

Fourth Session - Fortieth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS

Official Report
(Hansard)

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Fortieth Legislature

| Member | Constituency | Political Affiliation |
|-------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|
| ALLAN, Nancy | St. Vital | NDP |
| ALLUM, James, Hon. | Fort Garry-Riverview | NDP |
| ALTEMEYER, Rob | Wolseley | NDP |
| ASHTON, Steve, Hon. | Thompson | NDP |
| BJORNSON, Peter, Hon. | Gimli | NDP |
| BLADY, Sharon, Hon. | Kirkfield Park | NDP |
| BRAUN, Erna, Hon. | Rossmere | NDP |
| BRIESE, Stuart | Agassiz | PC |
| CALDWELL, Drew, Hon. | Brandon East | NDP |
| CHIEF, Kevin, Hon. | Point Douglas | NDP |
| CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon. | Kildonan | NDP |
| CROTHERS, Deanne, Hon. | St. James | NDP |
| CULLEN, Cliff | Spruce Woods | PC |
| DEWAR, Greg, Hon. | Selkirk | NDP |
| DRIEDGER, Myrna | Charleswood | PC |
| EICHLER, Ralph | Lakeside | PC |
| EWASKO, Wayne | Lac du Bonnet | PC |
| FRIESEN, Cameron | Morden-Winkler | PC |
| GAUDREAU, Dave | St. Norbert | NDP |
| GERRARD, Jon, Hon. | River Heights | Liberal |
| GOERTZEN, Kelvin | Steinbach | PC |
| GRAYDON, Cliff | Emerson | PC |
| HELWER, Reg | Brandon West | PC |
| HOWARD, Jennifer | Fort Rouge | NDP |
| IRVIN-ROSS, Kerri, Hon. | Fort Richmond | NDP |
| JHA, Bidhu | Radisson | NDP |
| KOSTYSHYN, Ron, Hon. | Swan River | NDP |
| LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon. | Dawson Trail | NDP |
| MACKINTOSH, Gord, Hon. | St. Johns | NDP |
| MALOWAY, Jim | Elmwood | NDP |
| MARCELINO, Flor, Hon. | Logan | NDP |
| MARCELINO, Ted | Tyndall Park | NDP |
| MARTIN, Shannon | Morris | PC |
| MELNICK, Christine | Riel | NDP |
| MITCHELSON, Bonnie | River East | PC |
| NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom | Interlake | NDP |
| OSWALD, Theresa | Seine River | NDP |
| PALLISTER, Brian | Fort Whyte | PC |
| PEDERSEN, Blaine | Midland | PC |
| PETTERSEN, Clarence | Flin Flon | NDP |
| PIWNIUK, Doyle | Arthur-Virden | PC |
| REID, Daryl, Hon. | Transcona | NDP |
| ROBINSON, Eric, Hon. | Kewatinook | NDP |
| RONDEAU, Jim | Assiniboia | NDP |
| ROWAT, Leanne | Riding Mountain | PC |
| SARAN, Mohinder | The Maples | NDP |
| SCHULER, Ron | St. Paul | PC |
| SELBY, Erin | Southdale | NDP |
| SELINGER, Greg, Hon. | St. Boniface | NDP |
| SMOOK, Dennis | La Verendrye | PC |
| STEFANSON, Heather | Tuxedo | PC |
| STRUTHERS, Stan | Dauphin | NDP |
| SWAN, Andrew | Minto | NDP |
| WIEBE, Matt | Concordia | NDP |
| WIGHT, Melanie, Hon. | Burrows | NDP |
| WISHART, Ian | Portage la Prairie | PC |
| <i>Vacant</i> | The Pas | |

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, November 27, 2014

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Mr. 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.

Good afternoon, everyone. Please be seated.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 7—The Public Schools Amendment Act (Protecting Child Care Space in Schools)

Hon. Peter Bjornson (Minister of Education and Advanced Learning): Well, Mr. Speaker, good afternoon, and I move, seconded by the Minister of Family Services (Ms. Irvin-Ross), that Bill 7, The Public Schools Amendment Act (Protecting Child Care Space in Schools); Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques (superficie réservée aux garderies dans les écoles), be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Bjornson: Well, Mr. Speaker, today we are pleased to further our government's commitment to high-quality child care in Manitoba by introducing legislation that protects child-care spaces in schools throughout Manitoba.

We now—we know how valuable early childhood education and child care are for getting children off to a strong start, and this legislation will make it clear that these opportunities need to be maintained in our schools. By moving to protect child-care spaces in school, this legislation will ensure that children in Manitoba continue to benefit from the strong foundation that early learning provides.

Thank you.

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

Any further introduction of bills?

PETITIONS

Mr. Speaker: Seeing none, we'll move on to petitions.

Grace Hospital Emergency Room Upgrade and Expansion

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

And these are the reasons for this petition:

The provincial government promised to upgrade and expand the Grace Hospital emergency department in 2011 and to complete it by 2015.

The Grace Hospital was left as the last of all Winnipeg hospitals to be slated for an emergency room upgrade.

The provincial government has broken another promise to Manitobans by delaying the start of this upgrade by three years, as failure to begin construction in 2013 has left patients and hospital employees facing long wait times, overcrowding and the risk of unsafe conditions and care.

This provincial government has allowed ER wait times at the Grace Hospital to become the worst in Canada at triple the amount of time that emergency physicians recommend.

Ambulances in Winnipeg, including at the Grace Hospital, continue to face excessive patient off-load delays that are getting longer every year.

Last year the Grace Hospital in Winnipeg had over 23,000 patients seeking emergency care through the ER department and over 2,000 of those patients left the ER without being seen because they became too frustrated waiting to be seen.

Instead of fixing hallway medicine, there are now numbered hallway spaces.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government and the Minister of Health to keep their promise to the people of Manitoba and make the upgrade and expansion of the Grace ER an immediate priority.

And this is signed by J. Nasekupou, W. Davidrich, E. Nabess and many others, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: In keeping with our rule 132(6), when petitions are read they are deemed to have been received by the House.

Highway 10 North and 3rd Street North in Swan River—Traffic Signals

Mr. Stuart Briese (Agassiz): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

And these are the reasons for this petition:

Local residents have expressed concerns regarding properties located at the intersection of Highway 10 north and 3rd Street North in Swan River, including the Swan Valley regional high school, the Tim Hortons and the Co-op gas bar quadrisect.

There are no traffic lights or pedestrian crosswalks at this intersection. Students from the high school run across the highway to access Tim Hortons and the Co-op gas bar. When the daycare centre opens, children will need to cross the highway if they wish to access the wellness centre.

Highway 10 north is a major haul route for farmers and logging trucks, increasing the potential for a collision involving students and/or motorists.

This intersection is a dangerous corner for motorists, including school buses making left-hand turns onto the highway from either direction, especially in the hours before and after school and at lunchtime.

The traffic on this highway and at this intersection will only increase in the near future with the opening of the wellness centre and the daycare facility.

Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation is only offering to provide a painted-line crosswalk with unlit signage but nothing to actually stop the traffic for pedestrian crossing safety. Motorists often disregard a painted-line crosswalk, creating a false sense of security for pedestrians who use them.

On October the 3rd, 2013, Winkler mourned the loss of one of their 16-year-old students, killed at a crosswalk consisting only of signage.

We petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Manitoba Infrastructure—that Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation consider installing a set of traffic lights, including pedestrian lights, at the intersection of Highway 10 north and 3rd Street North in Swan River.

This petition is signed by S. Nunn, N. Woroniuk, D. Fagan and many, many other fine Manitobans.

Residential and Vocational Service Organizations—Standard Province-wide Funding Formula

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Riding Mountain): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

And the background to this petition is as follows:

Funding provided to organizations that provide residential and vocational services to individuals with physical and developmental disabilities in rural areas is significantly lower than the funding levels provided to similar organizations in Winnipeg.

This discrepancy in funding levels has affected the recruitment and retention of skilled staff as average wages do not reflect the complex duties of staff that are similar to health-care aides.

Without increased funding, most organizations that provide residential and vocational services will be forced to close.

The closure of these organizations will severely impact the local economy, as these organizations are often large employers and provide necessary services in the community.

The value and quality of life experienced by individuals with special needs residing in a familiar and consistent environment is immeasurable.

Closing these organizations and moving these individuals will be incredibly disruptive to their lives and detrimental to their health and well-being.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Family Services consider implementing a standard funding formula across the province for organizations that provide residential and vocational services for individuals with physical and developmental disabilities.

* (13:40)

This petition's signed by J. Patterson, B. Johannesson, J. Rosteski and many more Manitobans.

Beausejour District Hospital—Weekend and Holiday Physician Availability

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

And the reason for this petition is as follows:

(1) The Beausejour District Hospital is a 30-bed, acute-care facility that serves the communities of Beausejour and Brokenhead.

(2) The hospital and the primary-care centre have had no doctor available on weekends and holidays for many months, jeopardizing the health and livelihoods of those in the Interlake-Eastern Regional Health Authority.

(3) During the 2011 election, the provincial government promised to provide every Manitoban with access to a family doctor by 2015.

(4) This promise is far from being realized, and Manitobans are witnessing many emergency rooms limiting services or closing temporarily, with the majority of these reductions taking place in rural Manitoba.

(5) According to the Health Council of Canada, only 25 per cent of doctors in Manitoba reported that their patients had access to care on evenings and weekends.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government and the Minister of Health to ensure that the Beausejour District Hospital and primary-care centre have a primary-care physician available on weekends and holidays to better provide area residents with this essential service.

This petition is signed by T. Marciwkwow, M. Marciwkwow, D. Hellett and many, many more fine Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker: Committee reports?

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Greg Dewar (Minister of Finance): I'm pleased to table the statement as to fidelity bonds carried by the Manitoba government, municipalities,

agents, school boards and Crown corporations for the year 2014.

Mr. Speaker: Further tabling of reports?

Hon. James Allum (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I'm pleased today to table the annual report for 2012-2013 for the Helen Betty Osborne Memorial Foundation and the annual report for 2013-2014 for the Manitoba Justice, Community Safety Division, Victim Services complaints.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to oral questions, I'd like to draw the attention of honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us today from—68 grades 4 and 5 students from École Riverbend Community School, and this—these students are under the direction of Jill Parent. And this group is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Mineral Resources (Mr. Chomiak).

On behalf of all honourable members, we welcome you here this afternoon.

ORAL QUESTIONS

NDP Leadership Convention Disclosure of Rules Request

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): Well, the kids up there might not remember, Mr. Speaker, but I know you do, the limbo from way back when. How low can they go, they used to say. And the answer when it comes to the NDP is, I guess, even lower.

The executive of the NDP says they get to make the rules to choose the next premier. And the NDP executive says that they'll do that this Saturday, November the 29th. And the NDP executive says nobody else gets to know the rules except the NDP executive.

Now, I remind the member and his former leadership colleagues who disputed these rules in the past vehemently and any other potential leadership candidate that this process excludes 99.9 per cent of Manitobans already.

So I want the Premier to explain to the people of Manitoba: Why keep it secret?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, this comes from the leader that was gotten his job through a puff of smoke in a backroom somewhere.

It's—on the business of the House, yesterday was a good day in Manitoba. We met with the AMM.

Cabinet showed up. We had a great bear-pit session with the people there. They had—*[interjection]*—they made several—*[interjection]* Thank you. It was great. It was great.

And the president of the Association of Manitoba Municipalities, having heard from the opposition, made it very clear that he thought we had the best working relationship between a provincial government and municipalities anywhere in the country—anywhere in the country—the best working relationship.

And what are we doing together, Mr. Speaker? We announced yesterday that we continue to work with municipalities on their infrastructure priorities: sewer and water projects, road projects, major strategic infrastructure projects. We talked about the \$200 million we're investing in Highway 75 north, south and all around Morris.

Yesterday was a good day because we are doing the—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable First Minister's time has elapsed.

Mr. Pallister: Funny business, Mr. Speaker. Now, the reality is, of course, something different from what the Premier's just described. The reality is that Manitobans are being shortchanged by that Premier, that member from St. Boniface, in this case, because he speaks as a candidate more often than as a premier.

Now, all Manitobans deserve to know the rules for selecting the next premier of Manitoba, and the executive of the NDP will make those rules this Saturday, November 29th. So I'll invite, right now, all members of this House who support Manitobans knowing what those rules are to stand in their place, every member.

Let the record show that every PC member stood, as did the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard), the Liberal member for River Heights, but not a single NDP member stood, not one—not one.

NDP members failed to show up when it mattered on the PST hike. They failed to show up when it mattered on taking away the right of Manitobans to vote, and now they failed to show up again.

Would the Premier explain to Manitobans if he believes that's why his party is entering annihilation territory?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, this coming from the party that had the largest vote-rigging scandal in the history of Manitoba in 1995.

Mr. Speaker, I ask them to stand up if they thought the '95 election was one where Manitobans knew the rules that they followed when they tried to rig the votes against the people of Manitoba. Stand up now.

Mr. Pallister: Mr. Speaker, what the Premier's doing, of course, is playing a dangerous game. It's a game of hide-and-seek. It's a game of hide-and-seek and the Premier's hiding with the rules, he's hiding with the rules, but his rebel caucus members get to count while he's hiding. But they only count for a few days. They don't really count any more after that.

So they have a chance to think about their vote next week, because it's very clear that these members don't trust one another. They are afraid of one another, they are hiding from each other, and one of them is trying to intimidate some of the others into not voting for a non-confidence motion. That's pretty apparent.

Now, the MLA for St. Boniface, not the Premier but the MLA for St. Boniface, is hiding the rules to ensure that those who oppose his leadership vote to sustain it.

Will he admit that by hiding the rules of the NDP leadership race he's also hiding from Manitobans?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, coming from the political party that perpetrated the largest vote-rigging scandal in the history of Manitoba on the people of Manitoba in 1995. It took years to discover that. It took years to uncover it. There was no disclosure then. They never admitted to doing anything wrong. They had to have an inquiry, and you'll remember in the inquiry what the Chief Justice Monnin said about the people testifying at the inquiry. While the member opposite—while the member opposite perpetrates the history of the largest vote-rigging scandal in Manitoba, we were doing the business of the people of Manitoba.

Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, we saw the community safety officer program announced in legislation in this Legislature. I hope the members opposite will vote for it.

We saw an announcement yesterday where the Big Grass Marsh was contributed by private landowners to protect the wetlands in the south end

of Lake Manitoba, something that will make a gigantic difference in the ability to manage surface water in the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, we saw the Minister of Labour announce a fire protection program in partnership with municipalities to keep municipalities and their local communities safe, something that will make a life-saving difference to the people of Manitoba.

And what is the leader opposite focused on? Everything but the business of the people of Manitoba.

NDP Leadership Meeting Disclosure of Rules Request

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): This coming from a premier who falsified his own election returns.

* (13:50)

Mr. Speaker, let the record show that each and every single member opposite, including the rebels within their caucus, chose—they had a chance to stand up for Manitobans. They had a chance to stand up just now for democracy, and let the record show that they chose not to stand up for Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker, last week the member for Seine River (Ms. Oswald) expressed concern about a level playing field for the NDP leadership race. She said, and I quote: Anyone entering the race should be really sure about what the parameters and the rules are going to be. If the rules of the game are such that—*[interjection]*

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Stefanson: She went on to say if the rules of the game are—she went on to say that if the rules of the game are such that it's only possible that there's one winner, and we know in which office he currently sits, I wouldn't encourage anybody to go into that spinning propeller, she said, end quote.

Mr. Speaker, I give the member for Seine River one more chance. Will she stand up for Manitobans in the interest of democracy and support an immediate release of the rules of the NDP leadership convention after the meeting of the executive on Saturday?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation): Well, Mr. Speaker, Tories talking about anything to do with leadership is pretty rich, and they know about rich and they know about leadership.

Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition, people may recall, after he quit provincial politics in the middle of a flood, he ran and lost federally. He then ran for the leadership of the federal PC Party. He got, I believe, 13 per cent of the vote. He then quit that party. He then, after Stuart Murray was forced out—I seem to recall a couple of current members that were involved in that—he was accused by his own party of using his position as a Member of Parliament to campaign for leadership.

And, Mr. Speaker, what was his response? I want to quote: I am copping what's known as a woman's answer, isn't it? It's sort of a fickle kind of thing. That's the Leader of the Opposition.

Non-Confidence Motion Request for Support

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): Mr. Speaker, last year each and every member opposite, and I remind them, they had a chance to stand up for Manitobans on the PST issue, yet once again they chose not to stand up for Manitobans, and I say shame on them.

