

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

Official Report
(Hansard)

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Speaker*

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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
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DRIEDGER, Myrna	Charleswood	PC
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GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Liberal
GOERTZEN, Kelvin	Steinbach	PC
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MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Flor, Hon.	Logan	NDP
MARCELINO, Ted	Tyndall Park	NDP
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ROBINSON, Eric, Hon.	Kewatinook	NDP
RONDEAU, Jim	Assiniboia	NDP
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WIGHT, Melanie, Hon.	Burrows	NDP
WISHART, Ian	Portage la Prairie	PC
<i>Vacant</i>	The Pas	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, November 20, 2014

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

At 1:30 p.m. the Sergeant-at-Arms, carrying the mace and followed by the Speaker, the Clerk, the Deputy Clerk and the Clerk assistants of the Legislative Assembly, entered the Chamber.

The Sergeant-at-Arms returned to the north doors and met His Honour the Lieutenant Governor with the mace.

Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms (Mr. Ray Gislason):
His Honour the Lieutenant Governor.

His Honour the Lieutenant Governor, accompanied by the honorary aides-de-camp, the officer escort, the Premier and the Provincial Court judges, entered the Chamber and took his seat on the throne.

The Sergeant-at-Arms made obeisance with the mace and retired to the side of the Chamber.

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

Hon. Philip S. Lee (Lieutenant Governor of the Province of Manitoba): Please be seated.

Mr. Speaker and members of the Manitoba Legislature:

Monsieur le Président, Mesdames et Messieurs les membres de l'Assemblée législative du Manitoba, je vous souhaite la bienvenue à la quatrième session de la 40^e Législature du Manitoba.

Translation

Mr. Speaker and members of the Manitoba Legislature, welcome to the Fourth Session of the 40th Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

English

The annual Speech from the Throne is an opportunity for government to define its priorities for the year ahead. Our government has rooted our priorities in those of everyday Manitobans. As the new century began, we reversed the policies of the previous decade. We ended the decade of cuts and underfunding, and launched a new era of investment and growth. We opened the doors to new operating rooms and clinics, more classrooms in colleges, more community clubs and child-care centres. Our province is stronger today because of the things we have built together.

In the last decade we have grown our economy at an annual rate of 2.5 per cent, the third best in the country. We have added over 140,000 people to our population and we hit a record 1.3 million people calling Manitoba their home in the next year.

We have built the best immigration system in Canada, helping businesses to expand and adding to the rich diversity of our communities. We have more Manitobans working than ever before with an unemployment rate that is amongst the lowest in Canada, and we have kept Manitoba one of the most affordable places to live in the country.

Through economic downturns and a series of major floods we have kept moving forward by focusing on those things that matter most to Manitoba families. The economic forecasters are once again predicting that Manitoba's growth will be amongst the best in Canada for 2015.

With an eye to the priorities to all Manitobans, today we keep building. Our plan will build an even brighter future for Manitobans by expanding and improving on the things that are working. In the year ahead we will create new opportunities for young people to explore their interests and get training and education they need to build good lives here in Manitoba.

* (13:40)

In the year ahead we will continue to build our core infrastructure, better connect communities and ensure more Manitobans can benefit with good jobs and training. In the year ahead we will protect and improve the services that families count on most, from the child care to care for our seniors. Our plan is balanced and focused, building on our successes and making life better for all Manitobans.

Education for the New Economy

Investment in education has been a cornerstone of our growth strategy for the past decade and a half. It is the most important investment we can make to ensure that our province continues to grow and prosper. Every parent wants their child to have the same opportunities that they had and more: the chance to have a rewarding career, own a home, start a family and build a good life here in Manitoba.

In today's economy, advanced education and training is the most reliable path to a good job. Two out of every three jobs that will be created in the next decade will require college, university or apprenticeship training. Over the past 15 years our government has rebuilt and expanded the post-secondary system, making advanced education accessible and affordable for more Manitobans.

Our campuses have been transformed with 18 major capital projects supported by \$1.1 billion in provincial investments. The options available to students have been increased with the addition of almost 300 new jobs—or new programs. As a result—as a direct result, enrolment has dramatically increased. College enrolment is up by 52 per cent since 1999. University enrolment has increased 40 per cent—42 per cent, and apprenticeship training has more than tripled.

