

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

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

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-First Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALLUM, James	Fort Garry-Riverview	NDP
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	NDP
BINDLE, Kelly	Thompson	PC
CHIEF, Kevin	Point Douglas	NDP
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	PC
FONTAINE, Nahanni	St. Johns	NDP
FRIESEN, Cameron, Hon.	Morden-Winkler	PC
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GOERTZEN, Kelvin, Hon.	Steinbach	PC
GRAYDON, Clifford	Emerson	PC
GUILLEMARD, Sarah	Fort Richmond	PC
HELWER, Reg	Brandon West	PC
ISLEIFSON, Len	Brandon East	PC
JOHNSON, Derek	Interlake	PC
JOHNSTON, Scott	St. James	PC
KINEW, Wab	Fort Rouge	NDP
KLASSEN, Judy	Kewatinook	Lib.
LAGASSÉ, Bob	Dawson Trail	PC
LAGIMODIERE, Alan	Selkirk	PC
LAMOUREUX, Cindy	Burrows	Lib.
LATHLIN, Amanda	The Pas	NDP
LINDSEY, Tom	Flin Flon	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Flor	Logan	NDP
MARCELINO, Ted	Tyndall Park	NDP
MARTIN, Shannon	Morris	PC
MAYER, Colleen	St. Vital	PC
MICHALESKI, Brad	Dauphin	PC
MICKLEFIELD, Andrew, Hon.	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	NDP
SCHULER, Ron, Hon.	St. Paul	PC
SELINGER, Greg	St. Boniface	NDP
SMITH, Andrew	Southdale	PC
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	Gimli	PC
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
WISHART, Ian, Hon.	Portage la Prairie	PC
WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC
YAKIMOSKI, Blair	Transcona	PC

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, November 23, 2016

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.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 200—The Human Rights Code Amendment Act

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the MLA for Burrows, that Bill 200, The Human Rights Code Amendment Act; la Loi modifiant le Code des droits de la personne, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Gerrard: Madam Speaker, this will–bill will provide that physical size and weight will be included as protected characteristics under our Human Rights Code. The bill will provide an avenue for somebody who feels like they have been discriminated against or bullied based on physical size or weight to come to the Human Rights Commission to seek redress and to seek to be–have the case looked at. Thank you.

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

Committee reports?

Oh—the honourable member—or the honourable Minister of Finance?

Bill 3—The Pooled Registered Pension Plans (Manitoba) Act

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance): I move, seconded by the Minister for Growth, Enterprise and Trade, that Bill 3, The Pooled

Registered Pension Plans (Manitoba) Act, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Friesen: I am pleased to introduce this legislation that would provide employers and their employees and the self-employed access to a new option to save for retirement.

It is important in this province that wage earners and employers continue to have access to a new option to save for retirement. It is important in this province that wage earners and employers continue to have access to quality products that assist all of us in the exercise of saving adequately for our retirement. This is an additional tool that will accomplish the goal of helping Manitobans save.

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

Bill 2—The Securities Amendment Act (Reciprocal Enforcement)

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister for Growth, Enterprise and Trade that Bill 2, The Securities Amendment Act (Reciprocal Enforcement), be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Friesen: As stated in our government's recent Speech from the Throne we are committed to protecting investors and consumers through strengthening securities legislation. This amendment will make Manitoba's securities market more efficient as well as contribute to harmonizing securities laws and regulations across Canada.

It will allow Manitoba to automatically reciprocate enforcement orders and settlements made in other provinces without the requirement of a hearing. This amendment has passed in Alberta, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Quebec and is being proposed right now in Ontario and British Columbia.

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

Committee Reports? Tabling of Reports? Ministerial Statements?

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Darcy Miller

Hon. Ian Wishart (Minister of Education and Training): On October 5th, 2016, the community of Oakville and the constituency of Portage la Prairie lost one of its most steadfast supporters and brightest lights. The loss of Darcy Miller has been felt throughout our community.

Madam Speaker, I rise today to remember and honour one of my community's most inspiring members and a man that I had the good fortune of calling a friend.

Darcy and his wife Andrea and their four children—Graham, Carter, Ian and Marae—live and farm a fourth-generation family farm in the Oakville area that has been in his family for over a century. At a young age the values of community service were instilled in Darcy by his parents and he brought those values with him throughout his adult life. Darcy and Andrea were very involved in their community, supporting Oakville School, community club and the skating rink. The Miller family was recently awarded the Centennial Farm Award and it was a point of pride for Darcy to have the award signed by the Premier.

Darcy was diagnosed with cancer in 2014. It is from this diagnosis that his charity, Growing Support for Cancer, was created. Being a farmer and growing pedigreed seed, Darcy was a firm believer in research. Knowing advances in research are what will ultimately eradicate cancer, Darcy, along with his family and friends, worked together to grow a crop and donate the proceeds to CancerCare Manitoba research.

Even through his battle with cancer, Darcy was still committed to serving his community. I had the privilege of watching a video in support of the Portage District hospital foundation in which Darcy was featured, discussing the importance of the hospital to the community, a video he made six weeks before his death.

Darcy was never one to sit idle and let things happen; he was always the first one to roll up his sleeves and say: how can I make things better?

There is a lot that can be learned from Darcy Miller and the legacy he leaves behind. The Portage constituency and Manitoba are a better place today because of Darcy's values and commitment to

family, friendship and community. He will be missed.

His family is with us today in the gallery and I would ask everyone to join in honouring him.

* (13:40)

Concern for the Environment

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): The government's Throne Speech earlier this week was a major disappointment for anyone with even a passing concern for the environment or the future health of Mother Earth.

During question period, this very conservative government has repeatedly refused to answer our opposition questions or provide any meaningful information about where they stand on some of the most crucial issues of our time. Environmental issues we have raised include the unknown state of Winnipeg sewer upgrade projects, the stalled bid for a UNESCO World Heritage Site on the east side of Lake Winnipeg and, of course, climate change.

You would think, Madam Speaker, that seven months after the election this government would finally start to take action. Instead, the Throne Speech was filled with the rhetoric of austerity, a fatally flawed policy that calls for cuts to services, privatization, deregulation and layoffs. The track record of austerity around the world can only be considered successful if its true goals are to weaken environmental protections, further widen the income gap between rich and poor, and leave the economies of its victim countries even worse off than they were beforehand.

I would never claim, Madam Speaker, that our previous government solved every environmental problem, but we did make important progress. Climate emissions were increasing at a rate of 200,000 tons per year when we came to office. That number has now been reduced to just over 20,000 tons, a nearly 90 per cent improvement. Dozens of cities and communities across Manitoba upgraded their water treatment plants thanks to investments we made. Recycling rates have improved dramatically, and we added dozens of new parks and protected areas to the list of protected spaces for Manitoba's future.

This Throne Speech was the first in 25 years to not even mention protected spaces. Governments around the world are creating thousands of new green jobs so their citizens can fix the mistakes of

the past. Manitoba can and should be part of this green evolution, but this government's Throne Speech is taking us in the opposite direction. Let's hope for all our sakes a different path is chosen in the years ahead.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Addiction Treatment Centres

Mr. Kelly Bindle (Thompson): November 13th to 19th, 2016 was National Addictions Awareness Week with this year's theme being Addiction Matters.

In recognition of Addictions Awareness Week, in Thompson the AFM, KTC, MKO, Ma Mow We Tak, Safer Choices and NRHA Aboriginal Liaison held events throughout the week around Thompson to educate the public about addictions and about programs available.

At least one in five Canadians experience problems with alcohol, drug or gambling addiction during their lifetime and make positive change. That positive change is made possible through caring volunteers and individuals working in the health-care field offering hope at AFM centres like the Eaglewood Treatment Centre in Thompson.

I had the pleasure of attending a tea and bannock reception at their centre that included displays, pamphlets and discussions of available programs, followed by a tour of their facility. This beautiful facility, nestled in the northern boreal forest, offers co-ed, culturally sensitive, community-based treatment programming for adults and youth; school-based services; impaired driving programming; family services; acupuncture and social activities focused on harm reduction through education, prevention and treatment.

As explained by a recovering addict to me to help understand addiction, he said: Drugs aren't the problem, reality is the problem. The drugs are the addict's way to hide from reality.

I'd like to thank the program director, Giselle Demeulle, Leslie Allard, Anita Lundie and Sharrone Cordell for organizing the events and for sharing their knowledge and hospitality.

I also want to recognize board members Chris Saulteaux, Elder Jack Robinson and all the board members, staff, volunteers and caregivers for their dedication and hard work, because the work they do and the support they offer is saving lives.

In closing, I want to share some words from that same recovering addict, words that we can all live by for a fulfilling life: May you always be challenged, but never defeated.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Dursameen and Raghees Bashir

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): Today I would like to recognize the incredible bravery of two young people in my constituency of Flin Flon, Dursameen and Raghees Bashir.

This past August, the Bashirs were enjoying a sunny day at Sally's Beach with their family friend Muhammad. Suddenly, Kamran Bashir noticed Muhammad's head bobbing in and out of the water. When his head went underwater and didn't reappear, Kamran knew something was wrong. He then urged Dursameen and Raghees to check out the situation, and they didn't hesitate for a moment.

Ali was about 10 to 15 feet away from shore, but Dursameen's swimming lessons paid off. She dove down and found Muhammad unconscious underwater. At 12 years old, she managed to pull the 180 pound, 5 foot 5 man ashore with the help of her brother. Kamran then immediately began chest compressions and first responders arrived soon thereafter. Another 30 minutes and it might have—another 30 seconds and it might have been too late. Thankfully, Muhammad only had to spend the night in hospital and made a full recovery.

Dursameen attributes her 'liveskaving' skills to a water rescue training session she took and her swimming lessons. She has said that this incident has encouraged her to learn even more lifesaving skills and continue swimming.

Because of Kamran's alertness and Dursameen and Raghees's own incredible acts of bravery, a life was saved that day. Dursameen and Raghees also proved that astounding courage can come at any age. They are truly heroes, Madam Speaker.

And I would like to thank Dursameen, Raghees and Kamran Bashir for their heroism and I am incredibly grateful for Muhammad's speedy recovery.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Swan Valley Food Bank

Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River): Today I'd like to acknowledge and pay tribute to the eight board members and many volunteers of the Swan Valley Food Bank. That food bank was formally organized in 1997. They quickly outgrew their original premises and purchased their own building which is now mortgage free.

The Swan Valley Food Bank runs on approximately 18 to 20 thousand dollars of donated money annually. They rely on the generosity of their community, grocery stores, churches and individual donations to stock the shelves. In the fall, potatoes are harvested from the food bank garden. It's a hope that clients will assist with tending and harvesting the garden in the near future.

Each month clients access the food bank from all four corners of the valley. The food bank provides hampers to 55 individuals and 85 families, assisting up to 500 individuals with various food items to help supplement their groceries and prepare five to 10 emergency hampers. The various volunteers and school groups ensure food hampers contain all the essential food items. Approximately 75,000 pounds of food is distributed each year. The food bank cannot stress enough exceptional co-operation from Swan Valley community to the shelves stock.

This group of volunteers are very committed to the success of the Swan Valley Food Bank and work tirelessly to make sure no one goes away hungry.

Madam Speaker, I ask the House to join me in thanking the group of dedicated volunteers who make such a difference in the lives of the less fortunate. For this, I thank: Jake Warkentin, Albert Quon, Andrew Jones, Rob Terhorst, Sue Stober, Kay Betcher, Phyllis Hunt and Betty Warkentin.

Thank you.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: Prior to oral questions, we have some guests in the gallery.

We have seated in the public gallery from Sister MacNamara School 62 grade 5 and 6 students under the direction of Samantha Villanueva, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Logan (Ms. Marcelino).

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

ORAL QUESTIONS

Public-Private Partnerships Repeal of Legislation

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Leader of the Official Opposition): Public-private partnerships can be an effective way of making investments in Manitoba. The Public-Private Partnerships Transparency and Accountability Act ensures that government lays out the full cost of these arrangements so the public sees a real comparison in an open and transparent manner.

There's good reason for this. In their worst form, private arrangements can be used as a means of privatizing public assets and amass transfer of wealth from the public to the private sector.

My question is simple: Why is the Premier ripping up this important legislation that ensures transparency and accountability?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Madam Speaker, if I could, I just wanted to say to Andrea Miller and her family that they're a wonderful family and we will all treasure the memory of her husband, and we will all celebrate the accomplishments of his children and Andrea as they move forward together as a family.

Partnership, Madam Speaker, is something we believe in strongly, and we are demonstrating in our early days as a government that we believe in partnerships and will work hard to achieve genuine partnerships.

* (13:50)

The bill that the member alluded to in her preamble is, of course, one which is unique in Canada in that it makes it virtually impossible for public-private partnerships to exist.

The previous administration had so little skill at developing partnerships they staged an historic and divisive rebellion among their own ranks, Madam Speaker, but we as a unified government will achieve genuine partnerships for the good of Manitoba's future.

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

Ms. Marcelino: Madam Speaker, the government of Manitoba's current bond rates are 1.1 per cent. The private sector isn't going to do projects for free. The media reports that expected rates of return by private partners are 8 per cent or more.

Manitobans understand this. A major investment like a house has much lower costs than carrying credit card debt. But in their worst form, that is what a P3 can do.

Providing an apples-to-apples comparison reduces the partisan rhetoric and lets the public get a real look at the true long-term costs.

Why is the Premier opposed to transparency and accountability?

Mr. Pallister: Well, Madam Speaker, we're already taking positive steps in the direction of increasing transparency and accountability on this side of the House. The previous government, of course, demonstrated its lack of respect for those concepts regularly, not least of all by engaging in the purchase from friends of commodities without tender or without shopping, almost un-Manitoban, Madam Speaker, on a regular basis and then covering up the fact that they were doing so—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: —of going the untendered route and claiming emergencies existed at every turn, Madam Speaker, rather than taking the time—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: —Manitobans always take to shop smart with their own money.

This is a government that will respect Manitobans'—hard-working Manitobans' dollars as well. When we shop, when we compare prices and when we get value, we will make sure it's done in a transparent way, Madam Speaker—not the way the previous government did it—the right way, the Manitoba way.

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

Ms. Marcelino: The public is tired of ideological fights over infrastructure. What they want are real investments in our highways and roads so that Manitoba gets the best bang for their buck. This legislation ensures that and it has the Auditor General make sure we are building wisely.

The Premier is simply ripping up the legislation. This sets all Manitoba back, hiding the true costs of this arrangement.

I implore the Premier: Will he consider—reconsider his position on ripping up accountability for public-private partnerships?

Mr. Pallister: Well, Madam Speaker, the previous administration was so challenged by a concept so common sense to Manitobans, they were so challenged by this concept of actually going and shopping intelligently and looking around for alternative prices to get the best possible value, that the Auditor General released a report a couple of years ago censuring them and saying there was no evidence of any ability to get value for money under the previous government's administration.

Now, they talk about shopping smart. But, Madam Speaker, evidence of shopping wasn't there on the east-side road project where \$500 million was expended and only 50 miles of road built—no evidence that there was any intelligent strategy around investing to get better results.

The difference between our two governments is that they are caught up in old socialist ideologies and we understand the importance of getting value for money for Manitobans, Madam Speaker.

Public-Private Partnerships Repeal of Legislation

Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview): Manitoba currently has the most progressive P3 legislation in the country. It requires a preliminary risk assessment. It requires public consultations. It requires a fairness 'moniser'—monitor to oversee purchasing processes and it requires a final report to the Auditor General.