Mr. Speaker, last week the member for Seine River spoke about integrity. She said, and I quote: Sometimes doing the right thing isn't the easy path. Being truthful and holding on to your integrity is something my parents raised me to do, and I honour them today with that.

Mr. Speaker, will the member for Seine River stand by her words on integrity and stand up for Manitobans by supporting the non-confidence motion put forward by the Leader of the Opposition?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation): Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm wondering if the member for Tuxedo might want to comment on the Leader of the Opposition's comments which showed how little he gets anything to do with integrity and how little he respects the status of women in this province. I wonder if the member for Tuxedo would care to do that.

And I want to point out, you know, at times political parties go through various different matters, but we have been focused on the business of the province of Manitoba. We're in session. We're bringing in legislation. We're making exciting announcements. We brought in a bold Throne Speech that put forward the vision of universal child care for all Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker, we're focusing on the business of the province. We're accountable to the people of the province through question period, and I stress again, we don't need any lectures from members opposite about anything to do about operating parties or leadership. They wrote the book. We know that.

Mrs. Stefanson: Then why are they going to hide the rules from Manitobans, Mr. Speaker? What are they afraid of?

Mr. Speaker, last week the member for Seine River (Ms. Oswald) expressed concern about the priorities of the Premier (Mr. Selinger) and the NDP government. She said, and I quote: It's become clear that if you are in a position where you support the point of view of the Premier that your priorities and your projects move up the queue ahead of what was once a government plan and what would be, indeed, the priorities of Manitobans, she said. End quote.

Mr. Speaker, if the member for Seine River is concerned about the politicization of priorities of infrastructure projects within her own government, why wouldn't she support the non-confidence motion before the Legislature today?

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, I suppose I could get into asking questions, certainly, based on discussions I've had with former Conservative MLAs about the dynamic in that caucus, but this is question period; this is to deal with government business. I thought members opposite might want to be asking questions about the economy today. Oh, maybe it's got something to do with the fact that we're actually the second best performing economy in the country.

I just want to indicate to members opposite we are the New Democratic Party. That means we are a democratic party. We know how to resolve issues internally within our party. We don't need any lectures from members opposite.

But I suggest, again, rather than worrying about our internal processes, how about they stand up and ask questions about the real issues for Manitobans: the economy, health care, education and the record investment in infrastructure? That's why we're here in question—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable minister's time has elapsed.

Non-Confidence Motion Request for Support

Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler): Well, Mr. Speaker, we know that the member there can

bellow, but it is an atmosphere of dysfunction, of distrust and disorganization over there. It is a land of confusion. This is not a team.

At one time the member for Fort Rouge (Ms. Howard), the former Finance minister, said that Cabinet decision making was open to various viewpoints. She said that when the member of Riel was bringing accusations against the Premier. But now the member for Fort Rouge is saying that the Premier has stopped listening. First she says he listens, now she says he doesn't listen.

One thing is clear. The member for Fort Rouge did not listen to Manitobans during the debate on the PST and the NDP's illegal PST hike.

Will the member for Fort Rouge stand with Manitobans today and support our non-confidence motion?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation): You know, Mr. Speaker, a few days ago I think I did describe the Leader of the Opposition, or the king of political stunts, we're seeing again here today.

They stood up earlier in question period, Mr. Speaker, again, a political stunt. They're now asking questions, not to ministers, not about government business, dealing with internal party matters. We will deal with our internal party matters within the New Democratic Party.

But this is question period in the Manitoba Legislature. It's about dealing with the priorities of Manitobans, and I wonder today if the reason they're asking these kinds of questions is because they don't want to ask why we have the second best economic record in the country. Perhaps that's why they're on this line of questioning.

Mr. Friesen: Mr. Speaker, we know the state of affairs over there. Phil Collins could've been speaking of today's NDP when he said, too many men and too many people causing too many problems and not enough love to go around.

Mr. Speaker, the member for Fort Rouge said she could not support her leader because she could no longer work with a premier who refuses to listen, yet she herself, as the former Finance minister, did not listen to the thousands of Manitobans who spoke out in opposition to the illegal NDP PST hike. She has made it abundantly clear she cannot stand with this Premier.

Will the member for Fort Rouge (Ms. Howard), then, stand with Manitobans today and support our non-confidence motion?

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, I don't think anybody in the province would believe that somehow the Conservatives have morphed into the party that holds hands and sings Kumbaya in their caucus. Well, I notice the member for—members for Charleswood and River East were applauding that one because it's pretty rich.

But dare I say, the bottom line is members opposite clearly have no interest in the business of the province. They don't ask about the economy. They don't ask about the significant new initiatives in terms of health care. They don't ask about what we're doing in terms of education, most recently with the announcement of a very significant move in terms of student aid, first western Canadian province. They don't want to ask about the economy in terms of the new kind of developments.

I noticed yesterday the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen), he's pretty vocal in everything, but you notice one thing? He didn't ask a question about Valeant, 60 jobs in Steinbach.

* (14:00)

Bottom line is they can talk all they want—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable minister's time has elapsed.

Mr. Friesen: The member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) doesn't think that the selection process for the next premier of Manitoba is important. Really?

Mr. Speaker, it is clear there is no middle ground for the member for Fort Rouge or the other dissidents. The member for Fort Rouge says that there is no way to be in Cabinet anymore with integrity when you feel you can't speak honestly. That is both an indictment of the leader and of the new members who now sit in the most senior positions of Cabinet. She did not show integrity when she broke her word to Manitobans and raised the PST.

But if the member for Fort Rouge believes that the Premier (Mr. Selinger) is not listening, if she believes, as she says she does in her heart of hearts, that there's no way to go on, will the member for Fort Rouge be true to her heart, stand today on the side of Manitobans and support our non-confidence motion?

Mr. Ashton: Well, Mr. Speaker, given the steady stream of former Conservative MLAs, it's, again, rather rich, members opposite lecturing anyone about anything, and they certainly can't lecture us in terms of the issues of the day.

I want to stress one thing, for despite all their hyperbole, the second best economic record in Canada, not just this month, not just this year, this past decade, Mr. Speaker, we have the best economic record in Canada, and that's what people expect from government.

Mr. Speaker, they have no—nothing to offer in terms of health, nothing to offer in terms of education. They put forward a throne speech. The only thing they could come up in terms of infrastructure was cutting the East Side Road Authority. Once again, they haven't changed. The Leader of the Opposition hasn't changed. The first thing they're going to do is cut back in northern Manitoba.

Bottom line is, Mr. Speaker, we're dealing with the business of the province, and given the—our economic record, that business is looking pretty good.

Non-Confidence Motion Request for Support

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, Manitoba has a dysfunctional government right now with members more focused on themselves than they are on doing what's in the best interest of Manitobans.

The member for Southdale (Ms. Selby) felt strongly that this Premier wasn't listening to his Cabinet and that he wasn't listening to Manitobans who rejected the PST. In fact, she said, and I quote: People are angry. They feel that the Premier has broken their trust. End quote. Serious words.

So, Mr. Speaker, if the member for Southdale feels so strongly about this, will she stand with Manitobans today and support the non-confidence motion?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, I actually ran into Stu Murray recently. He's still pulling the knives out, and I do recall the member for Charleswood was one of the ones calling for him to be removed as leader. So I don't think she then turned around and voted against her caucus. I do remember she was

placed in a different role by the then-leader of the opposition.

Mr. Speaker, you know, members opposite wrote the book on this sort of thing. They could continue to talk all they want about it. We're focused on the business of the province.

Mrs. Driedger: The member for Southdale (Ms. Selby) spoke out against her Premier (Mr. Selinger) with very serious allegations. She also went on to say, and I quote: We don't regret speaking honestly. End quote.

Well, Mr. Speaker, how honest is she going to be? Will the member for Southwood commit to standing with Manitobans and support our non-confidence motion on behalf of Manitobans? She can't have it both ways. Will she stand and support our motion?

Mr. Ashton: If anybody's trying to have it both ways, it's the member for Charleswood who 10 years ago spoke out against her leader, did not change her voting pattern in this House whatsoever, remained part of the Progressive Conservative Party and continues to be an MLA to this day.

And I point out, Mr. Speaker, that our caucus, all people in this House that are elected as NDP MLAs have indicated they'll support the budget, and for good reason, because we have the best economic record, we have a bold Throne Speech, we are dealing with the business of the province. We're not trying to have it both ways. That's—that is the member for Charleswood.

Non-Confidence Motion Request for Support

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): Earlier this month the member from Dauphin said, and I quote: The Premier wasn't listening so much interested in my advice as he was in validation. End of quote. And yet that same member says he will support the Speech from the Throne.

He says he's not a wallflower, so will he stand in support of the people of Manitoba and vote for the non-confidence motion currently being debated?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation): Again, Mr. Speaker, it's been very clear, and members opposite don't like to hear this, but every single MLA that was elected as an NDP MLA is going to support the budget. And I think it speaks volumes, despite all the efforts of members opposite to try and change that fact, that

every single member, including the members that the members opposite have been asking questions about, all—have all indicated they'll support the Throne Speech.

And why wouldn't they, Mr. Speaker? We've got the second best economic record in Canada. We had a bold vision put forward in this Throne Speech for universal child care. We have been making announcements day after day that reflect the priorities of Manitoba families. Why wouldn't those members vote for it? Why don't members opposite vote it? It's a good Throne Speech.

Mr. Eichler: Mr. Speaker, the member from Dauphin says he was honest with the Premier about his leadership. He said he tried his best to give him his honest views. The member from Dauphin says he's not a wallflower and he says exactly what he thinks. He says he didn't support the PST increase, then yet he voted for it anyway.

Will he do the same in voting for the Speech from the Throne, or will he support our motion?

Mr. Ashton: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'd point out that we not only have the second best economic record in Canada, the Conference Board of Canada specifically outlined that it's because of our investments in infrastructure and our investments through Manitoba Hydro in building our generating capacity.

I'd point out that it was the member for Lakeside in this House last year who got up and, when he was asking a question about Manitoba Hydro, urged this government to jam the brakes on.

Mr. Speaker, Manitobans don't want us to be jamming the brakes on the second best economic record in Canada.

Non-Confidence Motion Request for Support

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): Mr. Speaker, well, the minister does seem to be a little confused. Maybe it's the high pressure—high blood pressure he's generating over there, but he's not—he's concerned about whether they're going to vote for the budget or the Throne Speech. Just to point out, we are talking about the Throne Speech, not the budget. That comes in the spring, but I'm sure the minister will know that later.

Mr. Speaker, the member for Minto (Mr. Swan) failed to stand up for Manitobans and forced in the PST increase. Since then, he has said, quote: The

Premier is more concerned about remaining leader than necessarily doing things in the best interest of the province. End quote.

Mr. Speaker, will the member for Minto stand in his place and support our non-confidence motion?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation): Well, Mr. Speaker, the Brandon West MLA knows about voting in terms of budgets. I seem to recall he got up in question period. He demanded action on Victoria Avenue. We brought in a budget that specifically highlighted investments in Victoria Avenue. What did he do? Talk about integrity; he voted against the budget.

Mr. Helwer: Well, Mr. Speaker, if the minister would make a trip out to Brandon, he would see the effect on that budget on Brandon. He would see all the cracks in that road on Victoria Avenue, because they did not do the underground work, just a topcoat—just a topcoat.

Mr. Speaker, the member for Minto (Mr. Swan) has an opportunity to make a difference for Manitobans and back up his words with action.

Mr. Speaker, will the member for Minto stand in his place, show some backbone and support our non-confidence motion?

Mr. Ashton: Well, again, only the member for Brandon West could make critical comments about a record investment in infrastructure, particularly in Brandon.

Fortunately, Mr. Speaker, we do have an MLA from Brandon, the member for Brandon East (Mr. Caldwell), who's been a strong proponent for Brandon, and when he sees a Throne Speech or a budget that's good for Brandon, what does he do? What's the phrase they use in Brandon? Putting Brandon first. He puts Brandon first and he votes for it.

*(14:10)

Remand Custody Wait Times

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, the Manitoba Association for Rights and Liberties has said, in discussing a lengthy report from the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, there is a profound problem in Manitoba where 66 per cent of accused persons being housed in provincial jails sit waiting for their day in court.

Manitobans deserve an explanation for why such a high proportion of the people in our province's jails are legally innocent. The overwhelming delays and injustice occurring are also hemorrhaging our provincial treasury.

I ask: Are the Premier and his Minister of Justice (Mr. Allum) content to let this situation persist, or will they, after 15 years of delay, actually bring forth a plan to address this profound problem?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): I thank the member for the question.

He's referring to the high percentage of people that remain on remand in the court system, and we've put forward some very innovative projects to deal with that: first, the family court, with supports for people going through that process in the family court; the Front End Project, very effective, very well received, recognized by the United Nations.

We've since then launched a mental health court in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker. The mental health court works very closely not only with the justice system but with the health-care system to ensure the people that are challenged with those kinds of issues are given the support they need to stay out of the justice system.

We have many other initiatives, Mr. Speaker, stopping the number of people coming into the correction system with good prevention and youth programs in our communities, good programs to create employment and jobs for people so that they can be doing things that are productive and earning a good living and can stay out of the attractions or the opportunities that may present them—to them in crime if they don't have good employment and good opportunities, so all of these things are making a difference.

We have, as well, hired additional prosecutors as recently as 2000, 69 new prosecutors. We have a Criminal Organization and High Risk Offender Unit, and I'd be pleased to answer more questions in a second.

Justice System Systemic Discrimination

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, lots of programs, no real improvement.

Mr. Speaker, the report called Set Up to Fail goes—also says there is systemic discrimination in the justice system and that it frequently criminalizes poverty, addictions and mental illness and is biased

against Aboriginal people. The report also raises issues as to whether the justice system in Manitoba operates so that violations of the Charter rights in the bail context are routine.

Perhaps the Premier's latest Minister of Justice (Mr. Allum) has the solution which has eluded them for years.

If the Premier is really focused on the needs of Manitobans, he will act today to address the systemic discrimination in the justice system that his NDP government has run for 15 years. Will he?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Yes, Mr. Speaker, we will, because we believe that there are things you can do to keep people out of crime's way, and when you keep people out of crime's way you keep them out of the justice system.

That's why we're supporting programs like BUILD in Manitoba, where people are actually in neighbourhoods fixing up homes, helping people save money on their energy bills, save money on their water bills while they're getting good skills training, good opportunities for permanent jobs.

That's why we support the BEEP program in Brandon, which is doing similar types of work, taking people that were previously involved in the criminal justice system or at risk of being there, working with them to have good jobs in their communities.

That's why we have the After School Leaders program. That's why we support the Green Teams and the—on a seasonal basis in Manitoba, to ensure young people get good opportunities for good jobs.

And that's why we're looking at alternatives to people being in the justice system through traditional methods with First Nations communities where they can have—elders can play a role in playing—setting standards for behaviour in their community, and that's why we have criminal justice committees in our system where many things can be dealt with right at the neighbourhood level with the support of community volunteers and leaders.

All of those things will make a difference, Mr. Speaker, and we will look at other measures we can take that will further us down that path of keeping people out of the justice system.

Drug Treatment Court Availability Brandon and Thompson Locations

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): I asked a similar question to today's June the 8th, 2011, three years ago, but there's almost no progress in outcomes. Indeed, as this recent report says, one of the problems is that the Drug Treatment Court is not sufficiently available.

I asked about this April 15th of this year, and now for eight months the Winnipeg's court has been closed to new referrals because of the drastic and unconscionable failure of the NDP, and there's still no court in Brandon or Thompson.

Will the Premier tell us today: Will he halt the shutdown of the Drug Treatment Court and make it fully functional, and when will the urgently needed drug treatment courts in Brandon and Thompson be operational?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, we know that there's been some withdrawal of resources for the Drug Treatment Court from another level of government. We continue to be supportive of it. We think the Drug Treatment Court, along with the mental health court and the court that helps families that are having negative experiences, are all positive innovations because they focus on the specific issues those people are going through in their lives that caused them to get into trouble, and the Drug Treatment Court, we think, is something that has merit. We look for a federal partner in that. We certainly believe there's support in the community for a drug treatment court and we know that our people in the health and social services system are supportive as well.

And, Mr. Speaker, we've added additional beds in Manitoba for drug treatment so that people can get access quickly to those kinds of services and be able to take the stress off themselves from addictions. Addictions can be a very difficult issue for somebody to overcome. They need the help of people and governments that support their programs, and we have opened up many additional beds not only for youth but for adults throughout Manitoba to deal with drug issues and help people overcome those issues.