Over the coming months, our government will bring together education leaders to develop a new post-secondary education strategy to be released in the spring. The new strategy will be one of targeted growth responsive to the needs of students and the economy and supporting the collective needs of a growing, dynamic province.

Our goal of our strategy—one goal of our strategy will be to create new opportunities for learning that link to the emerging 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; 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 trade and technology network to facilitate greater collaboration between Manitoba's four colleges and improve responsiveness to employers' needs.

A second goal will be to add pathways for students to ensure that when it comes to higher learning, there are no wrong doors and dead ends.

Our government will 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.

As part of an ongoing effort to preserve affordability and increase the participation of under-represented groups, our government will make 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.

Planning for higher learning must begin in high school. High school should be seen as a launch pad, not a finish line, a place where students can get a head start, explore careers without being locked in and graduate with a sense of direction and purpose.

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 experience while still in high school.

We will work with schools to launch a new 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 new specialized high school programs where students have access to industry experts and state-of-the-art equipment, as Sisler High School has done with its cyber-security academy; expanding the existing High School Apprenticeship Program—expand the existing High School Apprenticeship Program by accrediting new programs in schools across all regions of the province; work with the Alliance of Manitoba Sector Councils to introduce a new Manitoba Career Prospects Program, bringing more employees into classrooms and more students into workplaces.

Appuyer les efforts de la Division scolaire franco-manitobaine afin d'élargir le développement de carrière de les possibilités de formation en français pour les élèves.

Translation

Support the Division scolaire franco-manitobaine's efforts to expand career development and training opportunities for students in French.

English

Students confirm what community experience has long demonstrated, that investments in early childhood education are critical to improving children's success in school and beyond.

In the coming weeks a new early childhood development strategy will be released, renewing our focus on preparing Manitoba children to enter the classroom. Innovative new programs like reading apprenticeship and the PAS good behaviour game are helping young children develop the skills they need to succeed in school.

This past year over 100 new teachers have been hired to help reduce class sizes in the critical early years and to give students more one-on-one attention. New legislation will be introduced this session to ensure class sizes continue to decrease.

Efforts will continue to ensure students complete high school. Manitoba high school's graduate rate has increased to 85 per cent today from 71 just-per cent just over a decade ago. That means 2,000 more students are successfully completing high school every year.

More work is needed to continue this improvement, including on reserves. This fall the Premier (Mr. Selinger) began bringing together employers and post-secondary leaders to meet with First Nations students in their own communities. Together they are exploring ways to overcome barriers and build bridges to higher learning and good jobs. The educational success of Aboriginal youth is essential for Manitoba's continued prosperity and remains a top priority for our government.

* (13:50)

Our government will continue to build on the success of our Provincial Nominee Program to recruit newcomers who want to work and make Manitoba their home. In the year ahead we will host consultations with newcomer groups to strengthen community engagement and open paths to good jobs. Literacy and adult learning programs are important stepping stones for many new Canadians and others seeking to upgrade their skills. We will continue to strengthen programs throughout our network of adult

literacy providers to serve more Manitobans. We will also work with community partners to pilot a new wrap-around literacy model incorporating essential skills training, child care, high school and post-secondary credits and work placements.

Manitoba has launched a new sustainable employment strategy and supports Manitobans on the social assistance to get the training they need to go back to work or to get their first job. This strategy is a major component of our commitment to reduce poverty and growth of—and grow our workforce.

This summer rent assistant—this summer Rent Assist was introduced to increase benefits to—for both social assistance recipients and low-income workers. The new benefit is portable, making it easier to move from welfare to work. This year we will continue to make progress on our commitment to increase benefits to 75 per cent of median-market rents over four years.

The Premier's Council on Education, Poverty and Citizenship will work together with the Economic Advisory Council to leverage major infrastructure projects into opportunities to train Manitobans facing barriers to employment.

Having access to quality and affordable child care 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 100 new and expanded child-care centres and the lowest fees in Canada outside Quebec.