In Monday's reactionary Throne Speech the government said that they were going to repeal this progressive piece of legislation.

So I ask the Premier: What's he—

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Allum: Well, maybe they'll clap for this too, Madam Speaker.

What's the Premier hiding, and what's—why is he opposed to open, accountable and transparent government?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Madam Speaker, the previous administration gave more than half a dozen untendered contracts to party pals, covered it up—covered it up and covered it up for years, failed to disclose—failed to disclose—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: —failed to disclose, Madam Speaker, and now talks about getting value for money and

transparency. It just doesn't work, and the member's confusing two important words. What he claims is progress is actually regressive.

What we're going to do is going to achieve progress for the people of Manitoba, Madam Speaker. Real progress is embarking on partnerships that the previous administration failed to build. Real progress is getting roads and bridges built, not talking about it or putting up posters saying you're doing it when you're not.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Fort Garry-Riverview, on a supplementary question.

Mr. Allum: Well, I suppose, Madam Speaker, that the Premier isn't aware that Ontario's Auditor General recently revealed that Ontario spent \$8 billion more on P3s than they needed to if they just used—if they just instead used the traditional public financing process.

P3s are like back-loaded, high-interest credit cards, and the real winner—the real winners—are the big investors who make profits out of public transportation.

Who's pocket is the Premier trying to line in repealing this legislation?

Mr. Pallister: Madam Speaker, thank you very much for the opportunity that that diatribe gives me to point out that the member, in his preamble, attacked P3s. He simply dismissed them. He said that they were a way to line private sector people's pockets. He took a totally ideological view which clearly reveals that the NDP has an agenda which says there should be no P3s at all. That is not anything but old ideology talking, no open-mindedness there—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: —no interest at all in getting value for money for the people of Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, we are brought into a situation as a new government where we have to clean up a mess. Part of the reason that that mess is so big is the failed ideology that the members opposite were caught in for so long, and Manitobans saw through it, and they'll see through it now as well.

Madam Speaker: I'm going to ask for the co-operation of all members in the House, that when questions are being asked and answers are being given, that everybody has an opportunity to hear

those. I'm having some difficulty hearing them myself, and, as you know, I have to be paying attention to what is being said so that I can catch any remarks that are unparliamentary and that we can ensure that we have a respectful debate here in this Chamber.

So we are only on question 2, and we've got a long ways to go yet this afternoon, so I would urge that we have this respectful environment from all members in the House so that we can accomplish something this afternoon with question period.

The honourable member for Fort Garry-Riverview, on a final supplementary.

Mr. Allum: Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. I did hear the answer, and it wasn't worth listening to.

We can give eight—we can give 8 billion reasons why they should continue to maintain this important and progressive piece of legislation. We're simply asking the government not to repeal something that brings P3s into the open light.

Why is the Premier putting it back in darkness? Is it because he's really only interested not in governing for the people of Manitoba, but lining the pockets of his friends in the private sector?

Mr. Pallister: Well, Madam Speaker, there you go again with the old tired ideology talking opposite, because it is absolutely true that the members opposite designed and built very little during their term of office, but they did design a piece of legislation which makes it very, very difficult, if not impossible, to design and build bridges and roads using any other model but the tired and same old model that we've always used.

* (14:00)

Every other province has seen progress on this front, but this province has seen zero P3 projects advance since that legislation was put into place, and the reason that legislation was put into place wasn't for progress, Madam Speaker, it was to stand in the way of progress and prevent it from happening.

Infrastructure Projects Government Funding

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): My question is to the Premier (Mr. Pallister).

The government announced last week that a \$126-million cut to the Infrastructure budget; instead of investing in infrastructure and boosting investment in the economy, the government has

proposed to pull back and make a 20 per cent cut in our infrastructure investment.

Can the Premier (Mr. Pallister) explain how a 20 per cent cut is a stable commitment to Infrastructure funding?

Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Minister of Infrastructure): I certainly welcome that question because it allows me to tell the House here today this is a record investment for infrastructure.

And the reason that it's a record is because it goes forward—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pedersen: The reason it's a record is that it goes forward five years. It gives consistent, steady planning for the construction industry so that we get the best value for the construction industry as we move forward.

Unlike the previous government, who only jacked up the spending in election years with their Steady Growth signs, we have given consistency to the industry.

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

Mr. Maloway: I mean, what he really meant to say was that last year, under the previous NDP government, was a record year. Madam Speaker, we invested \$628 million in—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Maloway: —highways. The government budget this year cut highway infrastructure spending by \$88 million, and last week's announcement by the minister will cut another \$38 million more for next year.

Can the Minister for Infrastructure tell me how a \$126-million cut is going to help build essential projects in northern and rural communities across Manitoba?

Mr. Pedersen: Well, the—thank you, Madam Speaker, and I thank the member for that question because, as he has explained, the NDP were very good at spending money but not at getting results, and one only needs to look at the Auditor General's report on the East Side Road Authority, how they blew \$500 million and only built 50 miles of road.

Manitobans expect better; that's why they elected a PC government.

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

Mr. Maloway: I'm going to accept that last answer as an admission that he's cut funding to the roads.

The Province has admitted it's cutting highway funding by 20 per cent next year. Now we learn they want to hide their P3 projects from public scrutiny. We will know less about how the fewer dollars we are spending than we did before because this government refuses to be transparent or accountable when it comes to infrastructure.

Will the minister take the lead, recognize his big mistake here and admit that cuts to Infrastructure will build fewer roads?

Mr. Pedersen: Madam Speaker, last Friday I was very pleased to announce our spending for infrastructure for the next five years to the Manitoba Heavy Construction industry. And if I may quote Chris Lorenc: The commitment to announce levels is fundamental to our ability to expand our capacity and bid competitively. We very much welcome the announcement.

Madam Speaker, this is just the first step in how we will fix the finances, repair the services and rebuild our economy here in Manitoba.

Northern Manitoba Infrastructure Spending

Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas): We know the members opposite have a long history of ignoring the North.

We know in the past election and in Estimates they said they would cut highway spending in the North to give more to southern Manitoba. Now we've learned the government will cut the infrastructure budget by 20 per cent. These cuts will not help improve the quality of life for many northern communities.

Can the minister explain how this will build more roads for our northern communities?

Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Minister of Infrastructure): With the AMM convention on, I had a number of meetings with municipalities throughout the province, and particularly with northern communities and they were very receptive to our highway plan. They realize that spending 2 and a half billion dollars, going forward in

five years gives the entire industry all across Manitoba, no matter where you live in Manitoba, steady, predictable investment in infrastructure.

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

Ms. Lathlin: The government in its Throne Speech said that it will use a return-on-investment test to prioritize highway, bridge, flood infrastructure projects. We know these so-called tests have been used elsewhere for decades to ignore the North and keep communities isolated.

Can the minister explain how this arbitrary test will not reduce infrastructure spending in the North?

Mr. Pedersen: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for the question, but her assertion is totally wrong. We are not ignoring the North; we're not ignoring the east, south, west, wherever you are in Manitoba.

This plan, this steady plan for infrastructure spending over the two and a half—or 2 and a half billion dollars over the next five years will ensure that we build roads throughout Manitoba no matter where you live in Manitoba, unlike the previous government who blew \$500 million in the east—and the Auditor General's report reported on that. They blew \$500 million and only built 50 miles of road on the east side.

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

Ms. Lathlin: This government likes to talk about investments to the North, but there is no action. We are still waiting for their northern strategy which has changed its title three times: Northern Lights, Yes! North, Look North.

Instead, there are cuts to our infrastructure budget and a commitment to hide behind arbitrary test. When there is less money in the budget, there can only be less dollars for our communities when there is a great need for it.

Will the minister say today whether investments such as Moose Lake road will be included from his—be included in his budget this year?

Mr. Pedersen: Well, Manitoba—Madam Speaker, I thank the member for that question because she talks about being much more than talking.

We are far more—unlike the previous government who was all talk and signs and no action, this government is about building infrastructure throughout Manitoba. We're following up on a decade of

debt, decay and decline, and that's why Manitobans elected a new Conservative government to fix our finances, repair our services and rebuild the economy.

Port of Churchill Grain Shipping Concerns

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): Madam Speaker, the Association of Manitoba Municipalities passed an emergency resolution at their annual meeting yesterday. It called for joint action on the part of both the federal and Manitoba governments to ensure that the port reopens in time for the 2017 grain season next summer.

Will the Premier (Mr. Pallister) commit today to ensuring that grain will be shipped in 2017 from the Port of Churchill?

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade): I appreciate the member's question and certainly any other question about northern Manitoba.

And it was a great opportunity to spend some time at the Association of Manitoba Municipalities to have conversations with representatives from across northern Manitoba. And I think they share our vision for northern Manitoba as well, and it was reassuring to hear them congratulate us on the good work that we've been doing in partnership with northern Manitobans to achieve good results around The Pas.

* (14:10)

Obviously, there's challenges facing Churchill and northern Manitoba relative to the rail line and the port, and I will tell the member opposite they were having very positive conversations in regard to that.

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

Operation of Rail Line

Mr. Lindsey: Along with Churchill, we can't forget the crucial importance of our northern rail lines to all northern Manitoba. OCN Chief Christian Sinclair pointed out that the future of the rail line is the most pressing economic issue in the North, and we on this side tend to agree with him.

Will the government commit today to making sure that the rail line serves all of the North now and in the future?

Mr. Cullen: Certainly, Chief Sinclair, we certainly welcome his views on it. We certainly share his

concern with northern Manitobans and certainly in regard to the rail line. We respect him coming on board as the new chief at OCN. In fact, we respect his comments so much that we've actually asked him to co-chair the economic development for northern Manitoba. So we really believe in what he's trying to accomplish there in northern Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, this is a sign of a new government working in partnership with First Nations and northern communities to achieve results for northern Manitobans.

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

Northern Manitoba Communities Economic Development Support

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): So far we haven't heard the commitment yet.

This government drags its feet in important files, using the excuse, well, they're waiting for the federal government to act. As luck would have it, the federal government has committed \$4.6 million in economic development support for this region of the North.

Will this government follow the lead of the federal government and commit to at least \$4.6 million in economic development support for the North?

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade): It does allow me to tell the House that I actually had a conversation with Minister Bains just last week in Ottawa regarding economic development in northern Manitoba. We discussed the money that the federal government is putting on the table.

It also gives me an opportunity to talk about the short-term political bailouts by the previous government—did not work for northern Manitobans.

Madam Speaker, that why—that's why this new government is working in partnership with northern Manitobans to come up with solutions for northern Manitoba. That's the job of this government, and we will fulfill that mandate.

Education System Overcrowding in Schools

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): Madam Speaker, today is a special question period for me because I get to ask questions that have been written by S.P.Y., Sisler's Political Youth, my alma mater. These questions address issues affecting students.

Madam Speaker, overcrowding is a serious problem in Manitoba schools. Many schools within the Winnipeg School Division 1 and Seven Oaks School Division are holding classes in their libraries and cafeterias due to lack of space.

Additionally, portable classrooms are being used more and more. There is an anticipated arrival of many school-age Syrian refugees by the end of this year, many of whom will be attending our public schools.

We would like to know specifically what the government is planning to do to address this problem of school overcrowding all over Manitoba.

Hon. Ian Wishart (Minister of Education and Training): I thank the member for the question, and I thank the students for the questions as well.

Certainly we are working very proactively with the school division and particularly the two that have reference to, Winnipeg and Seven Oaks. We are well aware that they have crowding problems, as do a number of school divisions in Manitoba. Surprisingly, we have some school divisions with as many as 46 portables in—at play, courtesy of a building program that seemed to be out of whack somehow in the last 17 years.

So we'll work very constructively with the school division to try and address the overcrowding problems as quickly as is possible, Madam Speaker.

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

Funding Concerns

Ms. Lamoureux: Education funding is becoming a concern for a lot of students. We believe that the funding formula for education could be improved.

The announcement of the provincial public education grants being 'potentially'—potentially delayed gives school boards less time to prepare for how much they need to change the tax rates and allocate resources to certain programs and services.

What will this government do in the next 12 months towards alleviating some of the growing concerns towards funding our public education system?

Mr. Wishart: I thank the member for the question.

And I understand students' concern about funding for schools, because it, of course, it affects their future very directly and it—as it does every

Manitoban because we're all very dependent on the fact that we need a good education for students. They are our future.

We are working very constructively to try and solve funding issues. I had many great discussions during the AMM convention with councillors and some people representing school divisions from across the province, frankly, expressing concern about the sustainability of funding for schools in Manitoba.

We are working together with our partners to try and find good solutions.

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

Teen Drug Abuse

Ms. Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, another issue for students is the rise of fentanyl and carfentanil use here in Manitoba. Abuse and trade of prescription drugs are occurring more among Manitoba's teens, especially in our northern regions, and worrying in our public schools. There have been reported fatalities of teens and even more who will admit abuse.

How does the government plan to address the rising problem of teen drug abuse with respect to public education?

And, Madam Speaker, before the minister takes the question, I would like to table the names of S.P.Y. and ask for leave to have them added to Hansard.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave for the names to be added to Hansard? *[Agreed]*

Hazel Panaligan; Riggs Balita; Joebelle Borja; Alandra Barairo; Prema Sharma; Emily Marchione; Alyssa Vokey; Arniel Alejandro; Jasmeen Kaur; Ethan Graveline

Madam Speaker: The honourable minister of Health, Education and—or—Health, Seniors and Active Living.

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): Madam Speaker, first, I want to say that this is, I think, the finest set of questions that the member has ever asked and I want to congratulate her.

It is, indeed, a very serious issue, the issue of fentanyl and carfentanil, and I'm glad that the young people have raised it, and I want to encourage them

to talk to their peers and to talk to them about the great danger of drugs and the potential that fentanyl and carfentanil can be put in them. You would do a great service to all Manitobans by ensuring that, as peers, you talk to them.

The issue about prescription is also key, and I'm happy to advise the member that the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons has indicated that they will, by March of 2017, have a statement of principles on safe opiate prescriptions, which I think is a good start.

Affordable Housing Initiatives Funding Increase

Ms. Janice Morley-Lecomte (Seine River): In the Speech from the Throne our government is setting a new course for Manitoba. After the NDP decade of debt, we are focusing on fixing our finances; after the NDP decade of decay, we are focused on repairing our services; and after the NDP decade of decline, we are focused on rebuilding our economy.

Can the Minister of Families tell this House more about our government's plan to repair our services to better support affordable housing initiatives throughout the province?

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Families): Well, thank you for the question from the member.

And, as mentioned—and I like the themes that she's talking about in terms of fixing the finances, repairing our services and repairing our economy to a certain extent, and what this announcement really is about is repairing services in terms of affordable housing.

We know that when we came into office we found over \$500 million of deferred maintenance costs in terms of the housing.

We also know, when we talked to people—even at the AMM conference I had an opportunity to meet with mayor and council—mayor Robert Buck from Grand Rapids with the—from the member from Swan River, that talked about the deplorable, in some respects, cases of some of the housing in terms of mould that's in Manitoba Housing.

We're very pleased that we're able to sit with the federal government and announce over \$90 million towards affordable housing initiatives, towards home ownership in terms of things like supports for housing for seniors, as well as initiatives—

Madam Speaker: The minister's time has expired.