Electric Bus Route City of Winnipeg

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): There's one more yet.

We had a very exciting announcement today which helps address no less than three failings of the members opposite. Exhibit No. 1: When they were in office, climate change emissions increased on an average of 100,000 metric tons per year. Item No. 2: They were then and they are today still adamantly opposed to the green energy projects that we are busy building for the future of this province. Item No. 3: They cancelled the funding agreement with municipalities across Manitoba that would lead to a 50-50 cost share on transit services.

Mr. Speaker, I'm hoping our hard-working Minister of Jobs and the Economy might be able to tell the House about the exciting announcement which makes important improvements in all three of these failings left over from the members opposite.

Hon. Kevin Chief (Minister of Jobs and the Economy): Once again, I got to—I hope that all members of the House buy some COLD-FX and support our local economy. That's a local company having a global impact.

Once again, it's another great announcement on the Manitoba model: collaboration, partnership, working together. I was proud to join Mayor Bowman, Red River College, Paul Soubry from New Flyer, and we had a great announcement at the airport today.

What we announced is the first electric bus route in the city of Winnipeg, Mr. Speaker. We're going to welcome the world and what they're going to see and Winnipeg's first impression's going to be our dedication to innovation, world-leading technology and our commitment to clean, green energy that grows our economy.

And I do want to say I used the hashtag today, for those of us on Twitter, if you want to #ridethefuture, come to Winnipeg. Thank you.

Non-Confidence Motion Request for Support

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, all 57 NDP candidates in the 2011 election went door to door promising not to raise the PST and then broke that promise to all Manitobans.

Will the new Minister of Healthy Living and Seniors (Ms. Crothers) stand up for Manitobans and support the non-confidence motion brought forward by the Leader of the Opposition?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation): I think members opposite

perhaps haven't got the message, and if the message, Mr. Speaker, if it hasn't been clear in debate, certainly clear in question period today that all NDP MLAs are going to be supporting this Throne Speech because it's a good Throne Speech for Manitoba.

Non-Confidence Motion Request for Support

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Spruce Woods): Not one NDP MLA is standing up for Manitobans, and it appears they've got their marching orders from the party.

Mr. Speaker, the member for Burrows (Ms. Wight) had a chance to stand up for Manitobans on the PST. Today the member for Burrows has an opportunity to stand up for Manitobans by supporting the non-confidence motion being put forth by our leader.

Will she do that today, Mr. Speaker?

* (14:20)

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation): Again, Mr. Speaker, we're actually in Throne Speech debate. I thought this would be a better time, and I realize that members opposite are actually—we're not even part way through this fall sitting and they're running out of ideas. I haven't heard one question today about any of the business of the day. Thank goodness we had one of our MLAs talk about a very important economic announcement.

Bottom line is, Mr. Speaker, we're dealing with the business of the province. We're seeing great things happening in Manitoba. They simply don't get it and that's why they are running out of steam. We've only been here, how many days? Four, five days and they've run out of steam.

Non-Confidence Motion Request for Support

Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris): Jim Walding had no problem standing up for democracy.

Mr. Speaker, the MLA for Flin Flon, the conductor of the love train, spoke to the Premier (Mr. Selinger) for over an hour a few weeks ago. Obviously, that conversation didn't go so well for the Premier, because after that conversation he described the Premier as floating the Titanic.

Will the minister responsible—

An Honourable Member: How's that new bridge in Morris?

Mr. Martin: Been reannounced, I hear, a few times.

Will he join us? Will he get to the life rafts, Mr. Speaker, and vote for a non-confidence motion?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation): Well, Mr. Speaker, I realize that the member opposite is a relatively new member and, actually, I think most people will be watching how he votes on the Throne Speech. I'm wondering if he's going to vote for a Throne Speech that is making a record investment in Morris, more than \$200 million on Highway 75, or is he going to listen to his seatmate, the member for Brandon West (Mr. Helwer)?

Like most of them across the way, they constantly talk about infrastructure. Big difference is we do it.

Non-Confidence Motion Request for Support

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): The new Minister of Health (Ms. Blady) sat on committee during the long, hot summer of 2013, and she heard the pleas of many hard-working, taxpaying Manitobans that begged her government not to raise the PST. But, Mr. Speaker, it fell on deaf ears. She didn't listen then and voted to raise the PST.

She's got a chance today to redeem herself.

Mr. Speaker, will she stand with us today and with Manitobans, those hard-working, taxpaying Manitobans, and vote to support our non-confidence motion?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, earlier in question period I referenced a question asked by the member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger). I just suggest that this member read the question. I think Stu Murray has still got a knife that he wants to give back to the member from River East.

You know, again, I know members opposite. I don't like to say this, but I'm going—I'm just going to make a prediction here. In a few days we will have the vote on the Throne Speech and they're going to see every single member of this NDP caucus voting in favour of it. And I want to say, when Manitobans see how good our record is in terms of the economy and what this Throne Speech means for moving Manitoba forward, we will put our vision forward any day against the negative, slam-the-brakes-on vision of members opposite. That's what this is really all about.

Mr. Speaker: Time for oral questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Mr. Speaker: It is now time for members' statements.

National Classified Bowling Championships

Mr. Ted Marcelino (Tyndall Park): It's always a pleasure to stand up and do this ceremony after a raucous question period.

When we have championship-winning sports teams in our province they deserve to be celebrated. This summer four Manitobans were crowned champions in their sport and I would like to recognize them in this Chamber.

On June 22nd Earl Sobotkiewicz, Dale Marchak, Paul Santos, Phil Haaksma became national champions after winning the men's 10-pin category in the National Classified Bowling Championships.

These men come from all over Winnipeg. Earl is from Kildonan, Dale from Concordia, Paul lives in the West End and Phil comes from Rossmere.

The great thing about team sports is that not only does it build skills, it builds friendships. I doubt a gold win would have been possible for these four men without great communication, camaraderie and teamwork. The tournament which was held in Saskatoon this year featured teams from coast to coast to coast, but in the end it was the guys who play out of the Chateau Lanes who took home the championship.

Chateau Lanes frequently hosts local bowling tournaments here in Winnipeg, providing fun recreation opportunities for everyone from teams to seniors. In December—or in the spring, for example, they host the high school bowling championships. In December they bring together older adults, like me, who are staying in the game with the annual MBA seniors tournament. This spring they'll be hosting the Canadian youth championships which will bring young bowlers from across Canada to Winnipeg.

Thank you to Chateau Lanes for being such a welcoming host for people of all ages who want to stay active and have fun.

Congratulations, Earl, Dale, Paul and Phil, for bringing home the gold.

Ukrainian Women's Association of Canada 75th Anniversary

Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye): Volunteering plays an important role in the success of community groups and organizations. Manitoba leads Canada in numbers of volunteers. On November the 2nd, I had the pleasure of helping the Sirko branch of the Ukrainian Women's Association of Canada celebrate their 75th anniversary.

The St. Olha's branch of the Ukrainian Women's Association of Canada in Sirko, Manitoba, was started in 1939. Its members knit socks, scarves and mitts that they donated to the Red Cross to be sent to soldiers who were fighting in World War II. The Sirko branch has a long history of supporting many good causes such as the Heart and Stroke Foundation and the Canadian Cancer Society. In addition, the branch donates humanitarian aid and medical supplies to children in the Ukraine, and they have been continually involved with many other worthwhile projects and programs.

The Sirko branch is very active at the local level and works with the St. Elias Ukrainian Orthodox Church to maintain the church hall, cemetery and the original church building which is a provincial heritage site.

The Sirko branch's 75th anniversary was celebrated with a church service and a lunch held in the church hall. Several members of the Sirko branch were also—received certificates in recognition of their dedication to the group. The following members received certificates of service: Annie Kachurovski, 58 years of service; Florence Safiuk, 57 years of service; Joyce Kutzak, 51 years; Olga Tkachyk, 50 years; Mary Mandziuk, 50 years; Gertie Gushulak, 48 years; Nettie Boychuck, 48 years; Nell Chobotar, 45 years; Audrey Dowd, 40 years; Olly Safriuk, 38 years; Rosie Andrusiak, 37 years; and Olga Elyk, 30 years. Congratulations to each and every one of them on their awards and their combined 552 years of volunteer service.

I would like to thank the past and current members of the Ukrainian Women's Association of Canada Sirko branch for their dedication and services over the last 75 years. I ask all members to help me congratulate the Sirko branch and wish them another 75 years of success.

Be a Santa to a Senior Program

Hon. Kerri Irvin-Ross (Minister of Family Services): Last week I was honoured to be at the

Victoria General Hospital for this year's launch of an incredible program in our community, the Be a Santa to a Senior program. This will be the sixth year that this program has taken place in Winnipeg. Since it began over 3,500 gifts have been delivered to seniors facing social isolation within our community.

* (14:30)

This program was brought to Winnipeg by Julie Donaldson, co-owner of Home Instead Senior Care. Initially partnered with A & O: Support Services for Older Adults, the program has grown substantially since its first year and this year's partners also include Meals on Wheels, Victoria General Hospital, Victoria Lifeline, 103.1 Virgin Radio and the Holy Rosary Catholic Church.

The goal of Be a Santa to a Senior program is to reach out to isolated seniors bringing a bit of joy to their holiday season with a gift and a friendly visit. For many of the seniors involved, this may be the only gift they will receive.

Participants are referred to the program by health-care professional agencies serving older adults. Gifts for the seniors are donated by members of the community, churches, businesses, retirement residences, community organizations and health care agencies.

Last year a thank-you card was received from one of the recipients that clearly shows how powerful this program can be. The card read: Your Christmas gift is greatly—is deeply appreciated more than words can say. It is both thoughtful and useful and represents in essence an expression of the ideal of love and peace on earth. Season's greetings.

I'd like to sincerely congratulate all of those who—dedication and commitment have made this program a huge success and to thank everyone involved for making such a wonderful difference in the lives of many older adults in our community.

CEO Sleepout

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, on September 18th, my colleague, the member from Portage la Prairie, and myself had the opportunity to participate in the fourth annual Winnipeg Downtown BIZ CEO Sleepout, an event aimed at addressing the important social and economic costs of homelessness in Manitoba. This year's event saw more than 160 community leaders commit to a sleepout at Portage and Main to raise awareness and funds for the over 3,000 Manitobans

who cope with the consequences of homelessness every night.

The CEO Sleepout brings together Manitobans from all walks of life to spend a night on the street and participate in tours of downtown and various presentations. We had the special opportunity to hear from individuals who have experienced homelessness on Winnipeg streets.

In addition to raising awareness and funds, the CEO Sleepout hopes to catalyze conversation about poverty and homelessness in Winnipeg with a focus on housing, employment and building stronger communities.

Over the past four years, the CEO Sleepout has helped to raise over half a million dollars for agencies providing support to Winnipeg's homeless. It has helped employ over 40 individuals, providing them with prospects otherwise unattainable as a result of the many barriers facing those who live through cycles of poverty and homelessness.

The CEO Sleepout has also gained national recognition. Just yesterday, the Downtown BIZ won the VIA Rail Community Service Award at the 2014 Canadian Tourism Awards held in Ottawa. A major reason the agency received the honour was the success of the CEO Sleepout campaign. While spending one safely organized night on the streets is nothing compared to what many of our province's homeless experience, I am proud to have had this opportunity to participate in such a great event. The CEO Sleepout is 'emblemic'— emblematic of the potential for the progress with the public, private and not-for-profit sectors work together.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank several of the organizers of the CEO Sleepout, including Downtown Winnipeg BIZ's Managing Director Jason Syvixay, Executive Director Stefano Grande, and Technical, Administrative and Operational Support Co-ordinator Brendan Malakym.

I encourage all members of this House to support initiatives that combat homelessness such as the CEO Sleepout and hope to see many of my colleagues there next year.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Support for Livestock Producers

Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff (Interlake): Mr. Speaker, the extreme weather conditions we experienced this summer challenged many crop and livestock producers in Manitoba as well as many in my

constituency, particularly around Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin.

Current market prices are strong, but some livestock producers may not have enough feed to maintain their breeding herds. In some cases the loss on income on breeding herds could take a toll on entire communities. Farmers identified this potential problem this spring and with hard work from the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (Mr. Kostyshyn), we fought hard with Ottawa to get a deal that would address the needs of livestock producers. Recently, we announced the creation of a new federal-provincial AgriRecovery initiative to address this concern. AgriRecovery will help affected livestock producers buy and haul feed and forage, so they can maintain their breeding herd over the winter.

The program includes two components, forage assistance and freight assistance. The Forage Assistance Program is a needs-based program for producers in the areas around Lake Manitoba, Lake Winnipegosis and Lake St. Martin where forage production was not possible due to high lake levels. The freight assistance program operates province-wide and assists livestock producers who need to transport animals or feed or for—by providing financial support.

Initiatives like forage and freight assistance programs are pivotable—pivotal to assisting livestock producers to remain economically stable. Our government is looking to the future and talking with agriculture groups, because it's important that we find ways that insurance programs can better address the long-lasting and increased frequency of severe moisture events.

The Province of Manitoba is working on initiatives that will support long-term solutions to flood protection that will limit the amount of damage to farmland. We're looking to enhance the outflow capacities of Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin so that fewer farmers will lose their forage lands to flooding. The work on a new flood-control structure is well under way—I should say structures—and, when completed, will address a major issue for beef producers in these flood-prone areas.

Our government is committed to ensuring producers get the support they need in times of crisis.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

House Business

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen), on House business.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader): On House business, Mr. Speaker.

In accordance with rule 31(9), I'd like to announce the private member's resolution that will be considered next Thursday is the resolution on Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry 100th anniversary brought forward by the honourable member for Spruce Woods (Mr. Cullen).

Mr. Speaker: It has been announced that, in accordance with rule 31(9), that the private member's resolution that will be considered next Thursday is the resolution on Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry 100th anniversary, sponsored by the honourable member for Spruce Woods.

Any further House business?

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

THRONE SPEECH

(Fifth Day of Debate)

Mr. Speaker: Seeing none, we'll move on to orders of the day, government business, and to resume the adjourned debate on the proposed motion of the honourable member for Wolseley (Mr. Altemeyer) and the amendment thereto, standing in the name of the honourable Minister of Multiculturalism and Literacy, who has 17 minutes remaining.

Hon. Flor Marcelino (Minister of Multiculturalism and Literacy): Mr. Speaker, that's also why we're moving forward with plans to build 1,000 more social housing—social and affordable housing units, because affordable, good-quality housing provides the stability people need to upgrade their education, get jobs, raise their families and actively participate in their communities. In the Logan constituency alone, there are 2,794 existing dwelling units under Manitoba Housing. Close to Logan constituency in the Maples area, there are 187 units. In the Gilbert Park area, there are 256 units; in the Inkster Garden Drive area, 40 units; the Notre Dame area, 55 units; on McDermot there are 21 units; on Arlington, 12 units; scattered around Brooklands there are 24 units; and on Alverstone there are two units.

Mr. Speaker, I know my constituents in Logan do not want cuts to services like home care, and do not want wealthy Manitobans to get—to cut to the front of the line when it comes to health care. These are not their priorities, they're not my priorities and they're not the priorities of this government.

The Leader of the Opposition, on the other hand, can't relate to the challenges facing everyday Manitobans. His priorities are just plain wrong for today's Manitoba, and they are wrong for my constituents in Logan.

Mr. Speaker, my constituents will be delighted to know that in last week's Throne Speech, access to quality and affordable child care is prioritized. It is essential for parents returning to work, pursuing higher education or looking for their first job. Working together with parents, communities and child-care workers, Manitoba has built one of the best early learning and child-care systems in Canada, with over 14,000 newly funded spaces, over a hundred new and expanded child-care centres and the lowest fees in Canada outside Quebec.

*(14:40)

In Manitoba, our vision is to work with partners on a long-term plan to expand the number of spaces so that child care is universally accessible for all families who need it, while maintaining affordability. Will the members opposite support universal accessible affordable daycare? It remains to be seen if their past track record is an indicator.

A new child-care commission will help chart the course forward. This will include looking at ways to forge stronger partnerships between child-care centres and public schools as well as exploring new approaches for providing part-time and casual child care.

Mr. Speaker, new measures will also protect child-care spaces in schools and advance our work with Aboriginal child-care providers to enrich programming related to Aboriginal culture and language. My constituents in Logan will also appreciate our—that our government has launched a new sustainable employment strategy that supports Manitobans on social assistance to get the training they need to go back to work or get their first job. This strategy is a major component of our commitment to reduce poverty and grow our workforce.