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. A new child-care commission will help chart the cause forward. This will include looking at ways to forge a stronger partnership between child-care centres and public schools as well as exploring new approaches for providing part-time and casual child care. New measures will be—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.

Creating Jobs and Building a Stronger Economy

Sustaining Manitoba's strong economic momentum not only requires a growing workforce,

but also strategic investments in infrastructure and the inclusion of new industries. Manitobans from all walks of life have called for greater investment into core infrastructure that helps revitalize communities, increases trade and investment, and strengthens Manitoba's competitive position. This is why we are matching every dollar raised from the new point of PST with new investments in core infrastructure over and above previous investment levels and providing detailed annual reports to show exactly where the money is being spent.

Our five-year, \$5.5-billion plan to build and renew our highways and bridges, flood protection and municipal infrastructure is on track to boost our economy by \$6.3 billion and create almost 60,000 jobs.

This year, investment in our highway network will hit a record \$700 million, including work on 2,300 kilometres of highway, roughly the distance from Winnipeg to Toronto. Our infrastructure plan will see \$3.7 billion invested in highways over five years, double what was spent on highways in the entire decade of the 1990s.

Improvements will be made to key trade and transportation corridors, including a new interchange at Highway 59 and the north Perimeter and the major upgrades to the Trans-Canada Highway east of Winnipeg and the south Perimeter Highway.

As a public meeting tonight, we will share our solution to better protect Highway 75 against repeated flooding, including the construction of a new high bridge at Morris. This plan will address the weakest link in our primary trade corridor to the United States, which carries \$19 billion in trade every year.

In the coming year, investments will also be made to better connect families and businesses with communities across the province, including finishing major upgrades to Highway 6 from Woodlands to north of Grosse Isle; improvements to Highway No. 10 near Boissevain south of Minnedosa, east of Swan River and south of Flin Flon; repaving Highway 17 north of Fisher Branch and servicing Provincial Road 327 to Easterville.

Since 2007, over \$240 million has been invested in Highway 1 west of Winnipeg. These investments twin and rebuild the Trans-Canada Highway, adding paved shoulders and rumble strips, and greatly improve the quality of ride and safety of the roadway. As a result, the speed limit will be raised to

110 kilometres an hour from the Saskatchewan border to Winnipeg.

As we renew our highway network, safety remains the key priority. This year the Province will invite municipalities' police services, First Nations and advocacy groups like the Canadian Automobile Association to form a new road safety committee to ensure that safety principles are integrated into all aspects of transportation policy.

In addition, a new Infrastructure Innovations Council has been formed in partnership with the Manitoba Heavy Construction Association to apply innovative approaches to core infrastructure design construction and maintenance, and to boost productivity and maximize return on investment.

A series of devastating floods over the last decade, the impacts of which continue to be felt by communities and producers across the province, have made the construction of new flood protection an urgent priority. The 2011 Flood Review Task Force recommended making the Lake St. Martin emergency channel permanent and building the new outlet on Lake Manitoba to provide better flood protection. Work on this complex integrated project is well under way, including Aboriginal and public consultations, and detailed studies on soil composition, water flow and topography.

The new Lake Manitoba outlet will be built through difficult and remote terrain and will run almost as long as the Red River Floodway. Today we are pleased to announce that from the two options presented at the recent open house in Arborg, our government is listening to public advice and will build the outlet to a higher capacity of 7,500 cfs, a flow equivalent to five Olympic-size swimming pools every minute.

Investments will continue to be made in flood protection along the Assiniboine River and the new community dike projects. Protecting Manitoba from flood water always requires better management of service water. New legislation will be introduced to protect Lake Winnipeg, preserve wetland, strengthen surface water management and drainage regulations and support the new Assiniboine River Basin Initiative to improve transboundary water planning.

* (14:00)

Renewing municipal infrastructure is another key part of our plan. This past year provincial funding was provided to support the renewal of over 400 kilometres of municipal roads and 13 bridges

outside of Winnipeg. In the coming year, Manitoba's municipal road budget will be increased, and funding for municipal bridges will be doubled.

Upgrades will also be made to 27 waste water treatment facilities throughout the Lake Winnipeg basin to protect Manitoba's lakes, streams and rivers and support future growth.