* (14:20)

**Fentanyl Crisis—Sale of Pill Presses
Request for Restrictive Legislation**

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): Madam Speaker, the Health Minister is shirking responsibility for an out-of-control fentanyl crisis by saying he has no power to act through legislation and that it's the federal government's job to end this problem. But, Madam Speaker, this is simply untrue. Families and front-line addictions workers are eager to share their expertise with the minister, and he's missing an opportunity to build an anti-opiate strategy that takes action immediately.

One example families are asking for is restriction of the sale of pill presses in this province to keep fentanyl off the streets. Provinces like Alberta are moving ahead with this important legislation.

Will the Health Minister take action today and commit to, at the very least, regulating the sale of pill presses in Manitoba?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): Well, Madam Speaker, I think there is progress in the House because the member has come on board. We have been saying for several weeks that there needs to be restriction of pill presses in Canada. It's a message that I brought to Ottawa when I met with the federal minister and health ministers across Canada. I'm glad the member is finally in agreement.

Now, he has to understand—and Alberta would confirm this and so would British Columbia—that limiting it just in one province doesn't actually work because our borders don't have great walls around them and drug dealers don't respect those borders. And that's why British Columbia, which is dealing with this in the most critical way, is calling for a national restriction of pill presses. We back them up. I'm glad the member has finally come on board, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Wiebe: Well, I'm surprised the minister didn't have the opportunity to read the private member's resolution that was before this House with families who are affected by this crisis in the gallery, didn't have the opportunity to read that important resolution which was non-partisan, which didn't actually push the minister in any other way than to say that pill

presses was one of the steps that we could take in legislation in this province.

So I ask the minister: Will he move on this important legislation? Alberta is moving on it. Other provinces see the value in it. It can be done here and now in this province. Will he take this opportunity?

Mr. Goertzen: Well, Madam Speaker, this government has seen the value of the restriction of pill presses nationally for several weeks. The former government never spoke about it. We went and we spoke about this in Ottawa. I was joined by the honourable Terry Lake, the minister of health for British Columbia, who is dealing with this in the most dramatic of ways, joined by one of the ministers of health from Alberta, and they all called for the national restriction of pill presses. We've been on board for a long time. I'm glad the member is with us. We can join together in calling on Ottawa to do that as soon as possible.

Madam Speaker, I thank him for finally coming on board with this initiative.

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

Mr. Wiebe: Madam Speaker, seven deaths in one month, multiple overdose calls every single day. This is not just a crisis; this is a public health emergency. Addictions workers need resources flowing immediately to tackle this fentanyl crisis head on. To do that they need the minister to stop shifting blame and stead call a public health emergency.

Will he stand in this House, tell us that he will develop a true anti-opiate strategy, ban the sale of pill presses in this province here and now, and start working with our first responders and front-line workers?

Mr. Goertzen: Well, Madam Speaker, we have put forward a number of initiatives, some of which are directly related to Manitoba, some of which are national in scope, and I am glad that health ministers from across Canada of different political stripes have seen the value of that.

We will continue to press the federal government where there needs to be national action. We will continue to work on a provincial level where there can be provincial action.

But make no mistake, we understand that there are many challenges and many facets around this issue, whether it is the inappropriate prescription of

opiates or the illicit importation of opiates, and we are looking at acting on all of those issues.

New School Construction Government Intention

Mr. Wab Kinew (Fort Rouge): The priority of this government shouldn't just be to help students to get better at writing standardized tests; it should also be to help students better prepare for the jobs in society of the future. The research is clear: having smaller class sizes helps students learn. That's why I like the question from the students from Sisler, though I didn't hear a direct answer to the question

So I'd like to re-ask in a slightly more pointed fashion, we didn't hear about any new investments in Manitoba schools in the Throne Speech, so can the minister tell the House today whether he plans to build any new schools in our province in the next year?

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

We're certainly focused on working with our partners across the province to work through the priority system. We know that we have a huge deficit in terms of school space across the province, for a variety of reasons, and we want to make sure that we put our investments in the right places.

We are working in a very constructive manner, and we do look forward to having some new schools.

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

Seven Oaks School Division New School Inquiry

Mr. Wab Kinew (Fort Rouge): We all look forward to new schools. The question is when and which one? I'm sure the member from Brandon East (Mr. Isleifson) would like to know if there's going to be that new school in the south side of Brandon. Lot of people in the Winnipeg School Division—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: —are wondering if there's going to be a school—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: —called Waterford Dream in this city.

But, specifically, and with relevance to some of the people in the gallery today, we know that the Amber Trails school, the area around Amber Trails, is dealing with overcrowding; it's a major issue.

So will there be a new school in the Seven Oaks School Division announced this year?

Hon. Ian Wishart (Minister of Education and Training): I appreciate the member's question, and I can tell him that every time we meet with the school division we find a new No. 1 priority because every school division has a No. 1 priority, mostly based on the fact that the previous government simply couldn't find the resources or the management skill to keep up in terms of supplying classroom space for the existing students.

We are continuing to work with the school divisions, and we will make a point, actually, Madam Speaker, of telling—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wishart: —the school division first and not just announce it willy-nilly like the previous government loved to do.

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

Mr. Kinew: I'm not sure whether my question should be: When the students of that school division ask you a question and giving them a direct answer, is that considered willy-nilly by this minister?

But I digress. I digress.

I would specifically like to know: Will the minister tell Manitoba students and their parents whether they can expect to see a new school this year in the Seven Oaks School Division?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Well, Madam Speaker, just a little bit of a dose of reality for the member opposite and something to understand: We have had, under the previous administration, not one but two credit-rating downgrades.

This is a quote four months ago from Standard & Poor's: As a consequence of the mismanagement—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: —of the previous administration—Madam Speaker, these downgrades were because of the accumulation of debt and gross overspending, unfocused overspending—I'm suggesting to the members opposite they listen and perhaps learn.

The downgrades reflect our assessment—I'm reading from the report now, Madam Speaker, if I might—the downgrade reflects our assessment of the significant rise in Manitoba's debt burden. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Pallister: —significant rise in Manitoba's debt burden. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: There is at least a one-in-three chance that we would lower the rating by one notch in the next 12 months should the government not address this situation. This is, Madam Speaker, tens of millions of dollars not available for schools as a result of this particular regime's administration—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: —which, Madam Speaker, it should be noted, over 10 years, lagged the country in investing in schools, over 10 years was 10th of all Canadian provinces in investing in schools and handed us a massive problem to clean up.

Madam Speaker, we value education on this side of the House. We'll find the savings; we'll get the job done.

* (14:30)

Madam Speaker: The time for oral questions has expired.

Petitions?

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

House Business

Hon. Andrew Micklefield (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, on House business, I'd like to announce that the Standing Committee on Public Accounts will meet on November 24th, 2016, at 5:30 p.m. for an orientation session to be held in camera.

Madam Speaker, will you canvass the House to see if there's leave for this orientation session to be open to all members of the Legislative Assembly and one staff for each party?

Madam Speaker: It has been announced that the Standing Committee on Public Accounts will

meet on November 24th, 2016, at 5:30 p.m. for an orientation session to be held in camera.

Is there leave for this orientation session to be open to all members of the Legislative Assembly and one staff for each party? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Micklefield: Madam Speaker, on House business, I would like to announce that the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs will meet on Friday, November 25th, 2016, at 3 p.m. to consider the following reports: Annual Report of Elections Manitoba for the year ending December 31st, 2014, including the conduct of the 2014 Arthur-Virden and Morris by-elections; Annual Report of Elections Manitoba for the year ending December 31st, 2015, including the conduct of The Pas by-election.

Madam Speaker: It has been announced that the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs will meet on Friday, November 25th, 2016, at 3 p.m. to consider the following reports: Annual Report of Elections Manitoba for the year ending December 31st, 2014, including the conduct of the 2014 Arthur-Virden and Morris by-elections; Annual Report of Elections Manitoba for the year ending December 31st, 2015, including the conduct of The Pas by-election.

THRONE SPEECH (Second Day of Debate)

Madam Speaker: Resuming debate on the proposed motion of the honourable member for Fort Richmond (Mrs. Guillemard), standing in the name of the honourable interim Leader of the Official Opposition.

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Leader of the Official Opposition): First, I would like to thank you, Madam Speaker, for your leadership in the House, along with the Legislative Assembly Clerk and the table officers. I would also like to thank our interns and the pages for their valuable work supporting us each and every day.

Madam Speaker, I would also want to thank the constituents of Logan for their trust and support. I'm humbled by their renewed trust in me, and I take seriously the trust they have bestowed on me while fully realizing I serve at their pleasure. The future of Manitobans and my constituents in Logan are looking gloomy as a result of this government's Throne Speech read to us last Monday.

Life is about making decisions. Sadly, contained in this year's Throne Speech are decisions that will

put at risk the many achievements in the economic and social life of Manitoba. Sadly, this government has failed Manitoba families and seems unprepared to do anything to help them better their lives.

Madam Speaker, Manitoba has lost some 11,600 full-time jobs since this government came to power six months ago. At 6.4 per cent unemployment in October, Manitoba hasn't seen a jobless rate this high since September of 1997.

I and my colleagues on this side of the House are calling on this government to reverse its regressive policies of neglect and implement real policies that will help Manitobans. This policy should include: for families, creating thousands of affordable, high-quality, licensed child-care spaces; for families, creating more affordable housing; likewise, tie the seniors' property tax credit to inflation. Our seniors deserve the support from this government, for they have put in so much investments of time and effort and years of working hard, and at this time in their later years they need to be fully acknowledged and supported. Likewise, for families there should be a guaranteed Manitoba affordability advantage by keeping Manitoba Public Insurance and hydro rates low.

As for health care, we should see programs that will maintain and improve the public health-care system. Likewise, we should be able to clearly define and protect front-line workers and their services. Also, there should be a made-in-Manitoba opioid strategy and expanded mental health services for children.

In the area of education, this government should be building and expanding public schools. Also, this government should be expanding training opportunities in colleges, likewise maintaining the cap on tuition increases in post-secondary tuition fees, as well as rescinding the wage freeze that many, many front-line workers will be facing in the coming days.

As for working Manitobans, day in and day out, we have called on this government to increase the minimum wage. Likewise, I and my colleagues have been calling this government to reinstate the automatic certification for workers who want to organize in their workplaces.

And for indigenous Manitobans, this government should be working with First Nations leaders and the federal government to improve education and health services in First Nations communities,

likewise working with First Nations leaders and the federal government to improve housing and water in First Nations communities, likewise working with First Nations leaders and the federal government to address the youth suicide crisis in First Nations communities.

So far, Madam Speaker, this government—this government's Throne Speech is a huge disappointment for everyday and average Manitobans. We were looking for investments for families in education, in health care, for indigenous Manitobans and also for disabled Manitobans, as well as investments in job creation.

For example, we'd like to see a commitment to creating thousands of affordable high-quality licensed child-care spaces for families. We were hoping to find out or—to read from and hear from the Throne Speech that this government will be maintaining and improving the public health-care system and home care, rather than turning to two-tiered medicine.

We were hoping to hear that building and expanding public schools and keeping post-secondary education affordable will be clearly spelled out, likewise just-mentioned yearly increases in the minimum wage and maintaining Manitoba's affordability, as well as working with First Nations leaders and the federal government to improve education and health services in First Nations communities.

And my colleague just mentioned in her question to—earlier that she'd like to see investments in roads, bridges and other assets for the North.

*(14:40)

Madam Speaker, we are—these times that we're in are uncertain times in our province and in our economy and in our country, and this government needs to come up with real, concrete plans to make sure we have good jobs for our youth, make sure life is affordable for families and make sure we have strong public services, rather than announce that major cuts to public services are looming.

This government is more interested in settling old partisan debts and coming up with manufactured crises, which is misleading Manitobans and not working for Manitobans. A government that picks partisan fights with labour rather than working co-operatively with labour will not grow our economy. Likewise, cuts to front-line services are no

solution. They do not grow the economy. Instead, they hurt everyday Manitobans.

We've heard time and time again of consultations, which are good, but political reviews that justify privatization of services are scary because it will only help well-connected insiders known to the government, but they will hurt everyday Manitobans.

This government needs to put away the partisan spin and look to finding real concrete solutions for Manitobans today.

We should have seen—we have seen, sadly, that this government's Throne Speech laid the groundwork for cuts to front-line workers and opened the door to privatization of front-line services. Not yet into their first year, this government had—has already broken their election commitment to protect front-line workers. Every single member of this government gave themselves a raise and are now going to make nurses, teachers, community safety officers, and child-care workers and linemen suffer.

Instead of building strong public services, the government is undermining them. This government plans to gut a law that requires transparency and accountability for all private-public partnerships. Rather than having to justify their actions to the public, this government instead wants to benefit their well-connected insider friends.

Why are they afraid of having the Auditor General monitor what they are planning on doing through the private-public partnerships?

The government is more interested in manufacturing partisan crises and fighting the last election than finding real solutions for Manitobans, and they are attempting to use this fake manufactured crisis to justify a program of cuts and eventual privatization.

This government's Throne Speech is the wrong direction for Manitoba. It cuts where it should build; it privatizes instead of keeping services public, and it will divide Manitobans rather than offering an inclusive vision for the province.

We in this side of the House oppose this austerity agenda and we oppose this Throne Speech.

I would like to also state that under this Throne Speech, fixing the finances, we heard in this Throne Speech that fixing the finances is code for politicizing the budget process. The government should stop picking ideological fights and actually work for all Manitobans.

In this Throne Speech we gleaned clear attempts to manufacture a political crisis in the budget in order to offer a fake justification for their program of cuts and eventual privatization.

First we learned, in the Throne Speech, it trumpeted fake savings of over \$100 million in their last budget; that's what transparent budgeting looks like for this government. But they couldn't produce a number because they made it up. Instead, they found so-called savings by jacking up taxes on seniors, breaking an election commitment to do so and making \$9 million in cuts to schools and universities.

Secondly, this government inflated the actual budget numbers by over \$150 million. The government claimed to have a historic deficit of over \$1 billion, but when the Auditor General actually looked at the books, it turned out the government inflated their deficit figure by more than 15 per cent, and they never could explain why they misled Manitobans, nor did they apologize.

This government has manufactured a political crisis surrounding the deficit in order to justify what they had already planned to do: cut front-line services and open the door to privatization. Clearly, this is breaking their election pledge.

Likewise, their Throne Speech breaks an election commitment and launches an attack on front-line services and the people that provide these important services. The government wants to off-load their financial problems onto the backs of front-line workers by cutting jobs and slashing wages and not protecting front-line workers. It shows this government's pledge was not worth the paper it was written on. It was written instead with disappearing ink.

Cutting jobs and slashing wages is not a plan for hope. It takes money from the wallets of working people for their—for this government's own mistaken priorities.

The Premier (Mr. Pallister) and his Cabinet took a raise to their salaries of hundreds of thousands of dollars this year 'alore'—alone. The Premier will pocket more than \$30,000 extra this year alone. Each Cabinet minister received approximately \$24,000 more this year. This totals nearly \$330,000—\$330,000—for the entire Cabinet. But this government refused to raise the minimum wage for working Manitobans, and now they're going to force nurses, teachers and child-care workers to take a legislated pay cut as well.

Cuts to jobs and to wages of front-line workers who are not part of the Premier's (Mr. Pallister) election pledge—he's already broken that commitment, and it appears they are his real agenda. Nothing in this Throne Speech preserves Manitoba's affordability advantage. It doesn't even mention it, for MPI rates, home heating and electricity rates and tuition fees are all set to rise under this government. The Premier does not believe it is the responsibility of government to ensure that life in Manitoba remains affordable for families. In fact, they have refused to preserve our affordability advantage and instead are shifting the burden to those who can least afford it.