Mr. Dave Gaudreau, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

Mr. Acting Speaker, this summer Rent Assist was introduced to increase benefits for both social assistance recipients and low-income workers. Many from my constituency will welcome this benefit. This new benefit is portable, making it easier to move from welfare to work. This year we will continue to make progress in our commitment to increase benefits to 75 per cent of median market rate rents over four years.

My constituents will also agree that to help young people better prepare for rewarding careers our government will work to ensure that all Manitoba students have the opportunity to access post-secondary courses and paid work experiences while still in high school. We will work with schools to launch a new first-year-now initiative modelled after the successful program in Seven Oaks School Division giving students the opportunity to take university and college courses in high school and earn dual credits, offer a new specialized high school program where students have access to industry experts and state-of-the-art equipment as Sisler High School has done with its cyber security academy, expand existing high school apprenticeship programs by crediting new programs in schools across all regions of the province, work with the Alliance of Manitoba Sector Councils to introduce a new Manitoba career post-prospects program bringing more employers into classrooms and more students into workplaces and support the Division scolaire franco-manitobaine. The post-secondary students from Logan will also welcome the Throne Speech as it will offer interest-free student loans.

In the city of Winnipeg, our government is committed to working with our partners to improve the lives of all residents. In Winnipeg, provincial investments in roads and infrastructure have reached historic levels and we look forward to participating in the mayor's new build Winnipeg partnerships to develop a long-term vision for priority investments including better streets, rapid transit and even a more vibrant downtown.

To make sure that opportunities for growth are extended to all Winnipeggers, we will work with other levels of government and community partners such as the Centre for Aboriginal Human Resource Development and Urban Circle Training Centre to expand career planning and skills training for Aboriginal people.

We'll also continue efforts with community organizations and the City of Winnipeg to improve

and stabilize a supply of rooming houses as an option for those in greatest need. We'll also work with the new mayor and council in updating the City of Winnipeg Charter to strengthen transparency and accountability.

In my constituency of Logan, many new and exciting things have been happening. This last year many organizations in my community were able to benefit from our government's Community Places Program grants or CPP grants for short. CPP grants help strengthen non-profit groups by providing them with funding and planning assistance for their building projects. Last year 227 groups in Manitoba received funding. The CPP grants helped groups build or upgrade their facilities to better serve the community. This might mean addressing critical repairs such as updating a building's outdated fire safety measures, making a building more environmentally friendly, renovating a facility to make it accessible for people with disabilities or tackling a brand new project.

Over the past years, organizations that have received CPP grants include playgrounds, museums, multi-use recreation facilities, community halls, child-care centres, libraries and seniors' facilities. I wonder how many members opposite feel about CPP grants. Under a PC government, would they cut this valuable investment in our communities? Many organizations in Logan have successfully applied for CPP grants and our community is stronger because of it. Some of the groups are the Exchange Community Building. They were approved for funding up to \$40,000 to make their building more environmentally friendly. The Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba, they were approved for funding up to \$20,000 for an exciting new building project. They built a rooftop garden for immigrant and refugee families to enjoy. Knox United Church, they were approved for \$13,000 to enhance their building. The Day Nursery Centre, Kid Gloves Unit, they were approved for \$1,800 for kitchen renovations so that the staff can have easier time to prepare-making the children healthy lunches and snacks.

Mr. Acting Speaker, other organizations in Logan have also received our government support such as the Manitoba Children's Museum, which was awarded \$20,000 for repairs and upgrades. The Winnipeg Chinese Cultural and Community Centre received \$100,000 for the renovation of their gym. École Sacré-Coeur Winnipeg was given a grant of \$80,000 for the school's concrete entrance landing

replacement. Ka Ni Kanichihk received \$50,000 for much needed foundation repairs. With a solid structure they will be able to continue their weekly programming that empowers, inspires and encourages Aboriginal women and girls.

The Leader of the Opposition, the members opposite still believe in cuts to services families count on and they still want to privatize health care and Hydro. That's why I'll be fully supporting our government's plan to grow the economy, create more jobs, protect and enhance front-line services and create more opportunities for Manitoba families. I fully support our government's plan to make Manitoba better for all Manitobans. I'm proud of the bold visions initiated in the Throne Speech. It reflects the values and principles that have guided our government as it continually charts a course towards progress, prosperity, opportunity and pursuit of happiness and social justice for all Manitobans.

Thank you.

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): It gives me great pleasure today to rise and speak to the amendment to the speech from the throne moved by our Leader of the Opposition from Fort Whyte.

I'd like to start off, you know, welcoming you back, Mr. Acting Speaker, and, of course, the Speaker of the House who's not in the Chair right now either, but I think we can—I think that's okay for me to say. I think they know that because of the acting Speaker comment, but now I'm in a lot of trouble. I've gone down a path of which I can't get back, so, anyways, I'm going to carry on.

I'd like to welcome the table staff and the clerks back, as well, from the summer, and hope they enjoyed a little bit of—hopefully some time away from the Leg. I know that there's a lot of hard work to be done in between sessions as well. Also to Hansard staff and to say that to all the staff who participates and helps us out here at the Legislature, welcome back to them as well. Of course, to the new pages who have joined us for the fall session and will be spending time with us here, I know that the experience you're going to gain here is going—you're going to remember it for many, many, many years to come. I'd also like to thank the constituents of Lac du Bonnet constituency who had elected me to work for them back in the fall of 2011. And basically like to thank all the volunteers who had put in countless, countless hours through the many various festivals and parades and events that we've held in the Lac du Bonnet constituency since July.

* (14:50)

Of course, many of us here who serve as MLAs and work here at the Leg., I couldn't do so without the support of family, and so I'd like to take this opportunity to thank my lovely wife, Tracey, and my two boys, Brayden and Jarvis, for their support over the last 38 months now, and it—because it's been quite the journey, Mr. Acting Speaker, as I'm sure you would attest as well.

Mr. Acting Speaker, we—on this side of the House we're talking about the Throne Speech and basically the amendment that we've brought forward as an alternate throne speech, I guess, and basically bringing a non-confidence motion to the House because there's been some disarray on the government side, a little bit of dysfunction as well. Basically, the amendment focuses on the fact that Manitobans no longer have the trust and the faith in this government, and I know that because we receive many, many letters and emails and people coming to the constituency office not only from my constituency, but also from a neighbouring constituency from the west as well. Many of them come by and they share their concern, and they're looking for change.

The NDP government no longer command a legitimacy needed to govern, and it's time, Mr. Acting Speaker, for something that we have been saying on this side of the House with increasing frequency ever since all the NDP members on that side of the House voted to raise the PST.

I'd like to highlight some of the communities in my constituency and some of the concerns that they've been bringing forward. I'll start with the community of Bissett, Mr. Acting Speaker. Up there we have quite a few community members that have been working tirelessly, filling in various paperwork and trying to basically purchase the pieces of property that they have their residences on. And I know that I've been in contact with the—with Crown lands quite a few times, and I know that they're—they say that they're working on it. But some of these residents have put in applications for the purchase of their property now for 12 years, if not more. So somewhere within the department I believe these applications are sitting on, you know, either one or more than one person's desk, and it continues to get transferred over and I don't quite understand why it needs to necessarily take all that much time, because a lot of people put their lives on hold whether they want to purchase it or potentially sell their place. So I

have, on their behalf, brought it to the attention of the minister and his department, and he assures me that they're working on it. And I'm just hoping that we can get moving a little bit faster than the last 12 years or so.

Also, the paramedic care out in the Bissett area, I am going to get into a little bit of our ER closure situation and doctor shortages out in the Interlake-Eastern Regional Health Authority. But I'd like to just touch on the fantastic service and the care that our paramedics throughout the whole province actually provide us, Mr. Acting Speaker, because I know, especially in communities that are, you know, over two hours away from the city of Winnipeg, they have to be very highly skilled and highly trained individuals who are manning the ambulances and the paramedics and the—well, the EMO services in its entirety. Up around the Bissett area we have three paramedics and they service the communities of Hollow Water and Manigotagan, and their closest ER is actually Powerview-Pine Falls, which, unfortunately, has been seeing—since we first brought it to the Health Minister's attention, the member from Seine River, back in the fall of 2011, the spring of 2012 on the doctor shortage and the actual amount of time that the ERs in Powerview-Pine Falls have been closed.

There's been months where the ERs have been only open four days out of the 30-31 days, which does not serve the people of those communities very well. And I know that here in the House we've talk—we've spoken, and I know that your side of the House, as well, has spoken about the East Side Road Authority and the east side roads, so when the east side road does open up there's going to be thousands of more people coming down and then having to access that hospital.

So I'm just seeing that that is a major, major issue that is going to have to be quickly addressed by this present government, and I'm not sure if this present government's up to the task, Mr. Acting Speaker, because I know that within the last, you know, two years, three years, we're now on our third Health Minister and I believe that she's going to try to do what's right for Manitobans, but so far we're not seeing the fruits of their labour.

I'd also like to talk about the communities of Powerview-Pine Falls, as I've already mentioned their ER, but the RM of Alexander and especially the community of Great Falls, Manitoba, where I know I brought up to the Conservation Minister in the spring

in regards to the fact that there's 85-plus residents, 85 to 90 residents that are on a boil water advisory, and they've been on this advisory for six-plus years, Mr. Acting Speaker. And I don't believe in this day and age that there should be people that are experiencing these difficulties with just—with drinking water. I think of, you know, myself, living just outside of the city, and then, of course, yourself being relatively close to the city, we just walk up to the tap and probably 98 per cent of the time we crank on the tap and the water's drinkable and we don't have to really worry. But there are communities out there, many communities out there that still are struggling to just have that drinking water.

So I'm looking forward to working with the new elected officials in those areas to try to find a solution, but it's even more than that, we're going to need to be working with the government as well to bring solutions for those people.

Victoria Beach area, since we'll stay on the topic of Conservation and Water Stewardship, I know that during the 2011 flood there was some major damage on Lake Winnipeg in regards to Victoria Beach, and actually the whole East Beaches area, Mr. Acting Speaker, from Grand Beach all the way up to Victoria Beach. And there was a study done, there was many, many town hall meetings and there was some very, very passionate stories being brought forward from residents who have owned property or owned cottages for over a hundred years over there. And they brought forward a study, and where's that study right now? It's sitting on the minister's desk, it is made public, but what is the action? Again, it seems that we've got no problem coming up with money for studies and throwing it out there, but then there's no action being taken with it. So the dust is continuing to pile up on these studies and these documents.

We do have a situation happening, Mr. Acting Speaker, and I know we've brought it to the attention, again, of Conservation, Water Stewardship and the minister for Local Government as well, in regards to—well, and the Minister of Health, in regards to emergency access from, actually, the new Minister of Finance's (Mr. Dewar) area, constituency of Grand Marais, all the way to—into my constituency there's an access road that would save probably about 15-20 minutes if they were to open up the access road between Grand Marais and a community of Lester Beach. And, basically, if they opened up the gate and they allowed the paramedics to be able to use it, or the fire as well—fire paramedics—so that just

in case there was a fire, they wouldn't have to go the extra-long route from Grand Marais up to 59 Highway and then back down to Lester Beach. They could just cut across.

* (15:00)

That has been a community initiative or concern for quite a few years already, and we've been trying to work with the local government as well in that area, but it seems that it's getting stalled out at the provincial body as well. And, basically, it's just making sure that there's a person in charge of that access road with a key so that they could be able to open up that gate in time of need and just to make sure that that access road is cleared of snow in the wintertime so that the ambulance or fire trucks can get down there, because it is—a majority of that area is seasonal. So there's a lot of—there's some of the permanent residents that could actually alert the emergency services if there is a situation going down—going on there, and it would just save a whole ton of money as far as being a little preventative.

Now, the RM of Brokenhead and community of Beausejour, the town of Lac du Bonnet and the RM of Lac du Bonnet, in the last few years we've also been speaking about lagoons and water quality and the shortage of—the shortage and also the red tape that continues to seem to pile up with the government of the day. It seems that the amount of hoops and that that have to be jumped through seems to be increasing, and there's many—again, many, many desks that it has to pass over.

We look at the Water Services Board and we talk about the regulations, I guess, and—that continue to grow. Basically, what it's ending up doing is downloading onto municipalities, and the municipalities then have to find certain funds and to try to bring—to move forward these lagoons where, you know, five, six years ago, if some of these regulations would've been told to these municipalities that many years ago, they could've maybe started setting up some plans. So there's many communities in our area that are, I guess, at a development stall right now because of these various regulations that continue to change.

I know that with the new Building Canada Fund there has been a couple communities that have been given some funds. Thank you to the federal government and hard work of the local MLAs and the municipal governments to bring forward some of those changes. But, again, you know as well as I know that there's not a never-ending money pit as we

do see with the government and their spending addiction right now, Mr. Acting Speaker.

I received a copy of a—of expectations of the Province, and I know that in October of 2012 there was a meeting with—or 2013, sorry—a meeting with then the minister from Dawson Trail on local government. He was supposed to be attending a special meeting with the town of Powerview-Pine Falls, but there were—but he did send his staff, which was great, and they sat down and tried to come up with some plans as far as saving and trying to rectify some of the problems that ended up happening up at Powerview-Pine Falls when the—Tembec had pulled up ship and closed. And some of the issues was that the town was given an order to merge between Pine Falls and the village of Powerview-Pine Falls—or, sorry, Village of Powerview.

And so what this order did was that they laid some expectations on the new-found town of Powerview-Pine Falls, and the order had several recommendations with respect to the level of financial participation expected of Tembec. Tembec did not honour these recommendations and proceeded with a lockout of employees less than four years after the merger, selling out six years after the merger. The town wants to know if the Province can enforce recommendations under the order covering a 10-year period after merger by way of financial compensation from Tembec to the town.

Part of the background to that, Mr. Acting Speaker, was that it took a good month, month and a half for anyone from the Province to come and try to mediate between Tembec and the employees, and by the time the Province did come around, Tembec had already made their decision to pull the pin.

So, Mr. Acting Speaker, what ended up happening after that amalgamation or merger of the two communities was that the mill-rate assessment had dropped 94.08 per cent from 2006 to 2014. Mill properties in 2006 had Tembec paying 57 per cent of all borrowing for infrastructure upgrades in ward 2, which was Pine Falls, and that percentage will drop to 2 and a half per cent in 2014, from 57 per cent to 2 and a half per cent, at a time when borrowing will double to meet the failing infrastructure needs, thus putting the full burden on the backs of the residential, mostly retired population.

The Province stated that the order is not their responsibility and the agreement was theirs, the community's. If there is any blame is to be made, it is against the lawyer, that the town will have to take it

to court. This is what the Province was telling the community. Later in the meeting, again, just over a year ago, the Province re-addressed this issue saying they would check with Justice Department but thinks would be—it would be a malpractice lawsuit.

So what is the action taken? The Province was in—was to check with the Justice Department as to the process for the town to follow in seeking an action against town solicitor for failure to ensure proper agreements were in place between Tembec and town under the Municipal Board order.

This has not yet happened, Mr. Acting Speaker, and it doesn't quite surprise me because we've been given many promises throughout the time and basically the government has stalled out with that.

I did want to mention—I know in my brief time that I have left here as well—some of the major challenges we're having out in the Lac du Bonnet constituency, but not only in the Lac du Bonnet constituency are we having these—it's happening all across the province of Manitoba—in regards to doctor shortages and closed ERs.

See, Mr. Acting Speaker, at one time no more than probably three, three and a half years ago, we had the communities of Powerview, Pine Falls, Pinawa and Beausejour fully staffed 24-7 ERs with full access, and within the last, like I said, three, three and a half years, those services had—have dwindled and I know that the Health ministers, and I'll say all of them, have on more than one occasion talked about patting themselves on the back about the numbers of doctors that they have actually been able to recruit. And it's actually not the Health ministers that are doing the job of the recruiting. Some community members, elected officials, have taken it upon themselves to basically take over that job because they were seeing, within their own communities, elderly people 70-75 years of age and that moving away from their communities because of the lack of ER service and physician retention in the areas.

So some of our elected officials took it upon themselves to go around and start trying to recruit their own doctors and with that excellent, excellent work done, it alerted some of the regional health authority executive to maybe jump on board and to talk about a pilot project. So there's a pilot project going on right now, which I know this part's going to sound very interesting, but it's the part of matching doctors with communities. And they've actually gone around and they've hired a headhunting organization

to go around and recruit doctors for the communities and again matching doctors to communities. To me, it just—it's great that all these local elected officials and community members have stepped up to take it upon their own shoulders to try to help their communities.