A new streamlined portal for infrastructure program information and application to be developed with the Association of Manitoba Municipalities will make it easier for municipalities to access and take advantage of provincial infrastructure funding.

De nouvelles mesures législatives garantiront la protection des services bilingues dans les municipalités récemment fusionnées.

Translation

New legislation will ensure bilingual services are protected in newly amalgamated municipalities.

English

In Brandon all levels of government are supported—supporting a major renewal of the Brandon regional airport to expand air service in southwest Manitoba. Our government is also undertaking a major reconstruction of the First Street bridge and will work with Assiniboine Community College on further redevelopment of the North Hill Campus. Manitoba will also partner with the City of Brandon to complete needed roof repairs to the Keystone Centre.

We will continue to work closely with key stakeholders to develop our Arctic gateway while making investments that position Churchill as a hub for Arctic research and tourism including exploring expanded markets and development opportunities for the Churchill Town Centre.

We have been pleased to work with federal and municipal partners to build new water and waste water capacity for the RM of Rosser, CentrePort and surrounding communities. In the coming days new legislation will be introduced to establish a special planning area to support rapid expansion, trade and strategic roles at CentrePort, including development of the new CentrePort Canada Rail Park.

Manitoba will continue to promote trade within Canada and internationally, including leveraging our World Trade Centre and developing new opportunities presented by the Comprehensive

Economic and Trade Agreement between Canada and the European Union.

In Winnipeg, provincial investment in roads and infrastructure have reached historic levels, and we look forward to participating in the mayor's new building Winnipeg partnership to develop a long-term vision for priority investments, including better streets, rapid transit and an even more vibrant downtown.

To ensure that opportunities from 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 will also work with the new mayor and the council on updating the City of Winnipeg Charter to strengthen transparency and accountability.

Small businesses drive job creation and economic growth in communities right across our province, which is why we were the first and still only province to eliminate small business taxes. Our new one-stop shop for business services, Entrepreneurship Manitoba, is making it easier and faster to start a new business.

Moving forward, our government will work with the Manitoba Employers Council to reduce red tape and develop and implement best practices related to regulations, including new public reporting on regulatory impacts.

Young entrepreneurs are building the next generation of high-tech businesses in Manitoba. The Exchange District's Innovation Alley is becoming a focal point for students, entrepreneurs and investors to advance their ideas from the drawing board to the boardroom.

New legislation will help support business and job continuity with tools for succession planning and employee ownership options for retiring business owners.

Canada and Manitoba are investing a total of \$176 million to the growth forward two partnership, supporting innovative strategies to boost competitiveness in our agricultural sector, including more value-added processing and the establishment of a globally recognized grain innovation hub.

Manitoba producers have experienced unprecedented wet weather and poor growing conditions. Canada and Manitoba are providing AgriRecovery to support affected producers. In addition, our government will establish a new working group with industry to ensure risk management tools are responsive to changing climate. New measures will support rural development by promoting Manitoba farms and food and will help food producers and processors to start and grow their businesses.

Manitoba is welcoming more visitors every year with attractions like the new Canadian Museum for Human Rights and the Journey to Churchill exhibit at the Assiniboine Park Zoo.

New world-class venues like the MTS Centre and Investors Group Field gave Manitobans the opportunity to see the stars of today and tomorrow. Our government will continue to make investments in amateur sports and recreation throughout the province.

Next year more than 200,000 people will enjoy marquee sporting events right here in Manitoba, including the Grey Cup, the FIFA Women's World Cup, the Telus Cup regional qualifier in Dauphin and the RBC Cup in Portage la Prairie. These events will boost our economy by \$100 million. Today we are pleased to declare that 2015 will be celebrated as the Year of Sport in Manitoba.

Building on the recent introduction of popular growth bars, a new craft beer strategy will further develop Manitoba's homegrown brewing industry, creating jobs and opportunities from agriculture to processing to hospitality.

New legislation, the strongest in Canada, will target invasive species such as zebra mussels, helping protect Manitoba's \$30-million commercial fishing industry as well as boaters and families visiting our beaches.