On the labour relations front, we have seen and heard deception and distraction on—and—or how this government conducts labour negotiations when it isn't launching unnecessary, partisan fights with labour, like it did with Bill 7.

We already know that this government does not respect the collective bargaining process, and collective bargaining is a fundamental right held by Canadians and has been affirmed as such by the Supreme Court of Canada. What proof can we say? Well, this government interfered with labour negotiations at the University of Manitoba, ordering the University of Manitoba to not offer a salary increase after negotiations had already started, which caused a strike that impacted nearly 30,000 students for three weeks. But it won't admit that its reckless actions hurt students.

*(14:50)

Now, the government proposes to bring legislation to cut wages and jobs for front-line workers, legislation which may very well be unconstitutional. We ask this government: Have they actually tried to talk to any labour leader regarding this proposed legislation?

Kevin Rebeck of the Manitoba Federation of Labour said, quote: The Premier recently said that he respects collective bargaining and the thousands of Manitoba workers who deliver the vital services families count on, but that's clearly not the case. In this Throne Speech, the Premier seems set on undermining collective bargaining and restricting the ability of our hospitals, clinics and Crown corporations to deliver services. Unquote.

Also, Michelle Gawronsky of MGEU said, quote: We were looking for a clear sign that this government was going to follow through on its

commitment to protect and invest in the public services Manitobans count on. Instead, the Premier is now proposing to not only strip working Manitobans of their bargaining rights, but also threatening the very services that he clearly and publicly promised to protect. Unquote.

Another labour leader, Kelly Moist of CUPE Manitoba, said, and I quote: The Premier plans to table legislation to control the cost of public services, but appears to be backtracking on his commitment to respect collective bargaining. The government speaks of the consultations it has undertaken, but appears to listen only to a small, privileged minority. End of quote.

On the infrastructure file we found in the Throne Speech, the agenda for infrastructure for this government is one of cuts. They do not want to boost the economy through infrastructure spending.

Our government invested a record \$628 million in 2015-16 alone in roads and bridges. Just last week the Province admitted it is cutting that investment by 20 per cent next year. But rather than admitting it is cutting investments, the government today portrayed this cut as a strong commitment to infrastructure. It is nothing of that sort. Instead of actually investing in roads, bridges and other essential infrastructure investments, this government is planning to open the door to privatization of public services.

Under the Throne Speech we learned that its only real plans for infrastructure are to scrap The Public-Private Partnerships Transparency and Accountability Act.

Also, according to this government, when you have transparency and accountability, this discourages investment.

We believe differently on this side of the House. We know that when you don't have transparency and accountability, this opens the door to the privatization of public services which only benefits well-connected insiders.

Also, Madam Speaker, the Throne Speech claims that Infrastructure spending will use a, quote, return on investment test, unquote, for roads and bridges. We know what return on investment means to Progressive Conservatives. It means taking new—no new investments in the North of this province and leaving rural Manitoba to fend for itself.

That's why this government made no specific commitment in the Throne Speech to build an inch of

road on the east side of Lake Winnipeg, nor did they provide a timeline for the construction of the Lake St. Martin-Lake Manitoba outlet.

Also, this Throne Speech offered new—no new investments in downtown Winnipeg. The government has already killed a rail relocation study and was supported by—which was supported by businesses, by the City of Winnipeg, and by the federal government. Likewise, this government ordered Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries to kill their headquarters relocation project, which would have saved the corporation millions and contributed to their revitalization of downtown Winnipeg. Now the government has interfered in Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries again and is trying to undermine their investments in the True North Square project for partisan and political purposes, and they're using deceit to cover their tracks.

This Throne Speech offered no new infrastructure investments for Brandon, nothing for the Brandon water treatment plant, nothing for the Keystone Centre, no regional economic development plans, nothing for the North Hill ACC campus, no new school in Brandon's south end, no new student housing for Brandon University, no new seniors housing. Brandon councillor Jan Chaboyer of Green Acres said, quote: This government has had a long enough time for building relationship. Now let's see some actions. It appeared in Brandon Sun, November 22, 2016.

It's the same story for communities across the province like the place—places like Selkirk, Gimli, Swan River, Dauphin, Lorette, Stonewall, Ste. Anne, Steinbach, Teulon, La Broquerie, Arborg, Thompson, Flin Flon and so many others.

Also lacking very clearly from the Throne Speech, and perhaps most importantly, there was not one mention of Churchill, the Port of Churchill or the Bay Line in this Throne Speech. This government has no plan, after nearly six months in office, after the port was shuttered and grain stopped shipping, to get it opened again. When will this government actually offer a plan to save the Port of Churchill?

On the health-care front, in the Throne Speech, instead of making a strong commitment to delivering good-quality, publicly funded health care close to home, the government is wasting three quarters of a million dollars on pointless reviews, reviews which will undoubtedly open the door to the privatization of our health-care system, something the

Premier (Mr. Pallister) and the Health Minister have both said they're open to.

In May 2013, the then-opposition leader, now Premier, said, and I quote: Two-tier health care is here. I think that's what Manitobans want to see. Unquote. And the Premier, in the interview at CJOB said this.

Madam Speaker, the government has launched partisan attacks on ACCESS centres, QuickCare clinics, and on the Birth Centre. It seems these health-care facilities are tying their hands. It can only tie their hands if they want to shut them down. Will the government admit their only plan for health care is to close the Birth Centre, close community clinics? But the government wants to have it both ways.

* (15:00)

In its budget, it trumpeted the investments it was making in the institutions it now wants to shutter. They claim their budget provided a \$220-million, or a 3.8 per cent increase, in funding for health care over the current core government's 2015-16 forecast to support ACCESS centres, health-care centres and hospitals in Winnipeg and rural Manitoba, the Provincial Oncology Drug Program and other important health-care services. That's according to Manitoba government press release, May 31, 2016.

On the most pressing health issue of the day, the fentanyl crisis which is devastating families, devastating communities in this province today, the government could barely find a room for a sentence in their 18-page-long speech. Instead of taking concrete action today—banning pill presses, for example, or creating more treatment beds—the Health Minister is dragging his feet. The Throne Speech offers no new supports for addiction services. It opens no new treatment facilities. It makes no real investments to stop this scourge from devastating more families.

What this Throne Speech failed to mention was any new investments in home care for Manitobans, any new investments in personal-care-home beds for Manitobans. Instead, the Throne Speech noted that the government still hasn't called its wait-times task force nearly seven months after it said it would. This is clearly not a priority for this government. It can't use the federal government as an excuse as to why it hasn't called a task force. Is this government waiting for the results for KPMG before actually taking—talking with front-line workers about how health-care system really works?

On the education front, our public school education needs real support. We need facilities that can house growing student populations and teachers need resources so they can meet students' needs. The Throne Speech will develop a plan to address literacy and numeracy, but it offers no supports to teachers or educational assistants to implement this so-called plan. Does the government expect educators to do more with less? Is this a plan that will help our students succeed?

Instead of offering real support, the government seems bent on reintroduction of standardized tests. We should not force our students to compete against each other. We should be providing them the support they need to succeed in school and in life. Likewise, Madam Speaker, the Throne Speech offers no commitment to a new school in Brandon or in Winnipeg. When will the government recognize the pressures of growing population put on our education system? The government already cut millions from schools in its last budget. Will it continue to make needed investments in our public-school system?

Our post-secondary institutions are looking for guidance from a government that can only offer uncertainty. This is a government that is looking to jack up tuition fees for students and families. The Premier (Mr. Pallister) said, in the press scrum November 21st, I do not think it's probably—I do think it's probably necessary that tuition goes up. Here's what students have to say about that: Tuition hikes will slam the door for so many students who are already in post-secondary and those who wish to attend, according to Mr. Barkman, chairman of the—chairperson, Canadian Federation of Students. Did the government bother to consult with students prior to jacking up their tuition rates? Likewise, the Throne Speech offers no new funding guarantees to post-secondary institutions of any sort, and it comes on the heels of a \$9-million cut to the education budget last May.

In the Throne Speech, there is no commitment to fund universities or colleges in a sustainable way. There is no commitment to access capital funding from the federal government in order to grow our universities and colleges and ensure students get the training they need to access jobs here at home. Also, this Throne Speech offers no vision for education at the school-age and post-secondary level for Manitoba students and families.

And on social services, what did we find out from the Throne Speech? Well, the Throne Speech

did not mention one investment in prevention services for children who are at risk of being apprehended into care. Prevention is the best mechanism to help children. Prevention is providing supports to parents, families and communities so children can remain in their home, and that is the best way to strengthen the child-welfare system.

Our government presented a comprehensive plan to address challenges within the child and welfare system, which is customary care. It is an indigenous-led initiative that has support within indigenous communities. Customary care has proved successful in other jurisdictions, and we hope the government acts on our proposal as soon as possible.

In our time, our government had also introduced comprehensive legislation to strengthen the Children's Advocate. We hope the new government acts on our bill and makes these needed changes. But with all improvements to the child-welfare system, the government must ensure that the needed supports are there.

Will this government commit to new offering needed funds for prevention and program development, so we can address the challenges we face?

Madam Speaker, the Throne Speech did not create one new child-care space and did not hire any new child-care worker. If the Cabinet had rejected their massive pay raise this year, they could have hired nine early-childhood educators to care for children. Instead, they took the raise. The government's inaction on the child-care file has meant 3,000 more families have been added to the wait-list.

Also, the Throne Speech claim that it wanted to reduce red tape but made no mention of what impact that will have on child-care facilities—these regulations protect the health and safety of children. Which regulations will this government scrap?

This government's ignoring the advice of experts to invest in universal, affordable public child care purely because it doesn't fit their ideological agenda. Instead, they are touting their home-based child care.

This government proclaimed that it will make use of social impact bonds in order to address poverty. Instead of working with community groups and building on local knowledge, we know that the government plans to scrap the ALL Aboard strategy after the government refused to raise the minimum wage for the first time in 16 years.

When will the government admit that it does not have a plan to address poverty in Manitoba?

Social impact bonds are a way of rewarding well-connected insiders. Instead of making public investments in poverty reduction and service delivery with not-with non-profit service providers, the Premier (Mr. Pallister) is sending cheques to his rich corporate friends. Social impact bonds have no track record of success, but they do leave the poorest and the most vulnerable of our citizens out in the cold.

* (15:10)

On the environment front, we were eagerly waiting to see what the Premier means by, quote, made-in-Manitoba, unquote, solutions to carbon pricing. The government should commit every dollar it raises from its upcoming carbon tax to reducing greenhouse gases, creating green jobs and protecting vulnerable Manitobans from the impact of the new talks-tax, but the Throne Speech didn't mention any of these.

Well, the Throne Speech did mention a new referendum on taxes. Will the government have the courage of its so-called convictions and put its carbon tax to a vote before Manitobans? If this government wants to levy a carbon tax on Manitobans it should make sure the funds raised actually go to protecting the environment and creating green jobs?

This government can also be a leader in reducing greenhouse gases and creating green jobs by working with community support to support composting programs across the province.

Madam Speaker, I would like to propose an amendment to the Throne Speech motion.

I so move, seconded by the member from Elmwood,

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

But this House regrets that the provincial government has:

- (a) announced an agenda of cuts and austerity breaking its pledge to protect front-line workers and the services they provide while government ministers receive large wage increases which will lead to increased inequality, undermine the health of the

economy and worsen the lives of everyday Manitobans; and

- (b) open the door to the privatization and deregulation of essential and important front-line services and has resolved to hide its plans from impartial public scrutiny, undermining public delivery of services and public accountability; and
- (c) manufactured partisan political crises and has refused to produce a transparent, long-term financial documents in order to justify an agenda of cuts to front-line services and privatization; and
- (d) failed to take steps to keep the cost of living affordable for Manitobans by enabling increases to home heating rates, electricity rates, auto insurance rates and post-secondary tuition; and
- (e) not presented any meaningful plan to address a wide range of needs concerning health care, home care, seniors, the environment, climate change, the minimum wage, publicly funded child-care spaces, the child-welfare system, housing, poverty, the justice system, the public education system, funding for post-secondary institutions, infrastructure, rural Manitoba, economic development for the North, investments in Winnipeg, Brandon and other municipalities, agriculture and many other important areas for Manitobans.

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

I would like to—I'm sorry, I missed some words and added unnecessary words to the amendment motion. Madam Speaker, I would like to reword letter (c) of the amendment.

It should say, under letter

- (c) manufactured partisan political crises and has refused to produce transparent, long-term financial documents in order to justify an agenda of cuts to front-line services and privatization; and
- (d) failed to take steps to keep the cost of living affordable for Manitobans by enabling increases to home heating rates, electricity

rates, auto insurance rates and post-secondary tuition fees; and.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable interim Leader of the Official Opposition (Ms. Marcelino), seconded by the honourable member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway),

THAT the motion be amended by adding the following . . . at the end—pardon me—THAT the motion be amended by adding at the end the following words:

But this House regrets that the provincial government has:

- (a) announced an agenda of cuts and austerity, breaking its pledge to protect front-line workers and the services they provide while government ministers received large wage increases which will lead to increased—

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense—I will continue reading where I was. Fact, I'll probably start again at (a) so I have it all accurately on message here.

- (a) announced an agenda of cuts and austerity, breaking its pledge to protect front-line workers and the services they provide while government ministers received large wage increases which will lead to increased inequality, undermine the health of the economy and worsen the lives of everyday Manitobans; and
- (b) opened the door to the privatization and deregulation of essential and important front-line services and has resolved to hide its plans from impartial public scrutiny, undermining public delivery of services and public accountability; and
- (c) manufactured partisan political crises and has refused to produce a transparent, long—pardon me—manufactured partisan political crises and has refused to produce transparent, long-term financial documents in order to justify an agenda of cuts to front-line services and privatization; and
- (d) failed to take steps to keep the cost of living affordable for Manitobans by enabling increases to home heating rates, electricity rates, auto insurance rates and post-secondary tuition fees; and

- (e) not presented any meaningful plan to address a wide range of needs concerning health care; home care; seniors; the environment; climate change; the minimum wage; publicly funded child-care spaces; the child-welfare system; housing; poverty; the justice system, the public education system; funding for post-secondary institutions; infrastructure; rural Manitoba; economic development for the North; investments in Winnipeg, Brandon and other municipalities; agriculture; and many other important areas for Manitoba.

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

The amendment is in order.

Debate can proceed.

Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris): Well, thank you much, Madam Speaker, and it's my pleasure to rise today and put a few brief comments on the record related not only to the Throne Speech but as well as the interim Leader of the Opposition's comments that we heard this afternoon. And I listened to those comments, because I think it's important that we listen to the colleagues and listen to all members of this Legislature.

* (15:20)

It's about perspective, Madam Speaker. And, I mean, that's one thing that I learned in the campaign trail, is when you go knock on a door, you have to be prepared to listen to whomever answers that door and their perspective. And that perspective may be from a retired nurse, it may be from a teacher, it may be from a farmer, it might be a senior, it might be from a student. You just never know.

Mr. Doyle Pivniuk, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

But they all come with a different perspective, Madam Speaker, and it's our role as legislators to make sure that those perspectives are being reflected here in this House in the work we do, in the questions we ask and answer and in the legislation we bring forward.

