what's going on with this government, too. The government today is testing its emergency alerts. Well, I think there's some emergency alerts going around inside the members of the government. And, when you think about it, I mean, you've got a federal election coming up and they're under a lot of pressure there from their federal party to make things right from a political issues point of view. So, I—what I'm saying is that they seem to be moving very quickly in several directions at once.

Five years ago, the NDP committed to increasing Grace Hospital operating rooms fivefold. You know, they pretend as though that was their idea all along, right? They forget it was the NDP that did that, increase the capacity of Grace Hospital by a factor of five. They opened that this year. That alone should have solved a lot of their problems.

Then they also announced they were going to do some expansion at St. Boniface. And we know—or we've been told that that expansion is probably six months behind schedule. And members opposite have intimated to me that oh, well, we're not going to move anybody from Concordia over to St. Boniface until the work is done. So you say, well, all right. Now that's going to take us into June, the month of June.

But now, a few days ago, we find out that there's something else going on, and we're being told that—and I don't have the exact numbers and—but I can get them for tomorrow, I'm sure. But I believe there are around 30 docs—doctors at Concordia currently, and they're planning to have, I think, 18 of them retained and to do hip and knee surgery. And where the rest of the 12 are going to go, I'm not sure—whether they're going to force them over to St. Boniface, which is evidently not ready to receive them yet, or whether they're going to go to Grace or whether they're going to be split up, perhaps, and sent somewhere else. But I was told that no more non-hip-and-knee surgeries will take place in that hospital past another two or three weeks. And the member for Concordia asked that very question

today but got no answers to his questions, none whatsoever.

So how is it that I know, or supposedly know, that they've already announced internally that there's going to be 18 docs moving in the next few weeks—or, not moving—18 docs be retained there to do hip and knee and the rest of them going somewhere else?

So this is already, you know, moving a little faster than we thought it was, and I'm suggesting that it's probably the election cycle that has a lot to do with what is going on there, not to mention the fact that people are asking questions.

You know, I did a member's statement recently where I asked and mentioned that people are asking me what they are getting out of those MLAs that they elected. And they're asking me, well, what does the member for Rossmere (Mr. Micklefield) have to say about this? What does the member for Radisson (Mr. Teitsma) want—I mean, he wants to talk about deficits, and I'd be, you know, willing to discuss that with him any time. I—he made a very nice speech, you know, last week, but never addressed at all the issue of the Concordia Hospital.

Now, Concordia Hospital was set up in its present location in, I guess, 1977—I think Ed Schreyer did the opening announcement—at a time when the area was much less populated than it is now. We have huge developments in Transcona. It's just like night and day out there, and north of the Perimeter Highway, huge development. So we are now servicing an area much—with many more people in it and much bigger area than we had before, and we have roughly 30,000 people now who are going to be going somewhere else.

And they expect that they're going to be able to do all of this, you know, close Victoria, close Seven Oaks, do all of this stuff in this tightly compressed area. This is like a 10-year plan, not a two-year plan. And when you consider that—you know, the NDP helped out a lot by expanding Grace to a factor of five.

So, I think whoever was in—doing the planning there—I think the planning genius was probably the Premier (Mr. Pallister) behind all of this stuff there, moving his little armies on the board, right, and then—and the former minister of Health was out there, you know, climbing those hospitals, trying to rip down those big signs. He's probably got a big collection of them now at home. And I think that it would seem so simple for them at that time.

\* (16:50)

And now things are looking to be a lot more complicated. And I have a feeling that this is going to turn out badly for them at the end of the day, and you only have to look at their own base. I mean, I just spoke with a big Conservative—I mean, a committed big Conservative the other day, you know, who is wondering what's going on with them and why they would do this. I mean, they haven't properly explained this, I guess, to their own base. And it's their own base that in many ways are the most against this, and no matter how hard they try to get their minds around it and to find a way to support, at the end of the day, they just can't. They're just being laughed at by their neighbours and their relatives, and it just doesn't make a lot of sense to them.

So I—you know, I think they're probably at the tipping point right now where they are too far down the road. They couldn't—they can't step back. So it's either, you know, ram it through, you know, in the next couple of weeks and just get it done as quickly as possible because beyond that, if they stray past, you know, June, it starts becoming too late, and they know that. They know that.

And, you know, people are not going to forget what they've done. That's the truth of the matter here is the hospital ER is open now. I have no idea where—how the message got out that it was closed, but I see that on their website right now they have a nice yellow and red and black notice—I don't know where they got that; I thought it looked pretty good, actually—stating that the operating—the hospital is fully operational; the ER is fully operational, and that's what—the way we want to keep it. We want people to know that it's fully open. We want people to go there and get their services. Part of the government's plan was to try to kill it by conveying the impression that, oh, well, you know, it's—nobody wants to go there. The equipment's moved, and you won't get as good service, things like that. And we have been fighting that from the beginning.