A new potash-marketing strategy will soon be launched to solicit interest in potash mining in western Manitoba. This year, two mining operations opened near Snow Lake, with total investments of almost half a billion dollars, creating over 370 permanent jobs in northern Manitoba. In the years ahead, we will work with the Mining Advisory Council to put in place a framework to share mining tax revenue with Aboriginal communities and create jobs and increase job training and business opportunities.

Wuskwatim marked a turning point in our province's hydro history, beginning a new chapter of northern development. Partnering with Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation provided First Nation input into construction, design, training and jobs, and an equity stake in development.

*(14:10)

After two comprehensive public reviews, Keeyask has now been licensed to build as a partnership between Manitoba Hydro and first- and four local First Nations, creating even greater scope for Aboriginal employment and training opportunities while ensuring Manitobans will continue to have a reliable supply of power into the future. Building Keeyask and Bipole III will create more than 10,000 person-years of employment. Power from Keeyask will always allow Manitoba Hydro to close its last remaining coal-fired plant, an important step in Manitoba's fight against climate change.

As these new projects proceed, we will not forget the effects of past development. Our government is committed to a new era of reconciliation with First Nations impacted by the hydro development in addition to the damage done in the past, and build stronger relationships into the future. We are proud to be renewing an historic resource management agreement with the Opaskwayak Cree Nation to ensure sustainable management of natural resources within their traditional territory. Our government will work with Aboriginal communities, northerners and industry to advance land-use planning, boreal protection and sustainable economic development as part of our Opportunities North initiative.

We will also expand financial incentive for manufacturers to increase the use of renewable biomass energy. Manitoba families have become the top recycler in all of Canada. In the community of Elie, the environmental liability left over from the former Isobord plant has now been cleaned up and the site will soon be home to a state-of-the-art electronic waste-recycling facility. A new recycling strategy will be launched this year with the goal of reducing by 50 per cent the amount of waste sent to landfills by 2020. New initiatives will expand curbside composting and increase recycling of commercial industrial waste. This strategy will create hundreds of new green jobs and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Investing in Prevention and Protecting Front-Line Services

Manitobans, like all Canadians, are proud of the universal public health care. We will continue to fight threats to this service that defines us as Canadians, including calls for American-style, two-tier health care and cuts to front-line services. Our approach means hiring doctors and nurses rather than firing them. It means building hospitals and personal-care homes, not freezing health capital and cancelling construction projects. It means putting the needs of patients first rather than cutting and privatizing the services families depend on.

Family doctors and primary care are the backbone of our public health system, keeping families healthy with quality care from someone they know while they—while also making the health-care system more efficient.

A new family doctor finder has already connected over 20,000 Manitobans with a family doctor since it was launched last year, and now QuickCare clinics have now had over 100,000 patient visits. These initiatives and others are helping connect Manitobans with the primary care they need.

In the coming year, our government will open new QuickCare clinics staffed by nurse practitioners in northwest Manitoba, St. Vital and Southdale, and finalize the location of a new QuickCare clinic in west Winnipeg; announce the location of a new ACCESS centre in St. Vital as construction moves ahead on new centres in St. Boniface and Fort Garry; start construction on a new primary-care clinic in Ste. Rose and Grand Rapids; open a new clinic in Swan River and add a new mobile clinic in north Interlake; and hire dozens of primary-care professionals including nurse practitioners into My Health Teams in every region of the province. These measures will help families get the right care they need in a timely way, affording—avoiding stressful and unnecessary trips to an emergency room. But we know there will always be a need for better and faster emergency care.

This year we will continue recruiting more nurses and other health professionals to our ERs; launch a new program at Red River College to train advance care paramedics to start emergency medical interventions before patients arrive at the ER; make the pilot Emergency Paramedics in the Community program permanent, as it has helped hundreds of patients avoid unnecessary ER trips; finalize designs

to rebuild and expand ERs in Flin Flon and Dauphin; and begin construction on the redevelopment of Grace Hospital, which will include a new ER.

Dans les semaines à venir, nous attribuerons le contrat pour la construction d'un centre de soins de santé de dix lits à Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes.

Translation

In the coming weeks we will award the tender for the new 10-bed health centre in Notre Dame de Lourdes.