But despite that, Madam Speaker, what I got from members opposite—mister—sorry, Mr. Deputy Speaker—what I got from members opposite and from the interim leader in her comments on the Throne

Speech, was one of negativity. After 17 years in office, it's shocking how quickly a political party can become the nabobs of negativity that we see across the way with the 14 members there. But I listened to her comments, and I'd like to make some observations that I think are worth noting.

They talk about—and they make their accusations and their fear, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because as the NDP know, there is no monger like a fearmonger, and that's a horse they tried to ride in the last campaign, whether it was scaring cancer patients, whether it was scaring front-line civil servants, whether it was scaring every civil servant, they did their best to fear and to scare Manitobans into voting for their failed agenda. But we saw Manitobans rejected that fear. They rejected that style of—Trump style of politics that the NDP were promoting in the last campaign, and they delivered the largest majority in over a hundred years.

But they continue, despite the overwhelming rejection by Manitobans on eight—April 19th, they continue to peddle that same tired song that they've been peddling for 17 years, Madam Speaker—or, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I understand, to a certain degree, why. I mean, obviously, that hobby horse got them in, in several campaigns. I—in fact, I remember a heated conversation across the table with a then-Finance minister, Minister Struthers, during an Estimates process. And he was accusing the former—or, the speaker of making stuff up. And I remember saying to Stan across the way, I said, you just—I said, isn't that how you got elected in the 2011 election? And his response to me was, yes, what makes you think it won't work again?

And so that was sort of the cynicism of members opposite, that, yes, they can misrepresent to Manitobans, they can lie to Manitobans and Manitobans will believe it hook, long—line and sinker. And, unfortunately, for Manitobans, they did buy what the NDP were for selling for a number of years, but, fortunately, they finally woke up and they lifted the veil and saw the truth that lies underneath.

So, when they talk about cuts to services, it's always interesting, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that they never talk about the \$20-million cut to Conservation under their mandate, the fact that every single one of those members opposite stood up and—to a person—and said, we vote to cut Conservation by \$20 million; we vote to eliminate the Fisheries department, despite the fact that there is a aquatic invasive species crisis in the province, probably the

single—one of the single largest environmental and economic crises of an invasive species that this province will face and that there is no going back and there is no closing that box.

So, despite that as a background, members opposite voted, to a person, that, you know what, we're just going to eliminate the Fisheries branch, because if we don't have a Fisheries branch, perhaps we don't have to hear that bad news from those individuals anymore.

They didn't talk about the fact that during their last mandate, they actually cut the winter clearing road budget, so that in the wintertime—and winter came yesterday and caught a lot of Manitobans off guard, despite the fact that it was the longest time between snowfalls; winter does eventually come here to Manitoba. And yet, the NDP, in all their wisdom, decided, you know what, we're going to reduce the amount of time that our plows are out there clearing the roads but, you know what, that's just rural Manitoba and that's okay, because they didn't really care about rural Manitoba, members opposite. They never did, and we continue to see that in the comments they make in this House day after day.

You know what, they never made mention in any of those comments when they talk about cuts to services in their own record. They don't mention the fact that they cut the road maintenance budget by 25 per cent this fall, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I'm sure you did, representing an area with a large agricultural base and a large number of gravel roads.

I've received an inordinate number of calls from producers and from residents about those roads, and when you talk to the department about, you know, some of the sloughing going on in the roads and the washboarding going on in the roads and, you know, what can we do about it. Then you find out, well, part of the issue is about four years ago the NDP actually cut the maintenance budget for those roads by 25 per cent in that short-term decision. While it may have saved them a few dollars back then, which they were allowed to put into ESRA in their 90 kilometres worth of roads over seven years and \$500 million later, unfortunately, those chickens have come home to roost, at least for rural Manitobans. And now you're at the point where these roads are 'begone' degraded, and now we're trying to play catch-up, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I notice the leader for the—the interim Leader for the Opposition didn't talk about—when she talked about her party's record—didn't talk about the

\$500 million in deferred maintenance that my colleague the Minister of Families (Mr. Fielding) has noted in this House in terms of Manitoba Housing stock.

I was recently up in St. Eustache at the seniors home there, getting a tour by one of the local councillors, and he was showing me three suites that were empty and noting the very—the windows, and these were very old windows in this facility. And he had shared with me that the previous administration actually had committed to replacing all these windows with triple-paned windows that would obviously not only increase the comfort of the residents living in this home, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but obviously there would be a cost savings in terms of energy usage. And then, of course, those windows aren't there; the single panes are still there. And so I had asked what happened to them. It turns out that the previous NDP government made that commitment to replace the windows in the facility but actually never attached a cheque with that commitment. But we have seen this time and time again.

You know, we just saw this—a couple weeks ago, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when news came out that Manitoba's emergency network system is literally—the integrity of the emergency network system, a system relied on by our conservation officers, by our forest firefighters, by the RCMP, by a whole host of front-line emergency service personnel—the integrity of the system, the ability of that system to respond was in large part contingent on the NDP's ability to hit buy now on eBay. That is how problematic the system was.

They were warned back in 2008 that that system was no longer functional, that it needed replacing and no more replacement parts could or would be made. And so it had gotten to the point that they actually had to source out on eBay some of those replacement parts. So, with duct tape and a wing and a prayer, we're very fortunate that, despite thousands of hours of the system being out because that government failed to make that decision and to move forward with that project, they just simply kicked that can forward, hoping that, you know, at some point some government would pick that and make that decision.

And so we as a government are faced with the decision of having to work and to ensure a \$400-million investment is made to ensure that those services and those—the protection of our front-line

services—they talk a lot about front-line services, but here's an opportunity to actually say, you know what, I believe in our front-line services, I believe in the men and the women of the RCMP, and of our conservation officers, the men and the women that are out there battling those forest fires, we want to make sure that they are safe, that they have those communications tools, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And, instead of doing that, they simply allowed the system to degrade to the point that eBay is the only solution.

So, when they talk about respect to front-line workers, they can talk all they want, but they clearly did not have that respect. They didn't talk—the member opposite didn't talk at all about the multiple wage freezes that their government imposed on civil servants, whether it was Manitoba Hydro or MGEU. They never talked about their throne speech in 2014 that outlined the goal of eliminating 600 civil servant positions. So, again, they talked about those front-line services, and here they are, you know, in their throne speech talking about how their commitment was to actually eliminate 600 positions, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

You know what, I don't remember mentioning when they talked about—you know, again they talk about cuts and services, they never talked about—in back in 2013 their Christmas clawback when the members opposite went to over 140 not-for-profits here in the city of Winnipeg at Christmastime and said, you know what, we need back a portion of your budget. And, in the terms of the not-for-profit that I used to run, that was a bill in terms of \$25,000.

*(15:30)

So you can imagine the fiscal year ends March 31st, and the government of the day comes to you and says, you know what, we need \$25,000 back, and I know it's only a few weeks 'til Christmas. And the worst part about the memo that members opposite set—sent to these hundred-and-some-odd non-profits was the fact that they were told that if you cannot return those funds to us you actually have to justify—and that is a key word there—you have to actually justify why you can't and what you can do. That is—and when I saw that memo it gave me insight into (a) how desperate the finances were under the NDP, and how little they cared, again, about the same front-line services that they now sit and shed their crocodile tears.

When they talk about the gap, Mr. Deputy Speaker, between rich and poor, it is a gap that's been only exasperated under members opposite. We

are now the child poverty capital of Canada. We have the highest number of Manitobans that rely on a food bank for daily nutrition than ever before in the history of our province. This is the legacy of members opposite.

We have a government—the NDP government—that raised the PST into, quote, the member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Kinew), the NDP member for Fort Rouge, he said, and I quote: How does raising the PST help grow the economy? How is a tax which taxes a proportionately bigger slice of poor people's incomes fair? End quote.

And I agree, actually, on that one instance, with the member for Fort Rouge. But, again, that is their legacy.

So they stand in the House today and they talk about, you know, about, you know, they talk about the low-income Manitobans. They talk about what we can do to alleviate the situation and help, you know, bridge that gap, and yet their own policies, as a government, failed to achieve that and, in fact, only exasperated that.

And yet, when our government brings in the idea of indexing the income tax system, one of the last jurisdictions in this entire country federally and provincially, one of only—one of the—only Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island being the only other two, the last jurisdictions to make sure that individuals' wages are actually protected from the impact of inflation, members opposite actually vote against that, which, again, I always find interesting, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because it was actually the NDP government in Saskatchewan that brought that policy in, in that jurisdiction because they said, at the time, that there was no single tax policy that provided greatest benefit to not only people on low income but people on fixed income, and that's one thing that members opposite continue to ignore.

When they talk about—when members opposite talk about, you know, in their motion, Mr. Deputy Speaker, about manufacturing partisan political crisis, well, I have no doubt that members opposite are very familiar with partisan political 'crises' because their own—five of their—five Cabinet ministers actually stood up in this Legislature, went downstairs and actually held a news conference, threw their own premier under the bus, and said that the premier's priorities are not the priorities of Manitobans, that he's not listening to Manitobans, and they actually went out of their way to, in a coup, to remove their premier. And during that time frame,

and I've talked to a number of high-ranking civil servants, they said the—actually the government and the business of government, during that time of the NDP's failed internal rebellion, things literally ground to a halt because ministers would not talk to other ministers, departments would not talk to other departments. It was more akin to an elementary school playground than a functioning government.

So I guess it's against that backdrop that you shouldn't be surprised that—a decision to, say, upgrade or replace the emergency network system that our front-line emergency services rely on was ignored, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So here we have an opportunity, though, for members opposite, to stand in their chairs and recognize what a Throne Speech should be. A Throne Speech should be one about vision, and a Throne Speech would—should be about—have a following through on the commitments you made as a political party when you went and knocked on those very doors that I talked about earlier in my speech, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So, whether, you know, and the members opposite enjoy quoting people, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and as I do, so I'll quote Jonathan Alward, who is the director of provincial affairs for the province of Manitoba for CFIB. It says, we are pleased that Manitoba government has made progress in a number of small business priorities, including indexing the personal income tax systems to the rate of inflation for 2017, reinstating secret ballot voting prior to union certification, freezing minimum wage, joining the New West Partnership and consulting Manitobans on the Canada Pension Plan expansion. End quote.

You know, Loren Remillard, president and CEO of the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce says: This Throne Speech recognizes the fiscal challenges we face in this province and really outlines a number of exciting initiatives that we believe will help Manitoba to get back on board. There is a lot to like in this Throne Speech.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I think really that is a comment that is a takeaway from today's—or from this conversation that we're having about this Throne Speech, that there is indeed a lot to like, because after a decade of debt, this government and these members and these 40 MLAs on this side of the House are committed to fixing the Province's finances. After a decade of decay, these 40 MLAs on this side of the House are dedicated to repairing our

services. And, obviously, after a decade of decline, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we're focusing on rebuilding our economy.

One of the things that—and I really wish I had more time to speak of, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but one of the things that to me is a personal highlight was the fact that this government has made a commitment to reduce red tape and wasteful spending.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I remember when I ran the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, and going to talk to members opposite about the issue of red tape, and saying, you know, there are a number of models to follow throughout Canada, throughout provinces, of different political stripes. This is not about reinventing the wheel. They would just stick their heads in the sand and deny that there was any red tape or, you know, or they would bring their sky-is-falling mantra that, you know, well, you can't do anything.

So I'm very optimistic, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we on this side of the House will not only identify and work with those sectors, including the not-for-profit sector, to identify that red tape with those regulatory requirements that should either be simplified, whether they have to be clarified in terms of language and whether they have to be eliminated, are dealt with in an expedited manner.

And not only that, that we—but we take on that institutional approach so that we can legislate those benefits in terms of a go-forward basis so that as we bring in new regulatory requirements we're simply not throwing them onto that pile for businesses to deal with.

And to put it into perspective, to give all members an idea of how many requirements potentially there could be on the books, when the Province of British Columbia about a decade ago decided to count the number of regulatory requirements, they counted in excess of 380,000 regulatory requirements on books. Those are 380,000 regulatory requirements that businesses and individuals and that not-for-profits had to be aware of, the ones that would affect them, and, obviously, if they weren't, and if they didn't follow them, whether or not they were aware of them or not, there would be consequences. And yet, that province has successfully reduced that number approximately in half to the point now that they actually have gone and changed their legislation, their two-for-one legislation, that for every one new regulatory requirement that comes in, two need to be taken off

of the books. They've achieved such success, again, over a long period of time, over the last almost dozen years, where they're simply doing it on a one-for-one basis, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, whether we're talking about issues of housing, whether we're talking about issues of child care, which, again, as a father of three young children, there was and there is, in the entire community of La Salle, a community of 2,500 people, there is not a single publicly funded daycare spot. The only thing that the people and the parents in La Salle can rely on is the private delivery of daycare.

And yet, day after day, members opposite stand there—stand in their chairs and they deride the idea that parents would actually want to take advantage of neighbours and of friends and the families that run these private daycares to watch for their—watch their children during the time frame.

And I am proud to say that I have used private daycares in my neighbourhood, that my children have had great experiences. And so I am—it's unfortunate that members opposite don't see the value in that, as, again, as part of that long-term solution—not the entire solution, Mr. Deputy Speaker—but part of the solution.

The last comment I'd like to make, Mr. Deputy Speaker, before I conclude, unless, of course, members opposite are willing to give me leave to keep going, and I would be more than willing to challenge the member for Flin Flon in the time that he took. But what's interesting, for all their consternation, all their member—consternation of members opposite about, you know, the Tories' reign of terror and all that baffle-gab and nonsense, it's worth noting that in our first legislative session they actually voted unanimously for two thirds of our legislative agenda—

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

* (15:40)

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): Good try.

I don't stand up to speak to merely challenge a member opposite to speak longer than me. I would, you know, challenge the members opposite to choose their words carefully so that they know what they're speaking about, and what they're speaking about is really, really pertinent and really helps move Manitoba forward, and that's what this budget doesn't

do—excuse me, this Throne Speech—Throne Speech—I stand corrected as—I shudder to think what the budget will be, looking at the Throne Speech, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

We talk—they talk about making Manitoba the most improved province, and I guess in order to do that, first they have to beat us down to a bad province, and then they got to try and build us back up again.

This Throne Speech, as most of the speeches that we've heard since this government came to power, talks about what somebody else did. They're very short on details about what their plan is, what they're going to do. We need look no further, Mr. Deputy Speaker, than their plan for the North.

What's the name of it this week? I've forgotten because next week it'll be a different plan for the North. The bottom line is they don't have a plan for the North. Nothing in this Throne Speech talks about a plan for the North, Mr. Deputy Speaker. There's no talk about how they're going to create jobs in the North. There's no talk about how they're going to maintain services in the North. There's nothing in this Throne Speech that talks about any kind of actual plan for the North, not that there's a lot of detail about any plan they have for anywhere else, other than how to make average, hard-working Manitobans pay and pay dearly.

That's the only plan we've seen from this government so far, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is average, hard-working Manitobans, be they minimum-wage earners who aren't going to get an increase this year and may or may not ever get one next year. It will depend on what plan this government comes up with then, but right now their plan is to ignore those workers—well, not to ignore them but to attack them.

We know so far from this government that they do have a plan to attack union workers. We've seen that in the last session and now, all of a sudden, the Premier (Mr. Pallister) and this government talks about, well, we're going to consult with unionized workers.

So far, they haven't. So far, when unionized workers have come to them and tried to give them advice, suggestions, ideas, they haven't listened. That's not really how consultation works, from my understanding of consultation.