One of the things that they are doing here is they're closing down the ICU, and you see, for hip and knee, I guess they don't actually need it; that's the medical arguments that are made. They say, well, you know, we do this at this Pan Am Clinic, and we don't need an ICU there, so why is it that in some places you need an ICU for hip and knee and other places you don't? And I gather the medical argument it is that if you're—if you've got complicated health

system—a situation in the first place or you're elderly, you know, maybe you want to do your hip and knee where it's a—where if it's a little trickier operation, you want to do it where there is an operating ICU. But, if it's—if you're just a younger, healthier person, then you can have that operation done, hip and knee operation done, in a facility that—without the ICU.

So I gather, without having all of the details here, that this is all hinging on that ICU, that the ICU is going to be moving or that a key piece of equipment is being moved out of there in this process, and that will mean the end of the road for this facility as far as an operating emergency room is concerned because once the ICU is closed, they can continue to keep doing the hip and knee surgeries there. And I see they're planning to do another 1,000, not there, but 1,000 in the system, in—next year. They will be able to do those without the operating ICU.

But the long-term effect of this is bad for them too. I mean, there is just no viable win for this government coming out of this particular—and I'm just dealing with the one issue on the one hospital. I mean, we can use this—you know, a—same argument, similar arguments for Seven Oaks or Victoria or any of the others. So they've taken a big hit in the short term. They're going to take a hit when it actually—when people realize that it's actually closed to them, they can't go there. And then they're going to take this long-term hit because for the next 10 years or longer there's people going to be, you know, upset about what they did.

You know, and so that's why I just, you know, having been around in politics for a number of years now, I think there's just like some basic common sense that all parties seem to kind of grasp. And this one just totally escapes me as to how they could have been hoodwinked into pulling something like this off. And I can only attribute to the fact of the current leadership over there, because the last time they tried to do something like this, it was the Filmon years, and Bonnie Mitchelson was in the Cabinet over there. And they only announced a night-time closure. They said we're going to close Concordia just over the night. Well, the whole area erupted, and Bonnie Mitchelson probably led the eruption. And she marched her way right into the premier's office. And you know something? It all got turned around in about two months. That was the end of that.

So I'm wondering now where is the Bonnie Mitchelson over there. You know, is it the member for Rossmere (Mr. Micklefield), is it the member for

Radisson (Mr. Teitsma), is it the member for Transcona (Mr. Yakimoski)? You know, I mean—and the member for River East (Mrs. Cox)? Like, they seem to be fiddling while Rome is burning. You know, the—their constituencies are, like, falling down around them. Their support base is just evaporating. And there's—they're pretending that everything's fine. You know, it's like that old argument about, oh, you know, I'm—about the Titanic. They say, well, there was—somebody was asked, well, what is all that ice for outside the boat, and they were told, well, that's for the party we're having on Friday night.

So I—you know—and then when the—and at the end of the day, I—you know, I'm sure that some of the members there have actually walked those steps down to the Premier's (Mr. Pallister) office and said, you know, things are not good out there for us on this issue. I'm sure they've done it. And I'm sure they've been told by the Premier, you know, if you don't be quiet, you're going to end up over here with the member for Assiniboia (Mr. Fletcher). Right? And I'm sure some of them have taken their licks over this issue and have suffered some lack of advancement because of it, because they actually have tried to do to the right thing. Because I just know the responses—I know the responses they're getting because the same people that are responding to them are responding to me, responding to the member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe). So we know exactly what's going on.

I had an entire church come to me and say, what are we going to—we—you know, we've got the whole congregation, what are we supposed to do to stop this? And I think I read out the address of the member for Rossmere, and they headed off on their merry way out to visit with the member for Rossmere.

And so, you know, the members know how much grief this has caused them. And, you know, if there was a positive to it, you know, I guess it'd be well worth it. But there—some of them are going to lose their seats over there.

Now, does the Premier concern himself about—oh, don't worry, he's got 40 of them. He—Premier was a schoolteacher; he knows how to add and he knows he only needs 29. So anything more than 29 is okay. He can get through this.

So, anyway, this is one of the more serious—very serious issue. But it's kind of humorous in terms of, like, political science studies as to how—the last thing you would think if somebody said before the last

election that a government was going to close three ERs, including Concordia, and you can say that you would be laughed out of the room. People would think there was—this—just not possible.

And then—and so they—and then they—so they find this study that Peachey did and I guess they thought, well, you know, there's tons of studies on everything, right? So they grabbed this study. It was like we'd left it there for them to accidentally find.

And they found it and they said, wow, look at this. Let's—

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please.

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member will have three minutes remaining.

The hour being 5 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow.

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, November 28, 2018

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