But this is the job of the provincial government. I'm sure that health care is under the provincial government's mandate. Matter of fact, I know that and I know the member from Southdale when she was Health minister, we've often talked about, you know, one of the communities that she grew up in as well. And what the health authority was doing with this pilot project, they were actually going to various municipalities and asking for the municipalities to then chip in anywhere between 10 to 25 thousand dollars, which was not budgeted ahead of time, to chip in to help with some of this recruitment because each doctor, it was going to cost somewhere around the \$100,000 mark.

*(15:10)

And I continually said that the Health minister had said on more than one occasion, the ex—the past Health minister, the member for Southdale (Ms. Selby), had on more than one occasion had said that there's money on the table. There is money on the table. Well, then I don't quite understand why they were going back to the taxpayer and then yet taking it from the municipal coffers, Mr. Acting Speaker.

I think, as long as this headhunting pilot project is going, I think it's going to go well. It's going to serve us well, but we're not seeing—we're not going to be seeing the fruits of that labour 'til later on this spring, and within that time frame we've lost another couple of doctors and another couple from the Powerview-Pine Falls area as well. So I believe that we're down another four doctors with the promise of another two potentially coming in the spring.

We know that over the last—under the—since the NDP have taken office, we know that they've lost 2,300 doctors to out—to other provinces. And I know I hear members across the way, and they'll get an opportunity to speak, Mr. Acting Speaker, but the fact is is that whilst they're busy recruiting, I think they're failing to actually hold on to them, the retention side. And I think there has to be quite the balance there on the retention side. So I've vowed to the communities to work with them and to try to, again, help recruiting the doctors, and I know that the present government is a little bit of in disarray right now and they've had their Cabinet shuffle and it's

going to take a little bit of time for the new Health Minister to get up to speed with some of the things. I know that she was deputy Health minister before that, but even still it seems to be taking her some time.

Now, Mr. Acting Speaker, throughout the history of our province, the people of Manitoba have demonstrated a willingness to adapt to change. A growing number of people in this province view a new provincial government as needed—as a needed alternative for the betterment of Manitoba. This was—the NDP have had 14, 15 years. As a summation of various outcomes demonstrates, every member of the NDP has failed to fulfill his or her fiduciary responsibilities to Manitobans. The 15 years every member of the NDP has again—those promises that they had gone door to door in the last 2011 election, they had broke almost immediately coming into office.

So that is why today that I stand and we're speaking to various other members in this House and asking them to stand with us on the non-confidence motion which is being brought forward by our Leader of the Opposition, the member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Pallister), and again I encourage every member of this House to stand up for Manitobans and vote for that non-confidence motion.

Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker.

Hon. Sharon Blady (Minister of Health): It's a pleasure to rise today in support of the Throne Speech. I spent my summer, like I'm sure many of my colleagues on this side of the House did, actually out in my community and out on the doorstep. I know that many of us were there literally morning, noon and night talking to our neighbours. And the things that I found out from my neighbours I know are reflected in this Throne Speech, and I know that the conversations that we've had as a team reflect the fact that we all brought back those things that we heard from the doorstep to sit down and to plan the Throne Speech. And I can tell you that I'm very happy with it because it reflects those things that my neighbours asked for.

It was things like investment in infrastructure and the opportunities for young people, and to do all of these things without the deep cuts to front-line services that have been proposed by others. And I can say, Mr. Acting Speaker, that we are committed to investing in education and good jobs for families to ensure that our kids can put roots down here and again build this as their home province, not just in

place of birth but in place of building an entire lifetime and a career here.

And, again, we have laid out a blueprint for the next year, which I know and my neighbours believe will make life better for families, grow the economy and protect services that families count on. And, again, being a mom, other parents in this room, other parents throughout the province and in my own neighbourhood, we know how important it is to start at the earliest age. And whether it's everything from those long-term commitments that we have to things like prenatal care and the PAX program, we continue to build on those and that's why, for example, we've introduced legislation in this session to support smaller classes for kindergarten to grade 3 students. And I know what an important investment that is in my own community because, again, with the beginning of these smaller class-size initiatives, Manitoba has made great progress to ensure smaller classes including hiring over 300 new teachers in partnership with school divisions. And I've seen that reflected in my own community.

In fact, I had the opportunity with the, well, current Justice Minister but at the time minister of Education to go to one of the schools in my neighborhood, École Robert-Browning, to see one of those newly configured kindergarten classrooms, meet those kids and talk to the teachers, some of whom I've known for a number of years, about just what this kind of change means for them and the investment and the importance it has. It was also very nice to stand there with a childhood friend of mine who, you know, after growing up with our yards kitty-corner to each other, I don't think Sandy and I, nor our folks, ever thought that she and I would be at an education announcement, she as a school board trustee and me as the local MLA in a school, again, a stone's throw from our own homes. So it's this idea about people that have long-term investment and commitment to our communities and seeing those kinds of values and those kinds of desires reflected in this Throne Speech.

And so, again, it's one of those things—with younger kids, this is what you want. You also want to have those ongoing investments. And I have to say as a mom who's just had her eldest graduate out of the University of Winnipeg, I know how important post-secondary education is and how it opens up the doors for more opportunities for young people to build a life and a career right here in Manitoba. And while I'm very proud of the education that I got at the U of M, I can tell you that the university has—

university world has changed since my time there in the '90s, especially seeing what my son has graduated out from. I can tell you that he didn't graduate out with the debt that I have and that debt load is, you know, something that is so crucial in terms of how it affects how you start off and carry on your life. And so knowing that more than 27,000 students from across the province will benefit from Manitoba becoming the first province in western Canada to eliminate provincial interest on all Manitoba student loans is huge, because I can tell members of this Chamber, I'm still paying off, to the tune of \$620 a month, the student loan debt I acquired in the '90s at about a 6 per cent interest rate if I remember correctly. So, again, talk about your long-term baggage that you have to carry, how that affects your ability to raise a family, put down roots. So this kind of investment, it's exactly the kind of things that I know my neighbours want and it's the kind of things that I want for my friends' families, for their kids, for my kids.

So, again, we're not just doing those things but we're adapting to a different economic world, a different employment world and so we are doing things like expanding the apprenticeship model to certify new occupations outside the traditional trades and launch—something that I think is brilliant is the new credit transfer portal to help students move more easily between programs and institutions. We want to make sure that there's no wrong door. Because as someone that, again, has come up through a very varied academic past, I can tell you, you get started in one place and you find out that maybe your true interest, passion and skill set is somewhere else, you don't want to waste the time, energy and credits that you've earned all because of some kind of little bureaucratic glitch or some kind of incomprehension between universities. So streamlining that communication and having that credit transfer portal makes sure that every part of your education is useful in building your future.

Again, not only did my neighbours talk to me about the importance that they placed on education for their children and the future that that laid, they talked to me about infrastructure. Oh boy, I knew about every pothole in our neighbourhood, and, again, it was so nice to see them be aware of the kinds of investment that we talked about. And whether it was the investments that had to go with the long-term strategic plans making sure that we do everything from strengthening Manitoba's primary trade corridor with new flood protection for PTH 75,

including the construction of a new, higher bridge at Morris, whether it was upgrading the Lake St. Martin channel and building a new outlet flow to the 7,500 cubic feet per second from Lake Manitoba for better flood protection, those kinds of long-term things matter to them. But they also were really happy to hear about the increase to Manitoba's municipal road budget and doubled funding for municipal bridges.

* (15:20)

Those were the kinds of things that struck closer to home, and, boy, we saw things happening over the summer in that regard. Whether I was on Allard or Sansome or Thompson or Aldine or Stillwell or Oakdean or Harris or Assiniboine Crescent, my neighbours all saw construction work being done and improving their streets and knew that there was solid commitment from our government to make sure that the roads on the way to their schools, to the rapid—you know, on their way through transit to universities, that was being looked after, again, both in the neighbourhood and in the larger system.

And, again, one of the things that matters in my neck of the woods is CentrePort. So, again, it's nice to see that we have a special planning area to support rapid expansion, trade and strategic growth at CentrePort, including the development of the new Centreport Canada rail park. Again, these are the things that build our economy and build our neighbourhoods.

And I find this all very much in contrast when I talk to my neighbours and the things that we talk about and how these things matter, very sharp contrast to the things that members opposite put forward in their alternate budget, their so-called action plan. And, you know, I can tell you I'm a fan of alt rock, I'm a fan of alt country, but I certainly am not a fan of the alt throne speech that those folks provided. And I can tell you none of my neighbours would be either because the idea of bringing a halt to the improvements—actually, that's the other thing. Maybe it's not a alt plan; it's more of a halt plan. It's, you know—it would throw people out of work. It would stop infrastructure and it would result in deep cuts to the services that matter most to Manitobans, to my neighbours. I mean, for an 11-page document, not once—to refuse to pledge to hire a single new doc, a single new nurse, single teacher, child-care worker or make any new investments in health facilities, schools or child-care spaces throughout the province, wow, that's frightening.

How do you grow a province when you're not willing to invest? I want to invest in my neighbours, in their kids. I want to invest in their education, and so you know what? I guess what I really worry about is that Manitobans, you know, when they take a look at the other side and who sits there and who leads it, they maybe forget the track record over there. You know, again, we've got a leader over there with his halt budget, his alt throne speech, that was part of a Cabinet that fired 1,000 nurses, and I know the naysayers over there are going to say, where are they? Well, you know what? I know some of them personally. I had family members fired, so please don't tell me they're imaginary nurses. I knew teachers that were laid off, some of those 700. So, again, don't tell me they're imaginary; they're real people, I know them. And one of the things I can tell you is that I was part of training some of the replacement nurses that were required once they fled this province. So, again, when you're asking who were some of those nurses, they're my students. They sat in the joint baccalaureate nursing program with me and the diploma nursing program. They were—they're real people. Again, they don't have to like it, but sometimes the truth hurts.

So, again, these options of freezing and halting things, that's not what I know my friends and neighbours want. And, again, that brings us to the idea of health care and how important health care is. And, again, I get questions from members opposite in this regard, but, again, their track record speaks for itself. Our approach means that we are hiring doctors and nurses rather than firing them. We are building hospitals and personal-care homes, not freezing health capital and cancelling construction projects. We are putting the needs of patients first rather than cutting and privatizing the services that families depend on. And I can tell you we are making progress. I want to thank my predecessors in this portfolio for the work that they did in the Family Doctor Finder, because you know what? As of this fall, the Family Doctor Finder has already connected over 20,000 Manitobans with a family doctor since its launch last year—20,000. And our QuickCare clinics have already had visits by over 100,000 patients.

That is looking after Manitobans. That's making investments that matter. And, again, these initiatives and others are helping connect Manitobans with the primary care they need. And so in the coming year our government will open new QuickCare clinics staffed by nurse practitioners in northwest Winnipeg,

St. Vital and Southdale, and finalize a new location for one in west Winnipeg, and I'm very excited about that. We're also going to announce the location of a new ACCESS centre in St. Vital, as well as construction moving ahead on new centres in St. Boniface and Fort Garry, start construction on new primary care clinics in Ste. Rose and Grand Rapids, open a new clinic in Swan River and add a new mobile clinic in the north Interlake and, in addition to that, hire dozens of primary care professionals, including nurse practitioners, into the new My Health Teams in every region of the province.

And, you know, one of the things that everybody wants is they want to know that in times of crisis that there is better, faster, emergency care, and this year we will again continue to recruit more nurses and other health professionals to our ERs. We're also launching a new program at Red River College to train advanced care paramedics to start emergency medical interventions before patients arrive at the ER. It's about that golden hour. It's about the idea of making sure that they get the care that they need at the right time and making an investment in the Emergency Paramedics in the Community program, making that program permanent, as it has helped avoid hundreds of unnecessary ER trips by working with folks in the community that might by higher ER users and getting them first-hand treatment in the community before they need to get to an ER.

We've also finalized the designs to rebuild and expand ERs in Flin Flon and Dauphin, and one that's close to my heart, well, we're going to begin construction on the redevelopment of the Grace Hospital which includes an MRI and an ER, and you know what? It's one of these things that's really interesting from my perspective, because as someone born and raised in the neighbourhood that has friends and family that have always worked at that hospital, it's the place that I gave birth to my eldest son; it's a place that, you know, has recently looked after my stepdad; it's one of those places that it's close to the hearts of everyone, and I've probably said this in the Chamber before, but Her Honour Pearl McGonigal, a lot of us borrow the phrase and nomenclature that she uses for the Grace, and it's not the Grace Hospital, it's our beloved Grace. And it is our beloved Grace and the transformation that is coming to our beloved Grace is phenomenal. It's been a long-term project that has involved both the ACCESS centre, which I can say is up running and making so many of my neighbours happy. When I was out on the doorstep there wasn't a single day that went by

where I didn't encounter someone that thanked our government for the ACCESS centre and told me a story about how much it had changed their lives, someone in their family that it had helped. And now that the ACCESS centre is up and running, we've got the next phase of development coming which includes the new MRI as part of the diagnostic imaging hub, followed by an entirely new emergency room development. And one of the things that was really nice, on June 5th of this year the Grace and the WRHA had an open house, and I spent the better part of an afternoon there talking to neighbours, touring the site, meeting the architects and designers and finding out about the great work that they've done and taking a look at the plans for both the MRI and the ER development as well as the PACT area and the 5th floor renovations that are going on. And you know what? It was really interesting to see the feedback and to see how folks have worked together on making sure that this ER can be everything that we all want and need it to be.

Now, I know members opposite would much rather show up at the Grace with placards and petitions, but I know that when I go to the Grace it's to talk to folks, to work with folks, to engage with the people that are making so much progress there and to partner with and to ensure that our neighbourhood gets the best that it deserves.

I know that members opposite, you know, had a penchant for closing the ER after hours. They seemed to think that an ER ran on banker's hours and that, you know, their solution would have frozen and closed the place up completely. We're working on developing it.

* (15:30)

But the thing is with that kind of a massive redevelopment of an entire campus, with each individual project being substantial enough in its own right, but when you put them all together it's a phenomenal redevelopment. Again, it doesn't happen overnight. It's not a barn raising. One does not just pop up an ER by gathering up a few friends and some two-by-fours. This is a long-term project for the best care of—the best care for our neighbours, and it takes a while. We're doing it right and we're doing it in consultation.

And like I said, I never—I have to say, in that time, that day that I spent over there when they had the open house, I certainly don't remember the member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger) being

there and talking to the designers, to the health-care professionals or to the neighbours that were there.

But, again, I can't talk just about my own neighbourhood. I will talk about the fact that we are also doing work for the seniors in this province, and that includes 300 personal-care-home beds currently under development across Manitoba, including Morden-Winkler, Lac du Bonnet and Winnipeg. We are—continue to build more PCH beds and, again, to provide culturally appropriate care for seniors and special supports for those suffering from dementia. So it's about making appropriate care, responsive care.

I also want to say that we are committed to strengthening Manitoba's best-in-Canada home-care system, and we will introduce Manitoba's first rural hospital home team.

And, again, something close to my heart, every year more and more Manitobans are surviving their battle with cancer, and a testament—it is a testament to their determination, and it is also a testament to our world-class doctors. And, again, it's been wonderful to meet with the folks from CancerCare and see the calibre of mental—of medical and health professionals, CancerCare folks, the oncologist—oncology teams, just, again, the calibre of folks we have and their willingness to work together and work for the betterment of the better health of all Manitobans.

Just a couple days ago, I announced the new cancer hub, the virtual hub for Winnipeg to help patients get better co-ordinated care and faster diagnostics and treatments. We're now going to expand the urgent CancerCare clinic hours, which has already helped hundreds of patients. And, again, as a cancer patient and survivor, I know how important a service like that is to the day-to-day life of someone going through treatment.

We're going to increase funding so that, again, even more patients can participate in clinical trials and take steps to prevent cancer by prohibiting minors from using tanning beds.

Again, all Manitobans can also be proud of the work that we do that not just reflects contributions to Manitobans' health care but to the role of Manitoba scientists in developing treatment being used in the global fight against Ebola. The Province will continue to advance Ebola preparedness with public health officials, regional health authorities and health-care providers.