So what is this government's plan? Well, they promised to protect front-line workers, but first they have never really defined what a front-line worker is,

so we can kind of go with what we think front-line workers is—are, but then let's look at how they're going to protect them.

Well, they're going to protect them by interfering with collective bargaining, which we've seen already from this government. We've seen in this Throne Speech that this government plans to continue to interfere in collective bargaining, while at the same time, the Premier, in particular, stands up and claims to be a staunch trade unionist and a believer in collective bargaining, while doing everything in his power to stymie and limit the powers of unions to collectively bargain fairly, openly and honestly with their employers by coming in at the last minute and telling an employer that you can't offer an increase. That's not fair and open collective bargaining.

By trying to pass a law that several other jurisdictions have tried to pass different forms of the same law that interfere with the right of workers to form unions and the right of workers to negotiate fairly and collectively with their unions, this government now is trying to do what previous right-wing governments have failed to do—failed to do because the Supreme Court of Canada told them that the laws they were passing did not meet the criteria of a law in this country.

Now—now—we have this government of Manitoba going to try again. I guess they believe the third time's the charm. The federal government failed in their attempts. The Saskatchewan government failed in its attempts. Now this government is going to try again, and that's really—that's really—the plans we've seen so far from this government in their Throne Speech, is not making Manitoba the most improved province—well, not for all Manitobans, anyway, I guess, depending on whose pockets plan to get lined with what's going to happen in the future in this province. It will be much better for some people in this province, but that'll be a relatively few people and it won't be hard-working Manitobans that go to work every day and pay their bills.

The power of the government should be really to help build Manitobans up—all Manitobans. When you look at people that go to work every day, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they spend their money in this province. They don't hoard it; they don't shovel it away in some off-shore bank account. They buy stuff. They buy food that our farmers grow; they buy products which—*[interjection]*—yes, they do buy potatoes, absolutely. The member talks about buying potatoes;

he's correct. But, when workers in this province, be they minimum-wage workers, unionized workers, front-line workers, public sector workers, private sector workers, when they don't have money to spend, then they don't spend it.

So, when this government, in their plan for the future, their Throne Speech, talks about protecting people, that's clearly not what they're doing. They're clearly not protecting all Manitobans. They're not protecting front-line workers. They're not protecting front-line workers when they plan to pass laws to interfere with the right of workers to fairly, openly negotiate collective agreements.

So we start to see some of what their plan is. They talk about transparency and accountability, and yet a law that's presently in place that talks about transparency with P3s, that they have to be the way the law is now, it has to be open so that people understand how much money is being spent and is there really any savings in the long run. They want to do away with that law because somehow that's too open and too transparent, I guess.

As we talked about with some other bills that they passed, the words they use are really not the way the general public would interpret those words to be, and that holds true with open and transparent because that's clearly not what the game plan is. When they want to do away with laws that force this government to be open and transparent, then it's completely the opposite, and that kind of doublespeak is what we've come to expect already from this government in the—well, its short period of time that they've been in power, but somehow it seems quite long already.

At some point in time Manitobans are going to start paying attention to what this government says and they're going to start trying to hold this government accountable for promises that they've made that they aren't going to keep, that they are not keeping. Front-line workers are not being protected. They inflate the number of a deficit so that they can build a crisis in the public's mind that the crisis is all borne by the workers, the public sector workers. Apparently they're all guilty of, I guess, trying to have a decent standard of living, seems to be what they're guilty of, Mr. Deputy Speaker, so we'll have to make sure that they can't get ahead, and somehow that will generate into this province being a great province when we stop working people from getting ahead. I don't know how that translates into any kind of 'sensical' plan forward.

* (15:50)

At the same time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this government made sure they feathered their own nest, if you will, gave themselves raises, made sure that they—*[interjection]* Yes, some of the backbenchers are saying they didn't get a raise, and they're absolutely right because apparently their government doesn't really care about them, either.

But they made sure that the few—the few—got a raise, which is really the same as what they're doing with this province. They're making sure that the few come out ahead while the majority pay for that, and pay for it quite dearly.

You know, that they've been caught, I guess, in manufacturing numbers, and supposedly they're going to be open and transparent, but the numbers that they throw out there, who knows what's right, what's wrong, because today it's this, tomorrow it's that. So, you know, we're really struggling, I guess, when we look at this blueprint for the future, it's certainly not going to be sunny days for average Manitobans.

Let's talk about infrastructure for a minute. The Minister of Infrastructure (Mr. Pedersen) was quite proud to announce the budget numbers, I guess, the contract numbers for Infrastructure going forward, and was really quite proud of himself, patting himself on the back about the money that's being spent. And it's really kind of too bad that he's proud of the fact that the numbers are less than previous governments spent, while he stands there and says that, you know, roads are crumbling.

The member from Morris talked about how bad roads are in his area and, oh, my, we need to do something about it, but we're going to not spend as much money on infrastructure. I don't understand exactly how that's going to work, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Maybe they're just going to close those roads. I don't know. That's what the last government did; they closed hospitals and schools, so maybe this government will close roads. That'll save money.

Oh, well, I guess it's the same as not actually building roads. Because while the minister touted his plan for infrastructure spending on roads, and I appreciate the fact that there is some money being spent on roads still, what we didn't see in his numbers that he said he released early so that contractors could actually get in and get bidding and be ready to spring into action, we didn't see any mention of numbers for the east-side road. And yet, I

guess contractors aren't supposed to spring into action to build that road.

What about Freedom Road? Was there any mention in the Infrastructure Minister's numbers about how much money was going to be spent on Freedom Road? Unless it was a page missing from what I read, there was no mention of that. And yet, and yet, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Premier (Mr. Pallister) said somewhere in the next 60 to 90 days. But in the numbers released, there's no contracts for Freedom Road. So, I guess, how do those contractors get the early jump? Or does everybody else just sit and wait?

So, you know, he—this and that don't add up to what they should, and that's part of the problem with—we talked a little bit about schools today, and while the previous government did build schools, so far we've heard no plan from this government to build schools. And, of course, while the population grows, whether it's from whatever, then hopefully there's more young people having more children, needing more schools, needing more education—but no plan, no plan for schools.

And, really, again, they talk about, well, you didn't build a school here, why should we? Well, we built a school somewhere else. So we couldn't build every school that was needed. But we did have a plan to build schools as we went ahead.

Now, so far, this government, even in their Throne Speech, doesn't talk about building schools. They don't really talk about building much of anything. They talk in vague terms about how good things are going to be but lack the detail in really how they're going to make that happen. And that's really too bad, because Manitobans were looking forward to something, and instead they get nothing.

So let's talk about Churchill. What's in the Throne Speech to help the people of Churchill? Nothing, absolutely nothing. And yet this government says, well, we're going to do the same as we did for Tolko when we asked them questions. So what exactly did this government do for Tolko? Nothing. They changed the law that allowed workers to potentially lose their future pension benefits; that's all they did. They didn't do anything to try and help with any of the nuts and bolts issues that needed to be addressed. Nothing, nothing whatsoever, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and that's too bad.

And, really, that brings us back to where I started talking about their Yes! North, look north,

no-north plan is—they don't grasp the concept of having to do things in the North and what that means. They talk about tourism. Tourism isn't going to employ everybody in the north.

We have heard them say words about mining, but we haven't seen them—is have any actual plan of what they're going to do to help mining. Certainly, the Town of Lynn Lake is hopeful that the mine will open in their community soon, but we've heard nothing from this government about anything they may or may not be doing to try and facilitate that process.

We hear them beaking off in the background here now about, well, red tape, red tape, red tape. What did we hear about red tape? Well, we heard that it gets in the way of child-care spaces, so they want to cut that red tape that protects children—protects children. Imagine, Mr. Deputy Speaker, trying to do away with regulation that protects children and provides them with a safe space. Which red tape will they talk about next? Will they talk about workplace health and safety red tape? Too much regulation there that stops workers from dying—well, maybe.

But, as usual, they really don't talk about what their plan is. They talk about what everybody else did or didn't do, and they never talk about what they're going to do. You know, I'm not sure what their plan is for health care; again, because they don't really talk about it. But I can talk a little bit, I guess, about seniors' care homes. What the—seems their plan is: there one only needs travel to Nelson House and see that November 28th is the strike deadline for those workers on that First Nations community to have parity with every other care-home worker in the province. But this province won't—this government won't even give them that, which is terrible—that they treat workers so badly and, worse yet, on First Nations.

So, just to wrap up—my time is short here—that this Throne Speech is not a blueprint for the future, because it doesn't talk about a plan, because they don't have a plan quite clearly, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It puts a lot of words on paper, and does nothing to make Manitoba a better province, because there is no plan in this Throne Speech for how they're going to make this province better. In fact, most things we have seen so far for average, hard-working Manitobans, the plan is to make Manitoba a worse place for them to be, and that's really too bad.

I hope that things look up, but I don't have a lot of faith in that.

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

* (16:00)

Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook): This past Monday we sat in this House to hear the government's priorities for the future of Manitobans. Manitoba's North and our rural communities have been severely underdeveloped. Residents there feel forgotten and neglected. Now is the time for all of us to come together and make a stand and do something for the collective benefit of all Manitobans. We must include the North and we must include rural Manitoba.

While I congratulate the government for repeatedly announcing meetings and consultations with First Nation government and their representatives, this will accomplish nothing if action does not shortly follow. The government must remember we have been consulted with for over 149 years. Strategies and action plans must include the voices of all Manitobans, especially those commonly forgotten.

Lateral violence exists in many communities due to centuries of oppression. We know that hurt people hurt people.

We must talk to the grassroots organizations, as well. Only then can we truly have a province that meets the demands of all the people.

The North is a reason—is a region that demands a long-term perspective. Northerners need to be the majority seat holders at these tables.

Rural Manitoba is our other most neglected region. Again, representatives need to be largely rural Manitobans at those respective tables.

You have to have people who possess a northern hat and in the case of rural when discussing solutions to those communities' respective challenges.

Let me give you an example. A southern hat wearer loves this balmy weather. A northern hat wearer faces fear and uncertainty: what of our direly needed winter ice roads. We know that lack of winter weather will impact our housing plans, our dry good resource transport and our fuel requirements, not to mention the impact on the trucking industry and our suppliers of those aforementioned goods.

Madam Speaker in the Chair

Climate change, infrastructure planning, economic growth and sustainable development—we acknowledge that these are not issues that can be solved in a four-year time span. In fact, these issues must have multi—a multi-generational perspective, and the solution must think seven generations ahead.

Recently, the North has faced serious and unexpected setbacks in its economy. The Port of Churchill is heavily underutilized as an asset in Canada. It is the only Arctic seaport Canada has and represents many possible benefits in securing international trade routes and northern sovereignty.

Other closures have seen in the North recently putting many out of work and affecting the economic stability of many Manitoban households. However, this government was disappointingly silent on the recent—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Order, please. The Official Opposition House Leader.

Point of Order

Mr. Jim Maloway (Official Opposition House Leader): On a point of order.

Madam Speaker: On a point of order.

Mr. Maloway: When the member for Fort Garry-Riverview (Mr. Allum) is sitting no more than two or three feet in front of the speaker and can hear not a word that she is saying because of the noise in this Chamber.

Madam Speaker: I would ask that we do give due respect to everybody that is speaking in this Chamber. These are important comments. It is everybody's response to the Throne Speech. So, if people do want to have conversations or need to have conversations, if we—you could please use the loges or the chairs at the back of the room. But please do keep in mind that we do have people speaking in here on an important issue.

Hon. Andrew Micklefield (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, there's no point of order.

And I'm sitting across the room. I have been listening and engaging. And I thank the member for her comments.

Madam Speaker: And I would indicate that there is no point of order, but it is a matter of courtesy and decorum and respect for all of us here to, you know, give people their due when they are speaking, because when everybody speaks, I'm sure you want

to be heard as well. So thank you, and I would encourage that. And there is no point of order.

* * *

Madam Speaker: Oh, the honourable member for Kewatinook.

Ms. Klassen: I won't repeat what I just said.

The vast potential of the North feels like it's being wasted. I urge members opposite to go back to your beginnings, go back to your roots, recall what it's like to ration your food to make it last. That's what northerners are going through currently.

Minister of Indigenous, we heard the chief of Tadoule Lake share stories of when the Dene in Churchill, after being forcibly displaced to Churchill, having to eat from the garbage dumps. What an atrocity. Real action is needed to solve the problems this province faces. We must look to creating plans that work.

The former government had—the government had 17 years in opposition to develop action plans they wanted to implement when elected. To solve the northern issues requires collaboration, and I will hold this government to its promises of working with both our First Nation, our rural and our northern residents. Our North is a magnificently vast wilderness, with strong, hard-working people who want to succeed and improve their communities.

In this Throne Speech, the government only mentioned investment opportunities in tourism and extraction of natural resources. I was recently on Tom Cochrane's highway as well. He would not be amused. What this government and many others fail to see is our amazing human capital in the North. I've said that—I said before that to rebuild our North, we need our TLEs settled so that we can have secured land to help with building an economy. We cannot do that without creativity and out-of-the-box thinking. Rural and northern Manitobas are well versed in that respect.

The old style of assuming that the only thing the North has to offer is the exploitation of its natural resources is flawed. I would ask that this government use its imagination and tap into the incredible human capital that exists in our North. They will be pleasantly surprised.

Rural Manitobans have limited access to mental-health supports, not to mention our lack of resources, access to many other parts of the health-care system. As our caucus stated in our recent brain health

report, suicide can occur from childhood to any—to old age. It is one of the leading causes of death among adolescents and young adults. We recommend—recommended the implementation of a comprehensive, multimodal plan for suicide prevention to reduce the number of suicides in Manitoba. That plan should include an approach targeted to individuals at risk of suicide, a province-wide suicide reduction plan, a community-based approach to ensuring activities and facilities are available to young Manitobans, and we need to enhance learning opportunities to build—and to build employment opportunities in their respective communities. I hope that this government will consider this in its review of access to our mental-health systems.

The agriculture industry is a vital component of our economy, as well as to the health and vitality of those who purchase and rely on locally sourced grown food. The agriculture industry contributes \$3.6 billion to the Manitoba economy. The farmland school tax costs families well over \$8 million yearly and hinders the growth and sustainability of young—our young farmers. This needs to be addressed.

The PCs campaigned on a number of issues that have yet to be seen in this House. They campaigned on a commitment to establish and release a duty-to-consult framework for indigenous communities. While we hear a lot about the consultations being held in these communities, we have yet to see the framework. A secretary answering the phone in a reserve does not equal consultation.

*(16:10)

This government campaigned on supporting urban Aboriginal economic development zones, and we have yet to hear of any development on this.

I—in regards to Yes! North, or whatever it is called—I believe it's now Look North—also does not appear to be a priority, except in renaming it. We need to get to work on that.

They committed to simplifying the funding applications for special needs funding in our education systems as well, yet we are still hearing from our constituents that these practices have not yet changed, nor were they mentioned in the Throne Speech.

This government's major campaign promise was to rollback the PST. We can't go a week without the PST rhetoric here in the House. Enough is enough, roll it back and be done with it.

Manitoba's technological systems have fallen way behind modern times. We heard from this government recently with the emergency management systems what this government needs—what this government has not yet recognized is the outdated and underutilized systems across all the departments. These advancements have the ability to streamline government programs and systems management while saving money.

Talk to the employees in your consultations, not just the people who hold the big titles. They have the answers.