English

We are committed to giving seniors the care they need and the options they want outside of a hospital setting. More than 300 personal-care-home beds are currently under development across Manitoba, including in Morden-Winkler, Lac du Bonnet and Winnipeg. We will continue to build more PCH beds and to provide culturally appropriate care for seniors and special support for those suffering with dementia. We are also committed to strengthening Manitoba's best-in-Canada home care system, and we will introduce Manitoba's first rural hospital home team.

Every year more and more Manitobans are surviving their battle with cancer, a testament to their determination and Manitoba's first-class of the—world-class doctors. This year we will establish a new cancer hub for Winnipeg to help patients get better co-ordinated care and faster diagnostics and treatment; expand the hours of our Urgent CancerCare Clinic, which has already helped hundreds of patients; increase funding so that more patients can participate in clinical trials; and take steps to prevent cancer by provide—prohibiting minors from using tanning beds.

All Manitobans can be proud of the role of Manitoba's scientists in developing treatment being needed 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.

Manitoba has been a pioneer in providing compassionate, comprehensive end-of-life care. We are pleased to be partnering with Dr. Harvey Chochinov and a broad community coalition to lay the foundation for a new international centre for dignity and palliative care.

Healthy and safe workplaces are a crucial health priority and essential right of all workers. In the coming year our government—strengthen

enforcement of workplace safety laws and bring forward new legislation for firefighters, paramedics and others suffering from PTSD.

The Workers Compensation Board will also complete a stakeholder review of its rate model and began—and begin to work on building a new model that encourages injury and illness prevention, strengthens accountability and removes financial incentive for suppressing claims. Investments in healthy living and prevention help people live longer and more fulfilling lives while reducing the need for costly interventions.

* (14:20)

This year we will launch a new round of Sports Opportunity grants for communities across the province to help Manitobans stay active and healthy. Our government is making milk, fruits and vegetables more affordable for families living in remote areas and supporting communities like Garden Hill to develop food social enterprises.

This year our government will also continue to major focus on crime prevention, providing young people with opportunities to stay active and engaged. Working with community partners like the Winnipeg Jets True North Foundation, Manitoba's new After School Leaders program has already offered more than 300 high school students exciting opportunities to experience fields like culinary arts, cinematography and musical theatre. This year the program will be expanded to Brandon.

In Winnipeg, redevelopment of the old Merchants Hotel and partnerships like the Block by Block community safety project have helped reduce violent crimes by close to 30 per cent.

The horrific murder of Tina Fontaine this summer and the recent vicious assault of Rinelle Harper have focused national attention on the need to take action to prevent violence against Aboriginal women and girls in Canada. Manitoba stands in solidarity with the families of victims and the many other voices across the country in calling for a national inquiry. Manitoba will continue to support families with initiatives like the annual Winnipeg away the tears gathering, and we will work proactively to support the development of a strong national response.

We are also working with First Nations to address the proposed elimination of the federal government's band constable program to ensure

affected communities have access to community policing.

The safety of children is paramount in our child-welfare system. We have supported better training and helped hire almost 500 additional social workers since Changes for Children in 2006. This spring, The Social Work Profession Act will be proclaimed to establish the highest professional standards for those entrusted to care for vulnerable families. Next, we will work with the University of Manitoba on a proposal for a master's of social work in indigenous knowledge, as recommended by the Premier's Advisory Council on Education, Poverty and Citizenship.

We agree with the conclusions of Commissioner Hughes that more work is needed to strengthen early prevention efforts, address the root causes of poverty and build stronger families. A new funding model will ensure services are provided to families as early as possible to prevent family breakdown and children becoming into—coming into care.

Manitoba's Minister of Family Services (Ms. Irvin-Ross) is also co-chairing a national committee of provincial ministers reviewing ways to reduce the number of Aboriginal children in care.

This year new targeted supports will be put in place to assist the most vulnerable children. This will include replacing contract employees with better trained staff for emergency placement shelters, creating a new unit for young women with complex needs and more clinical assessments.

New legislation will strengthen public reporting by Manitoba's Children's Advocate to increase transparency and help those working in the system to prevent future tragedies.

Non-profit organizations play a vital role in our communities, providing essential services to families in need. This year our nationally recognized project to reduce red tape for non-profit organizations will be expanded to allow those groups to expend—to spend less time on paperwork and more time delivering services.