I'm also proud to say that in Manitoba's pioneering legacy in providing compassionate, comprehensive end-of-life care, we're now pleased to be partnering with Dr. Harvey Chochinov in a broad community coalition to lay the foundation for a new international centre for dignity and palliative care. And it was wonderful to both meet with him and with Senator Sharon Carstairs, someone who I've known since my childhood, to talk about this new initiative and how we can all work together. I can tell you, when I knew her when I was much younger, I never thought there'd be a time where she and I would be working on a project together. I thought it would be a lot more about hanging out with her daughter the way I had in the past.

But, in terms of front-line services, again, we're taking steps across government to protect these important services, and this year we will replace contract employees from Manitoba Child and Family Services with better trained staff for emergency placement shelters and create a new unit for young women with complex needs and more clinical assessments.

We're going to work with First Nations to address the proposed elimination of the federal government's band constable program to ensure that affected communities have access to community policing, and I want to thank my colleague the Minister of Justice (Mr. Allum) for the work that he's doing there.

And we're also going to move forward with plans to build 1,000 more social and affordable housing units. Again, this is what we believe in.

We believe in moving things forward. We believe in developing and investing. We believe in a whole bunch of positive reinforcing things, unlike the halting that's proposed over there.

And, just in closing, I know we've had some folks across the way talk about, again, investments in health care, and I just want to reassure them that we are working hard in the area of doctor recruitment and retention. It's a nationwide issue, and I can assure them that, according to CIHI, Manitoba is among the best in the nation on rural doctor retention, that we actually have more doctors practising in rural areas than any other province west of the Maritimes, including more than our neighbours in Saskatchewan and Ontario, that in Manitoba we have 204 doctors for every 100,000 people in Manitoba. Saskatchewan only has

184, so we're, you know, 20 doctors ahead per 100,000 people.

So, again, this is what our Throne Speech is about; this is about an ongoing commitment to our friends, our neighbours, our families, to everyone across the province because we believe investing in their kids' education, we believe in investing in safety and complex supports, in terms of everything from mental health to primary health care. We believe in investing in infrastructure, so you can get from point A to point B and do so, with again keeping flooding action in check and again, according to the Conference Board of Canada, wow, the article is even headed—called Heading in the right direction. I think that says it all.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

And so, with that, I would like to thank all the folks from our side of the House for all the work that they did in bringing back the feedback from their neighbours so that we could put together a Throne Speech that reflects the values of Manitobans and again doesn't bring things to a halt like the folks across the way.

Mr. Stuart Briese (Agassiz): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and your timing is wonderful, getting back just to hear my wonderful words. I'm sure I'll put a lot of important stuff on the record here.

It's certainly great to be back in the House again. We all had our busy summers and the summer activities that flow by us, the fairs, the parades, the openings of businesses in some of our communities and all the things that go on. Into the fall you get into the fall supper season and then you get the Legion events around Remembrance Day and now we're into the Christmas-party mode. It's just starting, so you always need to get through that season and into January and maybe you can lose a little bit of the weight you're gaining from the last couple of months of the year.

But I do want to welcome the new pages in the House and indeed all the House and the Legislature staff that makes our job easier. And some of them we don't see out in the open very much, like the Hansard people, but they do a commendable job in these Hansards at our desk the next day, and that's a great service to us.

I know there are a number of new ministers over on the government side of the House and I welcome them to their portfolios and I wish them well in those new positions, although I would submit that maybe

when we're looking for cost savings and cost cuttings, we could do with a few less ministers. I think when Gary Doer came in, I think he had a Cabinet of 13 and I think we got 17 now, so—

An Honourable Member: We had 18.

Mr. Briese: Yes, they did have 18 and they cut it down to 17, but that's still considerably more than when Gary was there.

You know, my constituency of Agassiz is very much an agriculture constituency, and Neepawa is the town I live near. I live about three miles from Neepawa, and we've—I heard the Minister of Agriculture bemoaning the fate of some small towns at lunchtime today. Neepawa's been one of the fortunate ones that has a major employer, that being HyLife Foods and, beyond that, we are the hub of an area. We have a—I believe it's five machinery dealerships, five or six in Neepawa, and two car dealerships yet and you don't see very many of those in small towns anymore. At one time they were in every town; now they're not very common at all.

* (15:40)

HyLife Foods have roughly 1,000 employees, and Neepawa five or six years ago was a town of about 33, 34 hundred people. We're estimating it's now around 4,500 people. It's had a tremendous growth. Might be the fastest growing town in western Manitoba, and most of the new employees are Filipinos that have immigrated to the area. And I would want to give credit to Bonnie Mitchelson for her input into the—

An Honourable Member: Member for River East

Mr. Briese: Can't say—member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson)—I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker—member for River East who put in place the Provincial Nominee Program, which is very helpful in getting those immigrants into Neepawa and gainfully employed there.

You know, I had the opportunity—and you talk about businesses in rural Manitoba—I had the opportunity earlier this fall to tour the Manitoba Starch plant at Carberry which is right beside the potato plant and uses potato starch, turns it into edible, food-quality starch. They get the starch from the potatoes from all four potato processing plants in Manitoba. It's useful as a gluten-free product, too, because it's potato starch, it's not wheat starch. You know, you can get starch from a whole bunch of things.

So they've now started—just started into some pharmaceutical products out of their starch plant, and I think it's really exciting. They've done some research. There's some things that are going to go on that I think are going to be really positive for that company.

You know, yesterday I just took a quick look at Hansard last night, and I had to laugh a little bit about some of the things that went on in question period yesterday. I heard comments about the privatization of Manitoba Telephone and that's why we can't get decent cell service. Well, you know, if this government went out and said, MTS, here's a few million dollars to improve the cell service in this province, if they did it, do you think they'd be turned down? Do you think you would be turned down? No. Well, don't use that as an excuse then, like, just don't use it as an excuse because you've—you're suggesting that you can't do anything. It's all their fault, but you can't get any better cell service. That's just ridiculous, and you know it.

Another thing that was said in question period yesterday, I heard—or, not in question period, in the Speech to the Throne, was the Minister of Agriculture went on and on about the Canadian Wheat Board. Well, you know, I farmed for 40 years. I sold wheat to the Wheat Board for 40 years. I paid elevation charges on that wheat whether it went to the Wheat Board or not. I just talked to a farmer the other day. I said, how are you doing on marketing your grain? And this guy lives by MacGregor. He said, well, my wheat's all gone. He said, we trucked 35 semi loads to the United States, no demurrage charges, no anything. He—the minister was blaming demurrage charges. We had demurrage charges every one of those 40 years that I was selling wheat to the Wheat Board, demurrage charges on ships at Vancouver. I remember one year we had a four-bushel quota, four bushels an acre on the farm was all we could sell. And we had demurrage charges. We had trains that weren't running, we had—you name it. It was very difficult.

But to stand there and blame the demurrage on the lost of the Canadian Wheat Board is just ludicrous. You know, I could have a bin of wheat on my farm in those days, and there was a—there's a flour plant at Elie, by the way—and if that flour plant wanted that bin of wheat, I can load it in my truck, take it there, but I had to sell it to the Wheat Board and then basically buy it back from the Wheat Board.

An Honourable Member: And pay the freight.

Mr. Briese: And pay the freight and the elevation on it. And they never touched it. They never went near it, but I still had to pay the fee. And that just doesn't cut it with me.

So you can't have it both ways. I heard the minister talking about businesses in small towns, as I mentioned earlier, and there was nothing more regressive. The Canadian Wheat Board was a marketing agency. Its job was to sell something somewhere else. It wasn't interested in value added and pasta plants and flour mills in our own country. They wanted to sell it to the ones in other countries, so why do you think we only have one flour mill in Manitoba? No pasta mills, as far as I know. So we lost all that value-added stuff right there.

Then I heard somebody else yesterday talk about balanced budget, and one of the novel ideas they came up with was controlling expenditures. I thought, wow, isn't that great. The NDP have finally caught on that maybe you can control expenditures. They went on to say, of course, that they were going to find efficiencies. Wow, I—and then grow the economy. Of course, growing the economy means we're going to tax you a bit more but that's fine. Fifteen years—15 years, Mr. Speaker, of failure—15 years of failure and all of a sudden this great idea comes along, we're going to control expenditures. Well, I was quite impressed.

We had questions yesterday about the deep, dark secret of the student financial aid package and the missing \$22 million of the student financial aid package. That's a deep, dark secret. That one is—there's an oath taken, I'm sure, in the NDP Cabinet to never reveal where that \$22 million went. But then the Minister for Education said, we're going to continue to invest in the system. Well, we got \$22 million missing, we can't find it, but let's keep investing. We're not getting any results out of it but if we keep investing, something's got to happen—something's got to happen.

You know, the NDP like to blow about the increasing minimum wage. There's a method to that madness too. Minimum wage earners pay income tax, too, so you suck back some of the money right away. They like to whine about equalization payments and equalization payments dropping from the federal government. Well, Saskatchewan went from being a have-not province to a have province and they don't get any equalization payments now, and they're doing quite well. In fact, they're paying the money out that comes in equalization payments

to Manitoba. I don't think if I lived in Saskatchewan I would be particularly happy about that.

You know, I mentioned a little bit about how they—we've lost some opportunities with pasta and flour plants but we've lost some other opportunities here. There's been two new, in the last few years, two new canola-crushing plants go up in Yorkton, one of which for sure could have been in Manitoba. But we don't have a business-friendly atmosphere here, so they chose to build, almost side by side, in Yorkton and that's where a large amount of the canola from that—the western area of the province is going. We missed another great opportunity, possibly having a cattle processing plant. MCE, Manitoba Cattle Enhancement, collected an awful lot of money, wasted it, ended up with nothing to show for it, and we still don't know where very close to \$7 million went.

* (15:50)

Once again, we want to find efficiencies. Let's take a look at that: \$5 million, \$6 million, \$7 million a year missing here, 22 missing there. We've seen the things that drive the economy. There's—the main economy drivers are your resources, and mostly renewable resources but not all renewable. Agriculture, lumber, fishing, mining resources—those are the things that give us the wealth to have the type of health care we want, to have the type of education we want, and we're rapidly getting into a place here where the takers are overwhelming the makers. We've seen agricultural revenues drop considerably this year, lower grain prices, 'swinking'—really shrinking herds of cattle. You know, just a few years ago we had just about 800,000 cows in this province.

The other night I went to Manitoba Beef Producers' district meeting, and the number they're giving out now is 460,000 cows. That's down by about 40 per cent from what we had a few years ago, and that's significant. That's a significant hit at the economy of this province. It creates a lot of economy, and they're gone, and part of the reason they're gone—there's several reasons, but part of the reason they're gone is some of the absolutely antiquated methods of dealing with agriculture Crown land in this province. In my constituency, in the north end of my constituency, there's a huge amount of agriculture Crown land. It used to be if it was designated as agriculture Crown land, it stayed agriculture Crown land. Now, if a farmer gives it up, it doesn't automatically stay agriculture Crown land

and go to another farmer. It now goes through a process of being offered to Lord knows how many groups—Ducks Unlimited, Habitat Heritage, Treaty Land Entitlement, Water Stewardship, and if all else fails—if all else fails—Manitoba Hydro. If all else fails, then maybe we'll zone it agricultural, yes, and let it stay agricultural.

That's stupid. It's just a stupid principle. It's agriculture Crown land; it's a carbon sink. You put the cows on it. Where cows are grazing or where you're cutting hay, it becomes more of a carbon sink because the carbon's drawn in as the grass regrows. If you leave it sitting there bare, it's not drawing it in. So it's the regrowth on those areas that gives you the environmentally friendly approach, and we're ignoring it or appear to be ignoring it in the province right now.

You know, and you talk about where are you going to find the money to do this or do that to them. The biggest one—biggest one, obviously, is Bipole III. It went from \$1.2 billion to \$3.4 billion to \$4.6 billion, and it's not even built yet. Lord knows where it's going to end up by the time it's built. And Scott Thomson made it very clear at Hydro hearings that that's going to show up on our hydro bills. Now that, of course, isn't what the Premier (Mr. Selinger) said some time ago. He said we're going to build it on the west side and it isn't going to cost Manitoba consumers one red cent.

Well, he was right. It's not going to cost them one red cent. It's going to cost them about \$20 million a year. It's a lot more than red—one red cent—a lot more than one red cent.

Now they're into expropriation. They're walking onto people's property and saying we're taking your property. We're going to take your property, so they're into expropriation now on that line. And a couple of lawsuits, one by First Nations, one by Métis—I think there's more lawsuits than that. So this mess just goes on and on and on.

You know, Lake Manitoba and the flooding, the whole issue around Lake Manitoba and the flooding, we heard the Minister for Infrastructure say that they were going to open the emergency channel earlier this summer and it was going to draw down Lake St. Martin so that they could keep Fairford outlet running full rate through the winter. Well, it's a-sounded like a good idea. Only thing is they never opened it. They partially opened it and they took Lake St. Martin down about a foot. Now they're putting logs back into Fairford to restrict the flow out

of Lake Manitoba. Lake Manitoba is higher right now than it was in the fall of 2010, prior to the 2011 flood.

We're looking for—these people are living in fear, looking for another major flood in that area this spring. I don't know why they don't just tell them the truth. And the spin phrases, the catchphrases that go out there. The—they're going to put in a 7,500—right in the Throne Speech—7,500 cfs, which is equivalent to five Olympic pools—five Olympic-sized swimming pools a minute going out. This is supposed to be the proposed outlet. Now, if you just use that same figure, the diversion—the Portage Diversion running at 35,000 cfs—comes to 23 Olympic-sized swimming pools in. So you're going to dump in 23 and take out five. You think this thing is going to overflow again? I think it is.

They had a chance this fall to complete the third reach of the emergency channel—didn't do it. That's the one that really bothers the Dauphin River First Nation.

You know that the federal government has indicated to us that they're waiting for the proposition to come from the provincial government. They're ready to put the money on the table for Fairford outlet. These clowns haven't figured out to even go and ask for it yet, so I don't think they'll pay—you know, I—when you overinflate something, I don't think they'll pay for overinflation.

They called the emergency channel a \$100-million ditch, and it actually didn't cost even—I don't think it even cost \$50 million. Then they go to the federal government and say we want—it was \$100 million; we want half of \$100 million. I guess they're not going to give them that. The money didn't even go into it. So the people on Lake Manitoba are once again faced with a major flood episode this spring.

You know, when you talk about what this government has done, raising taxes—and I saw a quote from Dan Kelly, the president of the CFIB. And he said for small-business owners of Manitoba, an increase in the PST will have a major impact. It'll reduce purchasing power for customers, raise input costs, encourage more cross-border shopping and come with implementation costs to update advertising systems and cash registers. It will also affect Manitoba's overall competitiveness negatively, as well as Manitoba's PST in extremely broad charges on business inputs at all stages of production.

You know, what sometimes happens when you raise a tax or you raise a tax too much, you'll defeat the tax, and I think that's exactly what's happened with the PST. I think it's—went high enough now that for 3 per cent difference, people are going across the borders and shop elsewhere. So, in essence, you put it up 1 per cent, but you lost a lot of PST by forcing cross-border shopping.

I had a letter—I have several of them here—but I have one that I would like to quote from, and this is pertaining to Lake Manitoba flooding. This lady emailed me and said if we continue to flood Lake Manitoba, I will have no choice but to sell my home where I raised my children and supported the community for 25 years.

* (16:00)

Mr. Speaker, she runs a campground. She says, if I can't get campers onto their sites this coming spring, I will be financially devastated, especially if there's no loss-of-income compensation offered. I am 44-year-old single mother, have lived and worked in Manitoba my entire life. It's a horrifying realization that I should've invested my campground in another province or that I will be forced to sell and start over in another province. I will not reinvest in Manitoba, the province that is purposely financially destroying me. I have many others similar to that.

You know, Lake Manitoba has not had a natural flood since 1955. We've had two floods in the last four years and we're headed for a third one in the fifth year, I think, but we haven't had a natural flood in Lake Manitoba since 1955. Think about that. These are unnatural; these are man-made floods.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I see my time is growing somewhat short and I just want to say we've seen such a legacy, such a disaster of government from this government, 15 years of failure, 15 years of not getting it right. You know, they got away with it for quite a while, the people weren't noticing it, but it's kind of like an old Teflon frying pan. When they get old, you know, the cover kind of wears off and stuff starts to stick, and the NDP government is very similar to an old Teflon frying pan; things are starting to stick and they don't know how to get rid of them and they don't know how to go and buy a new frying pan. So with those—they have no money left to go buy a new frying pan so they struggle along and it just gets worse and worse.