I would like to conclude in saying that, while this government gives an austerity Throne Speech, it is vital that long-term investment is implemented to save money for our future Manitobans. People and workers want the assurances that the investments will be there year after year. It is one thing to make a lot of cuts and freezes but investments in areas like brain health care, jobs, housing, our environment, are critical to Manitoba's success.

This government likes us—this government likes to remind us of their historic mandate that the people of Manitoba have given to them, but let me remind them that mandate was based on promises that should be kept. The very least is to fulfill those problems—promises to those Manitobans who voted for them.

I move, seconded by the member for Burrows (Ms. Lamoureux),

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

- (f) failed to commit to lowering ambulance fees by 50 per cent this year; and
- (g) failed to commit to implementing recommendations from the 2016 Liberal caucus brain health report; and
- (h) failed to commit to increasing the amounts for special needs student funding while simplifying the application processes; and
- (i) failed to commit to diversifying industries and tourism in addition to 'extractivating' natural resources in the northern economy; and
- (j) failed to commit to releasing the duty-to-consult framework for indigenous communities; and
- (k) failed to commit to supporting the urban Aboriginal economic development zones; and
- (l) failed to commit to improving the outdated technology systems used in government departments; and
- (m) failed to commit to improving issues relating to supportive housing and personal-care homes; and
- (n) failed to commit to reducing the cost of prescription drugs; and
- (o) failed to commit to the development and implementation of a provincial suicide strategy; and
- (p) failed to commit to implementing a mental health support task force for Manitoba communities following a suicide; and
- (q) failed to commit to including the criminalization of mental illnesses in the just in-justice system review; and
- (f) failed to commit to reducing the farmland school tax's impact on Manitoba farmers; and
- (s) failed to commit to the immediate of a dedicated stroke unit in Manitoba; and
- (f)—no, (t) failed to commit to not increasing the cost of the provincial nominee applications.

Thank you, Madam Speaker. *[interjection]*

I would like to point out I make mistakes. For sub-amendment (i) I meant to say 'extractivating'—extricating, and for (l) I meant to say utilize; for (r) I said (f) instead of the letter (r), and in (t) I meant to say program.

Madam Speaker: Thank you.

It has been moved by the honourable member for Kewatinook (Ms. Klassen), seconded by the honourable member for Burrows,

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

- (f) fail to commit to lowering—

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense? Thank you.

I will, because of the corrections that were made, I think it's probably prudent if I were to read all of the text again, so

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

- (f) failed to commit to lowering ambulance fees 50 per cent this year; and
- (g) failed to commit to implementing recommendations from the 2016 Liberal caucus brain health report; and
- (h) failed to commit to increasing the amounts for special needs student funding while simplifying the application processes; and
- (i) failed to commit to diversifying industries and tourism in addition to extricating natural resources in the northern economy; and
- (j) failed to commit to releasing the duty-to-consult framework for indigenous communities; and
- (k) failed to commit to supporting urban economic development zones; and
- (l) failed to commit to improving the outdated technology systems utilized in government departments; and
- (m) failed to commit to improving issues relating to supportive housing and personal care homes; and
- (n) failed to commit to reducing the cost of prescription drugs; and
- (o) failed to commit to the development and of a provincial suicide strategy; and
- (p) failed to commit to implementing a mental health support task force for Manitoba communities following a suicide; and
- (q) failed to commit to including the criminalization of mental illness in the justice system review; and
- (r) failed to commit to reducing the farmland school taxes' impact on Manitoba farmers; and

- (s) failed to commit to the immediate construction of a dedicated stroke unit in Manitoba; and

- (t) failed to commit to not increasing the cost of Provincial Nominee Program applications.

The sub-amendment is in order and debate can continue.

* (16:20)

Mrs. Colleen Mayer (St. Vital): I rise today—Madam Speaker, I rise today to offer my remarks with regards to the Throne Speech that was presented to the people of Manitoba this past Monday.

The words spoken by the Lieutenant Governor offer the people of this province much hope and encouragement as they go about their daily lives working hard to provide better lives for themselves and their families.

We as a government will work with Manitobans, alongside Manitobans, and for Manitobans, because we know that the best way to help someone is to give them a hand up, not a handout. With the Lieutenant Governor's words, the province's greatest asset are its citizens, I will continue to remember those words each time I make a decision on their behalf.

She is very correct in stating that Manitoba is the home of hope—hope—rising optimism in the attitude of the people of Manitoba. We have much to be optimistic about, but we must first be perseverant to take stock of not only what we have, but what we need to look towards, what we can do and what we can be as a province. This is why our government will listen to Manitobans. Our government will govern for Manitobans. Our government will fight for the changes that will result in a stronger, safer and prosperous, better Manitoba. It has been said, and it's worth repeating, we will be the most improved province in Canada.

Families are the most precious commodity we have, and our children deserve better. We have a shared responsibility to ensure our most vulnerable children in Manitoba are protected and cared for. This can be accomplished through a comprehensive plan that will come from not just conducting studies and writing reports, but by actually acting upon the reports and recommendations.

We are currently exploring all options in order to improve outcomes and reduce the number of kids in care, options like the Nelson House approach that has the agencies working together with the goals of

keeping children in their homes; better co-ordination of services and the greater public accountability is the road to finding solutions to the challenges. The protecting children's act, aimed at improving information shared between services providers, CFS, schools and law enforcement, means earlier intervention, better prevention and less children in vulnerable situations.

A Children's Advocate will ensure that the voices of children and youth involved within the child-welfare system are heard. This brings hope, hope that we can lead all our children in this province to have a brighter future.

Many of the residents in St. Vital have let me know about the issues they're having with finding affordable housing. Just this past week we have announced measures that include the doubling of current funding under the Investment in Affordable Housing agreement, supporting affordable housing for seniors and victims of family violence and addressing repairs of existing social housing. Over \$21 million has been committed to this by our government.

People need to feel safe in their homes and in their communities. Seniors are in dire need of a safe, affordable housing. Families and children need safe, affordable homes. We see that social housing has been neglected and are no longer efficient. We look forward to construction work that will bring much-needed repairs to rental units across this province. We want to provide the hope for families, hope for a better place to live and leading a better life.

Early learning and child-care options provide hope to many young families. Just this past August, I received many calls from desperate families needing child care, as children were going off to school and parents were frantically trying to find daycare spaces. We are working towards a child-care plan that is realistic, one that's practical and one that is sustainable, a framework moving forward that will deliver a comprehensive program that is affordable and accessible. This will be a strategy that is broad based and comprehensive, collaborated with Manitoba families, front-line workers and experts. It will provide more hope for families who need this service.

Just last week I had the opportunities to spend some time in the workplace with a young man with an intellectual disability. He invited me to join him on Take Your MLA to Work Day, where we worked—where he worked at the food court at

St. Vital Centre. I got to see first-hand how an adult living with an intellectual ability, with access to appropriate supports can thrive in their community. Our government recognizes this, and we want to build on this through the Building on Abilities initiative. This young man taught me so much in one short hour about how his ability is so strong to do the job he has been working for for the past 10 years. He loves his job, Madam Speaker. He takes great pride in the work that he does. He loves the people he works with. He loves that he has a job that allows him to be with people who appreciate him and what he does every day. He loves that he's able to provide a paycheque for himself each week.

He is why we need to continue to modernize and continue to prove—improve services within the Community Living disABILITY Services. We will remain committed to ensuring these programs and services remain responsive to the evolving needs of the people they serve. This provides hope to these people and their families.

As a former school trustee, I know, and I see, the need for quality education. Education and training is the fundamental building block for a bright economic future in this province. Quality education is key, Madam Speaker. We will embark upon the development of a comprehensive, long-term literacy and numeracy strategy that will provide Manitoba children with the skills they need to succeed in this province.

We recognize that we will address the unique needs of the diversity of Manitoba students. Focusing on education through the early years and investing in professional development for educators, while supporting school divisions and the development of curriculum that includes measurable targets, will show improvement in both literacy and numeracy. Our government knows that education is an investment in a better future, a brighter future, for our children and our province.

Strengthening Manitoba's economy and addressing targeted labour markets—market needs is crucial. We are committed to the renewal of the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program by enhancing the selection process to attract immigrant skilled workers and entrepreneurs, so they can make contributions to Manitoba's economy soon after their arrival in Canada. Immediately eliminating the backlog of applications is vital, and we will work with the federal government to improve the speed with which visa applications are processed. A cost

recovery model and the reinvestment of resources will help ensure this program is sustainable, it improves its service standards, and provides stronger supports for immigrants and refugees.

Working in partnership with municipalities is key. This was particularly evident at last night's AMM convention where both the AMM president, the Premier (Mr. Pallister) and the mayor spoke about how important it is to stay committed to building respectful, collaborative relationships across the province with its municipalities and cities.

Ensuring that provincial funding supports local priorities and delivers economic benefits is key. Ensuring that all municipalities have a fair say is how infrastructure funds are invested at the local level was an important first step. Simplifying and streamlining the process of accessing funding is a must. Our Red Tape Reduction Task Force will identify and eliminate regulatory barriers.

We are committing—committed to providing value for money on infrastructure projects as we embark upon the most robust infrastructure consultation in decades for Manitoba. And, yes, there is hope for the people of Shoal Lake First Nation. This government has finally led the process in overseeing the consultation, engineering, planning and design work of this road. And we are excited to move forward with the Shoal Lake road project. Surveyors are on the ground and tendering preparations are happening. Past decisions by the NDP have failed the people of Shoal Lake First Nation. And I am pleased to be part of a team that has started the delivery of this project within our first year of government.

Manitoba's hunters, anglers and trappers are key partners in conservation and sustainability of our fish and wildlife resources. I come from a family of hunters and anglers who know the value of respecting the wildlife population as well as respecting the process of hunting. Respectful relationships, productive consultation and collaborative efforts on all sides are vital to the effective management of our province's precious natural resources. This province supports remedial restoration projects aimed at increasing the population of moose in Manitoba. This government will proceed with consultation with affected indigenous communities to build a more sustainable moose population. Manitobans share the concern about the stability of moose, elk and deer, and for the safety of farmers, farm animals and hunters.

* (16:30)

Manitoba's conservation officers, with the assistance of tips from the public, have prioritized enforcement efforts to reduce these practices of unsafe and unsustainable hunting.

As a hunter myself, Madam Speaker, I look forward to lending my voice to legislation that will work towards sustainability of our fish and wildlife resources.

While health care continues to be the largest portion of Manitoba's finances, we will continue to find best practices and efficiencies to deliver better health care to the citizens of Manitoba.

Today we must be committed to developing a new comprehensive mental health and addictions strategy in Manitoba. There is no health without mental health.

The newest scourge of society in Manitoba today is the opioid crisis. This government will renew its focus on public education measures to counteract this crisis by warning Manitobans of the dangers of fentanyl and carfentanil, two of the deadliest substances to hit this province, because of its presence, these drugs, where users do not know where it's hiding, the danger it poses to unsuspecting and vulnerable children and to our first responders. As a mother of teenagers, Madam Speaker, this frightens me to the core, and my heart breaks for the parents of those unsuspecting victims of these opioids.

I am extremely pleased that our government is fully committed to the national inquiry into missing, murdered indigenous women and girls. I want to see that this 'inquiry' produces realistic and meaningful change—not just words on paper, Madam Speaker, but that it begins to address the systemic causes of violence against indigenous women and girls.

Listening to advocates of change has struck a deep chord in me, and although there is much work to do, the additional funding that the federal government has committed to providing will allow us to expand upon the services already available. Those approvals can't come soon enough, Madam Speaker. Every day there's a new tragedy, a new heartbreak, and this must stop. I stand with those who have advocated and for those who continue to advocate for this inquiry. There will be no shortage of work in this area. Work is long overdue, so I say let the work begin.

Manitobans are looking for a secure, sustainable and prosperous future, one they will find when they look to our government for answers. I am proud to be part of a team that's willing to listen to Manitobans, talk to Manitobans and move forward to better the systems in place to improve the services they need.

I am proud that we are a government that will remain steadfast in our goals and one that will focus on long-term, sustainable measures to fix our finances, repair our services that are relied upon by citizens and spark the rebuilding of our economy to put our province back on a responsible fiscal track.

We are just getting started, Madam Speaker. In short, we have been in—in this short time that we have been in government, we have made significant real change. To get results, we must work together. Together we will fix our province's finances, repair the services that Manitoba families rely upon and rebuild our economy. The challenge may be large, but we are up for the task.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): Next spring will be the 20th anniversary of the passing of one of my political heroes, a gentleman named Stanley Knowles. Stanley Knowles was the Member of Parliament for Winnipeg North Centre for decades. He did lose one election in the Diefenbaker sweep, but held that seat for decades and decades. And, in fact, even when he stopped being the MP, the Speaker of the House of Commons, along with Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, actually created a special place for Stanley Knowles by naming him an official—unofficial table officer so that he could watch and hear the debates and the comings and goings.

And he was a man of faith, as a United Church minister; an academic. Of course, he attended Brandon University and wound up being the chancellor of Brandon University, but, most of all, Madam Speaker, he was a man of the people. And I still meet people today who were touched by Stanley Knowles, by his belief in social justice, by his belief in fair working conditions for all, his belief in the Old Age Security system and the Canada Pension Plan, which only came into place after decades and decades of Stanley Knowles standing up and fighting that fight. And it was only when there was a minority government, when all of a sudden the Liberal federal government needed the support of New Democrats, that those things actually started to happen.

He was an advocate for fair pensions for everybody and that everybody should have a pension plan through their employment. Didn't quite get there—didn't quite get there—but that's something that, as New Democrats, we believe is the case. And what did Stanley Knowles say in a book he wrote back in 1961? He said one of the facts of history is that battles do not stay won. Those that matter have to be waged again and again.

And so we have a second Speech from the Throne in 2016, a little bit longer, but frankly, Madam Speaker, no more vision than May's version. And here we see that the battles that have been won haven't really been won for good, and they have to be fought over and over and over again. And it's apparently clear, from this Throne Speech, from the language used by the Premier (Mr. Pallister)—especially the Premier—by Cabinet ministers and by all the Conservative backbenchers today, is that we are not just going back to the Filmon years, we are going back to the Sterling Lyon years, a one-term government which was focused on—is, I believe, they called it acute protracted restraint. And that's where we're headed.

My colleagues are each going to speak about the Throne Speech, in their own way, with their own critic responsibilities and about their own constituencies, and I will do the same. I'll talk about my own area of critic responsibility, which is Justice and human rights, which will take a portion of my time, really not much, because there was so little substantive in the Throne Speech dealing with keeping our communities safe. I will also talk about how the changes that are foreshadowed in this Throne Speech are going to make life tougher for the people that I'm proud to represent in the West End of Winnipeg.

First, in Justice, although I'm sorry to have to say this, I must say it's—it would be difficult for the new Minister of Justice (Mrs. Stefanson) to show less enthusiasm and less results in her job than she has so far. And, you know, in a short period of time, Madam Speaker, the results have been embarrassing. And, as I pointed out, and I hope the minister listened, although I'm not so sure she did, Winnipeg's police service has already demonstrated to us that crime is now, after a decade of decreases, is now on the rise. And last time I asked her a question about this, I pointed out that from May the 1st until the end of October, crime is actually up in Winnipeg 9 per cent year over the—8 per cent year over the previous year. I've checked again for May 1st to the

present time; that's now increased to 9 per cent over the previous year.

And what's driving these—this increase in crime? Well, if we look at CrimeStat, which any member of this House can do, you'll see it's being driven by robberies, both commercial and non-commercial; break and enters, both commercial and non-commercial. And it's up in every quadrant of the city. Every quadrant of the city is now experiencing more crime since May the 1st than in the previous year by a major margin. And that, of course, is what's driving an increase in jail population, which comes as a surprise, frankly, to me. It appears to come as a surprise to the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Stefanson). We know that the jail population is up 7 per cent just from June to October. In just four short months, somehow we now have far more adults in our jail population, and we know that is putting a pressure on our system. It's creating unsafe conditions for inmates and for correctional officers, and it's going to lead to worse outcomes.

*(16:40)

So I thought we might see something in the Throne Speech that might actually give us some detail about some kind of plan to make communities and neighbourhoods safer. And instead, what do we have that actually deals with safety? Well, the only thing contained in this Throne Speech document was another promise to continue developing social impact bonds. We heard the same thing in May's Throne Speech. I asked the minister about her view of social impact bonds in Estimates on June the 10th of this year, and it was very clear to me, Madam Speaker, that this minister took her direction from the Premier. She hadn't done any of her own research. She hadn't done any reading, and, frankly, her department hadn't done any work on it because I can tell you that the department really didn't have any interest in privatizing justice services for a system of social impact bonds which have at best middling, and at worst, negative impact, on how justice services are developed in other jurisdictions.

It's quite clear that the only words in the Throne Speech which actually talked about public safety speak about nothing other than privatizing justice services, services which are best accomplished by public employees doing their work. And what areas might we be talking about in the code, which made up much of the Throne Speech? I presume probation services.

Probation services, Madam Speaker, it's not easy work. It's not glamorous work, and sometimes it's work which can be frustrating. It means managing people in our communities whether they have received certain conditions before a trial date or whether there are conditions that they have to maintain to stay in the community after conviction. It is not easy work, and the fear that I have and the prediction I suppose I have is that social impact bonds are going to include probation services, and it is going to allow an investor to come in to cherry-pick the people who go into this program in the hope of meeting some targets and showing some better results.

And, you know, I could go into the justice system right now, and I could cherry-pick 10 or 20 or 50 people that I thought I could do better with than the general population. It's not that hard to do, and I'll predict right now there'll be a pilot project to do that. The minister and some organization will cherry-pick who they want to go into that pilot, and they will magically say there's been a great result because they're doing better than the general population.

Well, you know what, the public system doesn't cherry-pick who gets in and who doesn't. The public system has to deal with people who are charged with breaking a law, and there's different choices that a justice system can make. And it's very clear from this Throne Speech that the only system that this minister and this government believe in is a direct pipeline to our jail system.

And I've had a look at what the Throne Speech says about the system-wide review which is going to occur, and here is what's contained in the Throne Speech. And I quote: Our government is undertaking a system-wide review focused on improving the efficiency of the entire system from initial interaction with law enforcement to the final court ruling in the last interaction with the corrections system.

Well, if you want to get good results, you don't have the corrections system being an automatic result of being involved with the law, and that's why I've been asking this minister when we're going to see an expansion of mental-health courts, which are a great way to avoid people having to go to jail, a great way to make sure that people get the help they need so they don't have mental-health issues so they don't break the law.

And I've asked this minister if she's interested in expanding drug courts in the province of Manitoba.

We started a very successful drug court here in the city of Winnipeg, the Winnipeg Drug Treatment Court. It is getting good results. The recidivism rate, the re-offence rate is only about 14 per cent. If we could get those kinds of results elsewhere in our justice system, we would have the happy exercise of being able to close jail facilities and closing beds rather than having continuing pressures on our system, the kinds of pressures that we've seen just in the last several months under this minister's watch and this Premier's watch.

And, of course, there are other ways to try and bend the arc to prevent everybody who gets charged with a crime from winding up in the correctional system. I'm very proud that we began supporting the John Howard Society to run a bail supervision program. That program in Winnipeg has expanded, but there is no bail supervision program in most other communities. And I've spoken with people in Brandon, I've spoken with people in Thompson, I've spoken with people in Morden-Winkler, who would love to have some of these alternatives available so that when somebody breaks the law, when the police do their job and arrest somebody, that there is places and organizations and plans in place to try and change the criminal behaviour rather than those people simply finding themselves on remand or after conviction in our jail system.

The only way that we're going to make progress—the only way we had made progress, before the election, was to make sure that we ran as fast as we could to keep up with those challenges, to give people opportunities to prove themselves, to overcome their problems and to be able to re-enter our society in a way that's safe.

And, you know, we were on the right track. The last year and a half before the election the number of adults in our correctional system actually declined by about 150 people. That's a good sign, and yet in just eight months the number of people in our jail system has actually gone up by more than that amount, which was a surprise to me and, again, a surprise to the minister. There are things that we can do better in Justice and, unfortunately, we don't see any of this in the Throne Speech.

And what else did we see? Well, yes, there's a response to the Supreme Court's decision in *R v. Jordan*. I offered the opportunity to the minister to pass a law last session which would actually try to take cases out of tying up judges in the Queen's Bench system by trying to use more alternative

measures to resolve family court problems, to assist people in finding better ways to deal with their family law disputes.

Queen's Bench judges do not come cheap. A Queen's Bench judge makes \$300,000 a year. If we can take family cases and find better ways to resolve them, using other professionals, using other capabilities, and that frees up more Queen's Bench judge time to deal with these cases, that will actually help the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Stefanson) and that will help all of us. But to this point, Madam Speaker, I haven't seen any interest from this minister in finding real solutions.

And even the wording in the Throne Speech gives me cause for concern because it talks about the efficiency of the system, and when it comes to Justice, when it comes to trying to change people's behaviours, efficiency is not what we're looking for; effectiveness is what we're looking for. And it's not enough to say, oh, we're now processing people. As soon as the police arrest them, we know we can get them into jail quickly.

Well, that's not actually building a better system. What is building a better system, which we had worked hard on doing, and which I know is still the interest of so many good people who work in the Department of Justice, is to make the system more effective. And I'll be watching to see what else the Minister of Justice can roll out, what else she plans to do. I've just got to say, to this point, it has not been very impressive at all.

And, you know, we'll support good legislation. We'll do things that we can do as an opposition to keep pressing this government but it is very, very important not to lose sight of the importance of protecting Manitoba families so they can truly be safe in their homes and in their communities, as the previous speaker, the member for St. Vital (Mrs. Mayer), just said.

I don't think she's going to be very comfortable when she goes back and she talks to her old friends at the St. Vital BIZ and says, sorry, crime's up in St. Vital. It had been going down for two decades, but something's happened in the past couple of months. Crime's up and I really don't know why.

And, you know, if the member for St. Vital had an answer, I think she would have put it on the record, but she didn't. Well—[interjection] And there's the chattering. There's the—and I'm glad that members opposite are looking for me to put more

facts on the record, because the CBC has just reported that homicides in Winnipeg dropped a further 20 per cent in 2015. And, in fact, homicides in Winnipeg dropped 45 per cent since 2011—*[interjection]*

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

And, in fact, I know that members opposite used to run around saying, oh, Winnipeg's the murder capital of Canada. Well, last year, actually, we're not. We're not even on the podium. Which cities do have higher rates of homicide? Well, Regina and Saskatoon, where there's been a full Conservative government since 2007, and I know they go to Saskatchewan and they want to bring back all those ideas.

Please don't bring back the homicide rate from Regina or Saskatoon because people in my area will not appreciate it and I don't think people in your area would, either.

So, you know, I know that they talk into their hat. They won't look at statistics. Crime has actually gone down by 50 per cent in the past 17 years with an NDP government. And I'm sorry that it appears to be going back up with a minister who doesn't—who isn't prepared to take her job seriously and a minister who will not even, as we saw yesterday, do her job in giving the Premier (Mr. Pallister) advice.

* (16:50)

They got a law they're going to bring in, and I asked her a very simple question yesterday, whether, in fact, she got an opinion saying it was going to be constitutional to take away the right to free and fair collective bargaining. And what happened? The right wing talk show host got up instead and gave his answer, and, as he usually does, then stormed out of the Chamber.

If she'd got an opinion, I think the answer is very simple. She'd have got up and say, of course, I did, and sat down. But she couldn't even do that. And I'm very disappointed in this minister, and the fear that I have—it's not just a political one—the fear that I have is that all of the work that's been done over the past 17 years to build safer, stronger communities is now at risk. And, from this Throne Speech, we can only guess what's coming. It's going to be cuts; it's going to be reductions; it's going to be less of what people count on to make them safer in their communities.

And, of course, in the West End, course, they're counting on me, as each of our constituents is

counting each of us to raise issues that are important. And as J.S. Woodsworth said, what we desire for ourselves, we wish for all. And what I wish for constituents in my West End of Winnipeg, of course, is to have the confidence for the things that we all want for ourselves and our families. And, of course, in the West End, people work hard.

Manitobans want to work hard, but, unfortunately, there's 12,000 of them less working full time than there were in April when the changed. And what do we see? Recriminations from the other side, excuses. We don't actually have anybody on the other side that's prepared to stand up and take responsibility for jobs in this province disappearing at a rate that we have probably not seen since the Sterling Lyon era.

And, of course, what do we hear from people? There are many people in my constituency—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Swan: There's many people—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Swan: There are many people in my area that work in the public sector. They are not the imaginary high-paid public sector employees that the Conservatives like to talk about. The people who are public servants in my area, well, they're the unit assistants; they're the janitors; they're the orderlies; they're the LPNs who provide health care and safe places in our hospitals and our—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

I'm having a lot of difficulty hearing the member make his comments to the Throne Speech. So I would ask that everybody please refrain from shouting across so that I can properly hear him so I can ensure that we're capturing all that is happening here. Thank you.

Mr. Swan: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I don't know if I can speak any louder, so I appreciate your intervention.

But, of course, I always know when I'm hitting a nerve. And when I'm talking about people in my area—*[interjection]* When I—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Swan: Well, I know the Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen) is glib as he probably misses another \$150 million in accounting, but I will tell him that I'm on the side of people in my riding who are

counting on a government that actually stands up for them.

And, again, when we have a Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen) who just the other day got up and was so pleased with the fact that his government is going to do away with fair, effective collective bargaining in this province, that's going to impact my constituents who work at the Health Sciences Centre. And, you know, we can talk about taxes for certain, because those taxes pay the salaries of average families who work in my area.

And I'm very pleased that every time one of these Conservative members wants to heckle, because they're not heckling me, they're heckling hard-working people in the West End of people who are worried about what's going to happen. And who do I have in my area? Well, I've got some teachers who work in our public school system. There's also a lot of educational assistants who've been brought in to the education system, people who work in community schools as liaison workers in schools like Sister Mac—kids were here today—Wellington School, John M. King School, who do great things. And they're counting on a government that's not going to take them on. And, unfortunately, Madam Speaker, with this Throne Speech, we got the wrong people in charge.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Derek Johnson (Interlake): First off, I would like to thank all the people who have been here to assist us in this session. As one honourable member has stated, it's not a learning curve; it's a cliff. I would like to thank the staff from this great building, my colleagues and, most importantly, our families who support us throughout our venture here.

This has been an exciting start, just over six months from our swearing-in ceremony to where we are here today. I've experienced many things and learned a lot. Some things have been exciting to learn, others not so much. It has been stimulating to be part of such a large team—historically large, as a matter of fact, Madam Speaker.

I'll start by talking about one of the bills that brought us together this past session. I've had the privilege of supporting a colleague's private members' bill, Bill 209, that recognizes September as Childhood Cancer Awareness Month in Manitoba. And I was pleased to second that bill, which was brought forward by the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko). Replacing fear and misunderstanding

with compassion and information is an important part to helping kids with cancer cope with the illness. I think we all stand in awe of the heroism displayed by the children who are fighting this disease. Bill 209 recognizes September as Childhood Cancer Awareness Month in Manitoba and will help shed light on prevention and cure.

Unfortunately, as we are now the government, it has been disheartening to find out about a multitude of failures from the previous administration. Of course, we knew the previous government made many bad decisions, and that's why the people of Manitoba tossed them out. Madam Speaker, now that we're in government, we are learning even more about the magnitude of those failures.

I have also had the sorrow of speaking on a bill that are required to rectify previous government's debacles.

Take the East Side Road Authority, for example, Madam Speaker. We had an Auditor General's report condemning the NDP's action on ESRA, and inaction, if we want to be a hundred per cent accurate. If I may take a few moments to review some of what we have learned in this session about ESRA: NDP's East Side Road Authority spent a near half billion dollars and semi-completed 88 kilometres of road.

Five hundred million and 88 kilometres of road built—Madam Speaker, this is exactly why Infrastructure is taking back control of this debacle. Manitoba Infrastructure has been building roads in northern and remote communities for decades with proven success, including training and employing local residents. We will build that road, and they will do it right.

The NDP ignored red flags and put their political interests ahead of public interests. Between January 18th, 2016 and just one day before the pre-election blackout period, for that seven-week period following January 18th, the NDP East Side Road Authority signed community benefits agreements worth nearly \$160 million. This \$160 million worth of NDP's east-side authority vote buying mere weeks before the recent provincial election exceeded the entire value of agreements that the NDP East Side Road Authority signed between August 2009 and August 2015, totalling \$153 million. So let me say that again: \$160 million spent on vote-buying agreements mere weeks before the election totalled more than the previous six years combined at \$153 million.

Madam Speaker, this is what our Throne Speech is about. After a decade of debt, we are focused on fixing our finances. Getting Manitoba back on track after 17 years of mismanagement is the direction this government is on the road to. Our Throne Speech is proof of that, Madam Speaker. This government will reintroduce the legislation to eliminate the unnecessary duplication—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member will have 15 minutes remaining.

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, November 23, 2016

CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS			
Introduction of Bills		Port of Churchill	
		Lindsey	40
		Cullen	40
Bill 200–The Human Rights Code Amendment Act		Northern Manitoba Communities	
Gerrard	33	Lindsey	41
		Cullen	41
Bill 3–The Pooled Registered Pension Plans (Manitoba) Act		Education System	
Friesen	33	Lamoureux	41
		Wishart	41
Bill 2–The Securities Amendment Act (Reciprocal Enforcement)		Goertzen	42
Friesen	33	Affordable Housing Initiatives	
		Morley-Lecomte	42
		Fielding	42
Members' Statements		Fentanyl Crisis–Sale of Pill Presses	
Darcy Miller		Wiebe	43
Wishart	34	Goertzen	43
Concern for the Environment		New School Construction	
Altemeyer	34	Kinew	44
Addiction Treatment Centres		Wishart	44
Bindle	35	Seven Oaks School Division	
Dursameen and Raghees Bashir		Kinew	44
Lindsey	35	Wishart	44
Swan Valley Food Bank		Pallister	44
Wowchuk	36		
Oral Questions			
Public-Private Partnerships			
F. Marcelino	36		
Pallister	36		
Public-Private Partnerships			
Allum	37		
Pallister	37		
Infrastructure Projects			
Maloway	38		
Pedersen	39		
Northern Manitoba			
Lathlin	39		
Pedersen	39		
		ORDERS OF THE DAY	
		GOVERNMENT BUSINESS	
		Throne Speech	
		(Second Day of Debate)	
		F. Marcelino	45
		Martin	52
		Lindsey	56
		Klassen	60
		Mayer	63
		Swan	66
		Johnson	70

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