With those few words, I'd like to thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Mohinder Saran (The Maples): Mr. Speaker, I'm honoured to rise on behalf of my constituents in The Maples to support our government's Throne Speech. Thank you to everyone who has helped me in my role as MLA. They have made this special task of replying to the speech possible. I thank my constituents for putting their trust in me and for their lasting support and confidence.

As the Throne Speech demonstrates, our government has a plan in place to keep this province moving forward to benefit all Manitobans. It meets the needs of my constituency and of people across the province, new immigrants to Manitoba, those who are Manitoba-born, the elderly, the young and their parents in between. Newcomers are encouraged to work and live here and this government continues to ensure that a good life remains possible for all.

The people of Maples elected me so I could represent their interests. I will continue to work with others to improve health care, education and newcomer services in our communities.

Mr. Speaker, Manitoba is stronger because we are working together. We are continuing to invest in infrastructure like roads and flood protection. It's a plan that's growing our economy and creating good jobs for families.

Steady growth, good jobs and public services people can count on; that's how we make life better for all Manitobans.

Our government's priorities are the same as the priorities of every Manitoban, like the people I know and represent in the The Maples. This government ended a decade of cuts and underfunding and launched a new era of investment and growth.

One of my top priorities is in taking care of our seniors. Families are right to expect their loved ones are treated with dignity and respect. Seniors and their families want a variety of supports and housing options, and our strategy of adding new personal-care-home beds and investing in new supportive housing options and better home care is working to address those needs. We understand the importance of having people stay connected in their community close to family and friends who share the same language, religion or culture. It is also important for seniors to have a positive experience in personal care homes by having access to important cultural events with individuals from their community. I am pleased that our government is now expanding seniors' school tax breaks. The Seniors' School Tax Rebate is

part of our commitment to eliminate school tax for seniors by 2016.

Now Manitoba seniors, 65 or older, who own their home, are eligible to save up to \$235 off their property taxes. Actually, last time, when I was doing door-knocking, I have a really good conversation with one of the seniors and I start talking, do you know there is a senior tax rebate? He say, no, I don't know. But you can apply for it and you can get \$235 tax rebate this year and more next year and it will be eliminated in 2016. And he told me, well, I don't think you guys will be in the government in 2016. So I told him it's even more important for you to vote for us because, otherwise, opposition will do what they did in the '90s. There was a school tax rebate \$350 and they reduced it \$250. So that's what they are going to do, so beware of—you need us more as compared to other party. So that's the experience I got on the doors.

Then I met other person, and he said, you guys have increased 1 per cent PST, you are squeezing us and we cannot pay the taxes. So then I started discussing with him, but I tried to put on the paper how PST can hurt ordinary people and how PST cannot hurt the rich people, but it's the other way around. PST increase will hurt those people who buy big items. Items, like people who have six-garage home, they must have six cars. When they buy those cars they have to pay more and that's why they are crying that it's hurting people. But it's hurting rich people, not the poor people. In general, Canadians are caring people. They care for each other, especially about the less fortunate. Now, the politician, on the basis of their ideology, they make their decision for the citizens. Either they can tax the people who can afford and provide the services for everyone who needs or they can choose not to tax the people who can afford and let the unfortunate survive or die on their own fate.

Our present government believes in the philosophy about caring for each other. People pay taxes according to their income and they use services according to their needs.

One cent per dollar increase in the PST will hurt the rich people who buy big items and who can afford services, just like medical services on their own, but that will help the ordinary citizens who cannot afford services on their own. Although it is the propaganda of the rich citizens and opposition party that ordinary people are being squeezed by

increasing PST by one cent per dollar. Considering that the majority of seniors are low income people, don't spend more than \$2,000 per month, especially I can see in my own constituency, and out of \$2,000, consider the \$500 is already spent on the items which are PST exempted. Let us say they pay PST on items worth \$1,500, that means they have to pay only \$1.15–\$15 extra per month.

* (16:10)

Now consider if instead of paying extra \$15 they have to pay user fee to the doctors. For example, say \$75 per visit or if they have to go for operation. It may cost them \$4,000 per day in the hospital. Even if they can have private insurance, they will be paying more than \$15 per month for direct coverage for the whole family and will be left at the mercy of the insurance companies because insurance companies are not to lose money in their business.

The federal government announced that they will pay 50 per cent out in prospective projects if provincial governments are willing to spend money and start such projects. Manitoba provincial government could have not started such projects without the 1 cent increase on PST. The economy could have slowed down and people would have lost jobs and ultimately government could have cut services and have job user-fees which would have been burdensome on the ordinary families.

Manitoba proactively hired flood mitigation projects which cost approximately \$1.2 billion. That money had to come from somewhere. Because of that proaction by the government, Winnipeg city did not get flooded, contrary to Calgary's situation last year. In Calgary, last year the flood caused damage which was more than \$1.2 billion just to clean the destruction by the flood, and that can still happen in the coming year because they still don't have flood protection.

The PST increase of 1 cent per dollar is worthwhile for growth of the economy and jobs and the same time for the availability of services for all the citizens, especially for low-income and senior citizens. We believe in caring and inclusiveness while the opposition believes in survival of the fittest and leave the elderly person on their own.

Also, sometimes it's argued that economy—Manitoba economy did not shrink during the recession 2008, but in other provinces it happened. So it proves that Manitoba's plan was better than the other provinces. It's not because of the federal

government, it was because of the vision of our government.

Our government is committed to build on our best-in-Canada home-care system and working on launch new programs to help Manitobans who are battling cancer. We are launching a new program at Red River college to train advanced-care paramedics to start emergency medical interventions before patients arrive at the ER.

Another priority is to make the pilot Emergency Paramedics in the Community program permanent as it has helped hundreds of patients avoid unnecessary ER trips.

Our government will increase funding so that more patients can participate in clinical trials. We are also working to take steps to prevent cancer by prohibiting minors from using tanning beds.

We are pleased to partner with Dr. Harvey Chochinov and a broad community coalition to lay the foundation for a new international centre for dignity and palliative care.

This year we will launch a new round of sports opportunity grants for communities across the province to help Manitobans stay active and healthy.

Something else that is important to me is education and training. Every parent wants their child to have a clear path to a good job. We have been investing in education since we first formed government. In today's economy, advanced education and skilled training is the best way to get on that path to a good career.

Our government's new post-secondary education strategy is set to be released in spring 2015. One goal of our strategy will be to create new opportunities for learning that link to the needs of the workforce.

Our government will fund the development of five new hybrid university-college programs which combine academic learning with technical skills for in-demand fields such as engineering, water stewardship and new media.

Our government is working to expand our existing apprenticeship model which combines classroom instruction and on-the-job experience to certify new occupations outside the traditional trades such as information technology and form a new trades and technology network to facilitate greater collaboration between Manitoba's four colleges and improve responsiveness to employers' needs.

A second goal is to ensure there are no dead ends for our students. Our government is working to launch a new credit transfer portal to help students move more easily between programs and institutions, create a student advocate position to help ensure that course credits and work experience are recognized in a consistent and transparent way, and double the number of online courses available through eCampus Manitoba from 500 to 1,000.

A third goal of our new strategy is to build on the significant steps taken over the last 15 years to ensure post-secondary education is accessible and affordable. Our government, Manitoba, the first province in western Canada to offer interest-free student loans, reduce the barrier to student aid faced by many rural and northern students by removing vehicle ownership as a consideration, and lay the groundwork for a new educational training facility in the north Interlake, starting with a steering committee that will include First Nations and surrounding communities.

I would like to finish on a personal note, Mr. Speaker. I believe that our government is the best positioned to represent the diversity of all Manitobans. As we have said, our caucus has an assembly that more closely reflects the face of Manitoba. It includes a large number of women elected in our province. In our caucus alone we have former lawyers, professors, teachers, social workers, business people, journalists, farmers, miners, ministers and many others. We have members with many different ethnic backgrounds, including members who were born outside of Canada. Together we are truly representative of Manitoba and therefore we are the best positioned to move Manitoba forward.

To quote the Sikh holy book, the Guru Granth Sahib: We should have such a society that all people feel included. No one should be left out. As the 10th Sikh Guru, Guru Godbind Singhji said, there is only one race and that is the human race.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to stand and put a few words on the record—*[interjection]*—and I have a fairly large fan club, so, if you don't mind, they'll be helping me as we go forward with this.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the fact that the NDP no longer command the legitimacy needed to govern is something that we've been saying on this side of the

House for a long, long time, and with increasing frequency, ever since the NDP members on that side of the House voted to raise the PST.

As you may remember, Mr. Speaker, they went door to door in 2011. They knocked on the doors. Knock, knock, we are here for your support. We will not raise taxes and we will not raise the PST. And every one of them went door to door and said that, came back into this House, and it became clear that they had lied at the doors.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have also stood up here, not only today, but many, many days that we've stood up in this House for Manitobans. The sentiment is no longer confined to the members on this side of the House, though. Earlier this month the member for Fort Rouge (Ms. Howard), the former minister of Finance, said: In recent weeks and months it has become clear to us that the Premier (Mr. Selinger) is increasingly being driven by a desire to hold on to his own leadership rather than the best interests of Manitobans.

We have said that repeatedly, Mr. Speaker, and now a member on their side of the House, the former Finance minister, stands up and agrees with us wholeheartedly. So it's clear that we are on the right track, that we have said the things that Manitobans want, and now we have support on the other side of the House, it would appear.

The sentiment isn't confined to the former minister of Finance, though. The former minister of Justice and Attorney General, the member from Minto, had this to say earlier this month about the Premier's leadership: Our concern is that the Premier has become more concerned about remaining leader than necessarily doing things in the best interests of the province.

* (16:20)

The Premier went door to door as well and said, we will not raise the PST; that's nonsense. We will not raise taxes.

An Honourable Member: Ridiculous, he said, ridiculous.

Mr. Graydon: He said it was ridiculous, and, Mr. Speaker, as he came back into this House, he made the NDP government into liars. Manitobans are angry and believe that this government and the NDP have broken their trust, and I know that's a feeling shared by the former minister of Health, the member for Southdale (Ms. Selby), who said earlier this

month—what did she say? She said, Manitobans are angry. They feel the Premier broke their trust and he hasn't been able to mend that.

Well, it's clear that he has no intentions of trying to mend anything, no intentions whatsoever. He took some of the brightest from his caucus and kicked them out. He kicked them out.

An Honourable Member: I wouldn't say the brightest. Easy does it.

Mr. Graydon: You might be right. You might—I might have overstepped that a little.

Mr. Speaker, it's clear that not only have a number of former NDP Cabinet ministers lost faith and trust in this government, so have Manitobans. And it's time for an immediate election, so the Manitobans can decide who is best placed to govern in the best interests of all Manitoba.

Earlier this month, the former minister of Health and, later, Jobs and the Economy, the member for Seine River (Ms. Oswald), had this to say about trust and integrity: Sometimes doing the right thing isn't the easy path. Being truthful and holding on to your integrity is something that her parents raised her to do and she honoured them today with that statement.

But, basically, what she said was those that had not spoken up, like, perhaps the member from Dawson Trail, have no integrity. Is that what she was insinuating? My goodness. The member for Seine River's sudden respect for trust and integrity is interesting, giving her support for the increase of the PST.

An Honourable Member: You're a big fan of Theresa lately.

Mr. Graydon: I am. She owed me keys. But she didn't give them to me.

Roughly, one year ago, the member for Seine River had this to say about the PST increase: As the result of a plan brought forward, we knew—we know that the opportunities are going to increase as we make investments with the 1 cent on the dollar being collected.

Only a year ago she said that. But now she has integrity. She's had an epiphany. She's looking into the future and saying, we're in trouble as a party, the leader has to go, and I'm capable. I'm capable of putting on the shoes. I can lead this party. I can lead this party on into years and years of more debt. That's what would happen, we know that. And yet,

earlier this year in a conversation with a reporter from the Winnipeg Free Press, the member for Seine River (Ms. Oswald) expressed disagreement with the decision to raise the PST, elating—alluding to, saying, used by the premier, Gary Doer, former premier: You don't increase beer prices, and you don't hike the PST.

I don't know which one she didn't want to do, but they did both. They did both. I'd like to ask the member for Seine River, where was her respect for her personal integrity on the day that she voted for the PST? Where was the respect of any of their integrity, voting for something that they promised not to do? Where was the integrity for the member for Dawson Trail (Mr. Lemieux) promised at the doors, every door, in Dawson Trail, that he would not raise the PST, he would not raise taxes and then turned around, turned his back on the very people that had elected him and voted for the PST. What kind of an individual would do that? And there were 36 of them that did that. They turned their back on the very people that put them in this House to represent their best interests.

Was it in their best interests to tell them at the door that they wouldn't do it and then come and do it? Where is the integrity for the member from Rossmere, who I have a great deal of respect for? Her integrity was shot when she walked into this House and voted for the PST increase and the increase on taxes. It was not necessary. They said it wasn't necessary; we were on an upswing; Manitoba was in perfect shape; we've got a five-year plan. Well, the five-year plan in 2011 didn't include raising the PST.

An Honourable Member: No, but they—what—it did include balancing in 2014.

Mr. Graydon: Mr. Speaker, 2014, they raised everything.

As it was pointed out, though, by my colleague from Agassiz, is some of these things that they said they wouldn't do and they have done is now like his old frying pan with the Teflon wearing off. It's sticking to them. It is sticking to them, and what has that caused? That's caused infighting. That's caused attacks of integrity with some of them. And when that was voiced, poof, they're gone. They're out of caucus. They're sitting on the sidelines. They come in, they look united and they're wearing different coloured flowers. They come in on a daily basis, and one member of those that have been relieved of any ministerial duties comes in and hands them the

agenda for the day. I don't know if it's different coloured paper, but they don't get it 'til they get into the House. Why would that be, Mr. Speaker?

An Honourable Member: Let it be. Let it be.

Mr. Graydon: And as my colleague is singing to me, I'll just let it be.

And so, when was the member from Fort Rouge telling the truth? Was it in February when she said the Premier (Mr. Selinger) considered a range of views from caucus and Cabinet, or was it a mere few weeks ago when she said it was increasingly difficult to work with the Premier because he doesn't listen to dissenting views?

But we know that if everybody thinks alike all the time, you only need one person. But, at the same time, when you have a team, you have to come to a consensus to do what's best. Do you do what's best for that team, for the individuals on that team, or were they elected to do the best for Manitobans? They said they were going to do the best for Manitobans.

The member for Dawson Trail said we will not raise taxes. He said we will not raise the PST, and came in here and voted for it. Was that the best thing to do for Manitobans? Where's his integrity? We see, though, that the member for Fort Rouge (Ms. Howard) seems to have a degree of integrity.

In February of this year, the First Minister, the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Selinger) had this to say about—at a press conference he held to announce he was removing the member for Riel (Ms. Melnick) from his caucus for directing civil servants to do partisan political work. When we have a caucus discussion, there's a range of views discussed and then we come to a consensus view. The question then remains: Did the rest of caucus agree to have the member of Riel removed for telling the truth? Is that what took place?

There's a lot of unanswered questions and it's terribly, terribly quiet on the other side of this House. I don't understand that. They have lots to say but it means nothing. And a good indication is that at election time they went door to door promising not to raise the PST, and there's nothing to stop you from getting up and speaking, nothing at all. But they had lots to say before that, came in the House and voted against everything they had to say. So, Mr. Speaker, Manitobans are angry and believe that this government has broken their trust, and with full justification, I might add.

So, when we look forward, let's remember that according to the member for Seine River (Ms. Oswald), sometimes doing the right thing isn't an easy path. If it was easy, perhaps everybody could do it. Obviously, she made the effort to do it, but it's too tough a path for those that didn't. It's too tough to admit that they deceived Manitobans.

NDP waste means less for Manitobans. Every year, the average Winnipeg family pays \$3,200 more than the average family in Regina. Let's understand that we all looked down on Saskatchewan at one time; they were a have-not province. They had two trees, some gophers and a lot of dust—[interjection]—and a pretty decent football team.

* (16:30)

Today we are so far behind Saskatchewan in everything, including manufacturing. We were the leaders in manufacturing in western Canada and today we're behind Saskatchewan, and they're proud of it. They're proud of it. They've chased business out of the province with their high taxation. High taxation. Get rid of it; we don't need industry. Terrible, Mr. Speaker.

They've never considered adjusting the tax brackets to compensate for inflation, as is done in every other province other than Nova Scotia and PEI, and I would suggest that Nova Scotia is probably going to address it now that they don't have an NDP government.

Manitoba families pay the highest income tax in Canada outside of Quebec, and the NDP has doubled the debt carried by every man, woman and child since 2000. What a legacy. What a legacy for the member from Dawson Trail. It's quite a legacy to go back and say, hey we've doubled your debt, but don't worry we're doubling your taxes to pay for it, and you get nothing to show for it. I'll bet you he won't go and say that. In fact, he's already made a decision not to go to the doors in Dawson Trail. The same as every other member on that side of the House made the decision not to go to the doors ever again when they brought in the vote tax. They don't have to; they've got a million and a half dollars that Manitobans don't even know that's being taken out of their back pocket. That's transparency; that's something to be proud of. Tell your grandchildren how you did that.

NDP promises from 2011 elections were not kept. Balance budget by 2014, we're pretty much through 2014.

An Honourable Member: It's not too late.

Mr. Graydon: It's not too late, as my colleague says. I'm afraid that he's a very optimistic individual.

Increase small business income limited to 500,000, never did it—never did it. Never did that. Eliminate school taxes for farmers and seniors. Oh, my goodness, a slight oversight. No new taxes—PST.

Mr. Speaker, under the NDP, Manitoba's manufacturing base has diminished. In 2008, Manitoba had 72,100 manufacturing jobs; in 2013, we have only 67,100. That is a huge, huge loss; that's an economic loss. But where did those people that worked at them jobs—where did they go? Where did they go because we've had a mass outward migration from Manitoba since the NDP were elected? They went to Saskatchewan. They went to Alberta. They went to BC. Who went with them? Their families, their families went with them. It's a huge loss.

Under the NDP they underspent the infrastructure budget by 19 per cent, or \$344 million. Last year alone—last year when they had already taken in gas tax, they had taken in vehicle registration. They had raised so many taxes for infrastructure. That was part of what they said they were doing with it, but the fact is they never spent it. They never put the money into potholes. They never put it into bridges. No, in fact, in St. Jean Baptiste they kept telling me, no, no, we're going to fix the bridge, until the day that they blew it up, just went out to the community and said stand back because we have dynamite all along the bridge. Blew it up, dropped it in the river, a bridge that had been there since 1946.

They ruptured a community. They split it in half with no discussion until afterwards they came out and apologized for not speaking to the residents beforehand. The only community along the Red River from the United States border to Winnipeg that did not have a crossing has a church and a cemetery; that's all that's there. Anybody that has driven to Emerson will see a small church and a cemetery between the divided highway; that's all that is in that community because there was no crossing on the river. But, in St. Jean—in St. Jean Baptiste, the people were innovative. They had ferries in the summertime. In the wintertime, they had an ice road. And so, as a bridge was built farther upstream, they acquired that ferry, and they said, you know, we can hook them both together and, in the summertime, we'll have a floating bridge. And they did that; they were innovative. They made it work so that their

community could grow on both sides of the river, and, gradually, they were able to get a bridge built. And, wow, the community grew. The community grew until the NDP decided, no, no. They did a study—they did a study—on the river and said, you know, we're going to eliminate two crossings, but we know which one has been eliminated.

Would anyone of the members like to tell me which the next one will be? Will that be in Aubigny? No, that's a new bridge. It's a high bridge with lots of clearance; there's no ice touches that bridge. Will it be the bridge in Letellier? Ah, no, no. That's a brand new bridge; ice doesn't touch that bridge. Would it be the bridge in—oh, and, if the member for Dawson Trail (Mr. Lemieux), wants to tell me which bridge it is? They tendered the bridge in Letellier for \$36 million and the federal government paid half of it. He would like to take credit for it all, but really, no.

In Emerson, would it be that bridge that they were going to remove right on the border? No, it's a high bridge and it's out of the water. Are there any bridges in the city of Winnipeg that they would remove? I doubt that. I doubt that. So where's the other bridge? Where's the other bridge that their study said should be removed? It's a flat bridge. Where is that bridge? Let's see. If we go north, the next bridge, north of Winnipeg, that's a federal bridge. It won't be removed. The next bridge, however, is a flat bridge, isn't it? It's a flat bridge that the ice piles up against, in the middle of the town of Selkirk. Right in the middle of Selkirk, and, on the edge of Selkirk, is a huge bridge that was built to nowhere at one time and ice doesn't build up on it.

I'm wondering if that next bridge is in the middle of Selkirk. It's hard to say. I would like to suggest it is, but we've got a number of issues that should be dealt with. The NDP have made victims of many Manitobans—many, many, many. They made flood victims of many, many Manitobans that have not been compensated properly from the first flood, and they flooded them the second time with a possibility of a third time. Health care victims, highway medicine—highway medicine—also ER issues—victims of ER, Brian Sinclair, criminal justice victims. Manitoba was—as the murder capital of Canada, 2013, violent Crimes Severity Index leader. Thompson, it's the highest per capita of violent crimes city, and incidents of violence against women is double the national average. What a record; something to be proud of. Child care victims, Phoenix Sinclair, more recently, Tina Fontaine—it's a

shame—it's a shame—that Manitoba should be known as that.

* (16:40)

And education system victims, all Manitoba children. All Manitoba children are victims of the education system in Manitoba. And, with no solution, even the pensionator has no solution to dealing with it. Municipalities, forceful amalgamations and lack of flood relief, forced amalgamations by a minister who referred to the municipalities and the people that were elected, duly elected at the grassroots level, referred to them as howling coyotes, insolent children, as he sits in his place and laughs at them, the same people that he went to their doors in Dawson Trail and said, I will not raise the PST; I will not raise taxes. But you howling coyotes have upset me and are acting like insolent children. No consultation; just drop it on them.

Markets—Moody's downgrade. It would be nice if there was someone on that side of the House who would understand exactly what that means in the long term for Manitobans in general, not just the government, but Manitobans in general, the City of Winnipeg. The fallout from this is huge, and when you mature, sir, you will understand. So Manitobans have been victims. They've been made victims by this very government, and they continue to do it.

Let's see what they're doing to the seniors and to healthy living, Mr. Speaker. We've got the longest wait times in the province. We're waiting two hours longer for emergency care or urgent care. Ambulances wait an average of an hour and a half. Across Manitoba 1,000 Manitoba seniors are stuck in acute care beds or left to struggle at home because they cannot access a PCH.

NDP broken promises to remove education property taxes off of seniors, and then what do they do? They finally, after two years of breaking promises, three years, then they come in with a cap—oh, but let's understand, just because we've announced a cap doesn't mean that we're going to pay, so rural Manitoba has not even been addressed and in the city of Winnipeg 18—over 18 weeks waiting. These are people that are on restricted incomes. Think about that—not like the member from—where is he from, that little guy? *[interjection]* Yes, who cares?

Greg Selinger was named the worst premier for fiscal management in 2012 by the Fraser Institute

due to overspending, record deficits and spiraling debt. I would hope that the new Minister of Finance (Mr. Dewar) knows the difference between debt and deficit.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order, please.

It's been drawn to my attention that the honourable member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon) may have referenced a member by their family name versus their constituency or portfolio, so I'm asking for the honourable member from Emerson's co-operation, when you're referencing members of the Assembly, please refer to the ministers by their portfolio or members by their constituency names.

Mr. Graydon: Mr. Speaker, it was an unintentional-misspoke. That's what I did. But what I will do, I will repeat, then, that the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Selinger) was named the worst premier for fiscal management in 2012 by the Fraser Institute due to overspending, record deficits, and spiraling debt.

Estimates based on Statistics Canada figures found out as many as 80,000 Manitobans ages 12 and older lacked a doctor to call their own—another broken promise, Mr. Speaker. The NDP are not making long-term care a priority, even though Manitoba is home to an aging population. Patients are stuck in acute-care beds and are left to struggle at home because there are not enough long-term-care beds. Currently, in Winnipeg alone, there are a total of 320 persons awaiting placement in personal-care homes—76 in hospital, 244 in the community. Across rural Manitoba 362 Manitobans are awaiting in hospital for PCH placement; 510 are waiting in the community.

That's a record to be proud of, isn't it? Yes. The NDP is failing those that are living with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. The government has refused to renew The Mental Health Act. Why would they do that even after the National Mental Health Commission of Canada made this recommendation in 2012-2013? They profess to have Manitobans' best interests at heart, but they would not, today, stand up for Manitobans in this House and they will not in the future either. They have committed themselves not to stand up for Manitobans.

Under this NDP government, the province has had some of the highest proportions of people living with symptoms of mental or substance-use disorders. Addictions Foundation has not seen an increase and, in fact, has been closed for a week at a time because lack of staff or funds.

So, Mr. Speaker, what we're faced with is a lot of issues that are not being dealt with, and this NDP government isn't prepared to stand up. But I'll give them something to think about. What if Manitoba Hydro put the water rental rates into a meaningful flood infrastructure and mitigation? What a novel idea. Wouldn't that be nice? Over \$100 million a year, that would fix a lot of infrastructure. You should listen to that.

But what I will do is I will point out the benefits, Mr. Speaker. I'll point out the benefits of the alternate throne speech commitments. Value-for-money audit, that would be something; that's novel. That would be novel for the—for an audit to be done, a value-for-money audit. Reduce red tape and wasteful government advertising, another great way to save money.

Remove sole-sourcing contracting. Eliminate the vote tax subsidy. Reduce the PST. Increase the PPE to the national average. Address bracket creep and index at the rate of inflation. Raise the EIA rental allowance to 75 per cent of median market rent. Hold the NDP to account for failing in the health-care system and halt hallway and highway medicine.

Mr. Speaker, the dissenters and those that are unhappy with that leadership could stand up for Manitobans and vote for this alternate throne speech commitment. Thank you very much.

Hon. Eric Robison (Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs): It's indeed a pleasure to rise today and speak and address the Chamber. I, first of all, want to congratulate my colleagues, the new ministers—were appointed recently and express my appreciation as well for being given some additional responsibilities, a position that I take very seriously, Manitoba Hydro.

Let me begin my remarks this afternoon by saying that I am, indeed, very proud and I want to commend the people that work on the field—out in the field and the ones that were the first responders to the storm that we had this past weekend. I think that we should be proud of these people that do the work in order for us to continue having power and take for granted many times these things that occur. And I know that I'm told 3,700 people were without power on the west side of Winnipeg and into communities like Headingley and other areas. So I want to commend the Hydro workers that were out there repairing the damage that was done by the act of God.

As members may be aware, on the 15th of December of 2000, our government did a ministerial statement on the Northern Flood Agreement, and we recognized the Northern Flood Agreement as a modern-day treaty in this very Chamber. The first five First Nations of the 1977 Northern Flood Agreement, of course, were the communities of Tataskweyak Cree Nation, otherwise known as Split Lake; York Factory; and the Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation, also known as Nelson House; and Norway House; and Pimicikamak, which is commonly referred to as Cross Lake.

As a member of Cross Lake-Pimicikamak Cree Nation, I was actually born at Norway House, and I know first-hand the damages that were done by past hydro development and the residential school system. And I want to just acknowledge that as well.

* (16:50)

I want to pledge to those five communities that were directly affected by the hydro development and also other northern communities by past developments that in my new role as the Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro, that I will act to the best of my ability to ensure that we uphold our responsibilities to these communities, to the damages that have been done and inflicted upon these communities. And oftentimes they did business in a different way in those days, unlike today where we prefer to do our business in a government-to-government fashion and in the spirit of partnership as well.

Mr. Speaker, we have seen tremendous progress in many areas, but there is much more that can and must be done. As the Speech from the Throne noted, our government is committed to a new era of reconciliation with First Nations.

Today the Crown parties and representatives of Cross Lake—and Pimicikamak, as I said, is the other name for that—signed an agreement to move forward with talks on the Northern Flood Agreement issues. And this follows a recent appointment of Michael Werier as the Northern Flood Agreement arbitrator who will begin addressing NFA claims very shortly.

Progress continues on building Keeyask with First Nations partners and Bipole III, which together will create 10,000 person-years of employment. Now, this builds on the Wuskwatim partnership, and that was a partnership that evolved with the Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation, the first such partnership of its kind ever in Canada.

And we're also going to be building on past smart—Power Smart projects throughout the province and continue the highly successful Aki Energy geothermal projects that are located on a number of First Nations throughout the province of Manitoba.

As well, I want to note two weeks ago I was in Bloodvein for the official announcement of the community becoming a part of the all-weather road system here in Manitoba, and this was something that I was really proud to be a part of. The East Side Road Authority is a model of Aboriginal partnership and success that I understand members opposite want to cut, despite the 600-plus residents who have received training and employment from the East Side Road Authority so far. Multimillion-dollar bridges have been constructed that are servicing Wasagamack, Red Sucker Lake and Gods River, amongst other, extending existing winter roads and positioning these roads for the upcoming all-weather roads.

I heard my colleague across the way who spoke ahead of me talk about the death of Tina Fontaine less than two weeks after we unveiled a monument for missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls. This issue struck us all deeply as Canadians, as Manitobans, as did the assault and near murder of Rinelle Harper. And I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that we don't mention these names for the sake of political expediency and political advantage, but we talk about these young women in the spirit of wanting of do something.

And I believe that this government has been a true leader in trying to advance the issue of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls across Canada. The need to prevent such horrific attacks on our Aboriginal women and girls haunts each and every one of us, because you know what? It could happen to each and every one of us in this Chamber. It could be our daughter; it could be our niece; it could be our grandchildren. The need to prevent such attacks on our women and girls should be always on our mind, and we will continue to call for a national inquiry into missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls, but we cannot simply wait for that to occur.

So, with that in mind, we're going to continue the work that we have done here in Manitoba, the Wiping Away the Tears event with families and victims, because that's what we are aiming to do is work directly with families that have been affected by this, continue with the work to prevent—

on the preventative work with non-governmental organizations and with families.

And we're continuing to work with victims of the '60s scoop and the intergenerational effects of residential schools. You've heard me say many times here in this Chamber, Mr. Speaker, because you and I go back a little ways now, you being elected in 1990, myself in 1993. My experience, I wish I could say, was a positive one, in residential schools, but in a way it was because I was only there for four years of my life. But that four years also took a certain degree of who I am today away from me, and I will never be able to reclaim that.

And I'm one of the many thousands of Aboriginal people across Canada who's waiting for a hearing, as well, to be able to tell my story about how this has had an effect on my life.

And I've been working recently with people who are now in their 50s and late 40s, who were taken away by the system that existed in an era called the '60s scoop, that were taken away and adopted into foreign environments, either in Manitoba, in different locations in Canada, and in some cases in foreign environments like Germany, Holland and other countries. That is shameful and we have to correct that wrong, and, much like the residential school survivors, we got to work with these young men and women—I'll call them young elders now because they went through some horrific experiences.

I worked with a young woman, who's now in her 50s, and she was brought back from Holland and she knew nothing of who she was. At the very least, those of us that came through the residential school system had one another, but these young ones that were taken away from their families didn't have anybody. And she had children, four children with her adopted father. Can you imagine that, getting impregnated at the age of 12 by your adopted father? And her body wasn't equipped to give birth to that child. And she lived in Holland, knew nothing about her background as a Cree woman, and then when she came back, she found some difficulties in being able to survive, and we had to work with her. And we still work with her, to this very day.

So our government has created a round table. We are continuing to work with these people in ensuring that, at the end of the day, that they'll find some justice on the terrible experiences that they had.

There's another story I'll convey about a young man from the Sagkeeng First Nation, young at that time. He was adopted out by a Ukrainian family and he knew nothing about his Ojibwa language, and at the age of 18, when he was no longer worth anything to this family, he was dropped off at the corner of Portage and Colony at the site of the old bus depot—and many people will remember that, where the bus depot used to be located, at the old Mall Hotel—and he was told goodbye. That's it. Nothing, no connection with his adopted family, and he had to find his own journey back to the community that he was born and raised in. And, to this day, I stay in touch with this man because he's a man that I believe is truly a survivor.

So there are many stories like this, and we have to give attention to people like this because their experience is something that we as Manitobans, as Canadians, should be ashamed of. And they, too, deserve a form of an apology; they, too deserve a package, which will give them a sense of hope as they get into their elder years, in their golden years.

I'm also very proud that yesterday we introduced legislation here that allows—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

When this matter's again before the House, the honourable Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (Mr. Robinson) will have 17 minutes remaining.

Just prior to adjourning the House today, I'd like to draw the attention of honourable members to our public gallery, where we have one of our former pages, Maya Janzen, with us this afternoon. Welcome back, Maya, good to see you again.

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, November 27, 2014

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