Building safe and affordable housing helps build stronger communities and reduce poverty. Our government is moving forward with plans to build 1,000 more social, affordable housing units. A partnership has been launched between our government and the Manitoba Metis foundation—federation to build affordable homes for Metis families across the province. We will also continue

efforts with community organizations and the City of Winnipeg to improve and stabilize the supply of rooming houses as an option for those in greatest need.

Taking a Balanced Approach

A balanced approach means making smart investments today that reduce costs tomorrow. It also means finding more efficient ways of delivering quality public services. All governments in Canada are under fiscal pressure. In Manitoba, our plan is to responsibly return to balance without major cuts to the programs Manitoba families rely on. Our government is on track to meet our goal of reducing the size of the civil service by 600 through retirement and attrition. With 485 positions now off the payroll, this initiative combined with a voluntary reduced work week is helping to save over \$300 million this year alone.

In the year ahead we will undertake a major restructuring of internal services such as accommodations, procurement, IT and materials and equipment management. These services will be consolidated under the direct authority of Treasury Board to reduce costs. We are also setting a goal for the next year of reducing the office space used by government by over 100,000 square feet.

Basic household costs in Manitoba including home heating, hydro and auto insurance are the lowest in Canada, over \$2,100 less per family than the national average. The average Manitoba family pays \$3,800 less in taxes today because of tax relief provided by our government since 1999. Our minimum wage is second highest amongst provinces, and we will continue to improve purchasing power for low-income workers. Our inflation rate this year has been the fourth lowest in Canada.

In the coming year, new consumer protection legislation will be introduced to help Manitoba get a fair deal, including ensuring homeowners are provided complete upfront guaranteed quotes and timelines for home improvements, providing pet owners with upfront and all-in pricing for veterinarian services, and helping homebuyers and realtors more easily identify properties that were previously used as criminal grow ops or drug production sites. With winter now upon us, over 10,000 Manitobans are already accessing low-interest loans from MPI, making it easy to buy snow tires.

Building on Manitoba Hydro's successful smart power program, this year a new independent energy efficiency agency will be put in place to expand opportunities for all Manitobans to lower their energy bills.

Conclusion

As we look ahead, we also take time to honour the past. This year we join all Manitobans in commemorating the First World War centenary. We mark the sacrifices made by the many Manitobans, including First Nations and Metis volunteers, who went to war a century ago in the service of our country. As we gather today in this Assembly representing all Manitobans, we renew our promise that those sacrifices will never be forgotten. We are all indebted to our veterans and military personnel for the sacrifices they have made and continue to make representing us around the world and helping here at home.

It is due to these sacrifices that Manitobans today look to the future with a sense of optimism.

* (14:30)

Je voudrais remercier les invités qui se sont joints à nous aujourd'hui à l'occasion de l'ouverture de cette nouvelle session, et exprimer ma reconnaissance au Président et à tous les membres de l'Assemblée législative pour le dur travail qui les attend.

Alors même que vous vous 'assaqueverez' des responsabilités que les Manitobains et Manitobaines vous ont confiées, j'ai la certitude que la divine Providence éclairera vos délibérations et vos décisions, dans l'intérêt de tous nos concitoyens.

Merci beaucoup.

Translation

I would like to thank our guests for joining us for the start of the new session and thank our Speaker and all members of the Legislature for the hard work that lies ahead.

As you proceed to carry out the responsibilities the people of Manitoba have entrusted to you, I trust that divine Providence will guide your deliberations and your decisions in the best interests of all our citizens.

Thank you very much.

English

Thank you.

His Honour the Lieutenant Governor rose from the throne and retired from the Chamber escorted by the Sergeant-at-Arms carrying the mace and followed by the honorary aides-de-camp, the officer escort, the Premier and the Provincial Court judges.

Prior to their exiting the Chamber, the lyrics of God Save the Queen and O Canada were sung.

The Speaker proceeded to the throne.

The Sergeant-at-Arms approached the Speaker, made obeisance with the mace, then placed the mace on the table.

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.

Please be seated.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 1—An Act Respecting the Administration of Oaths of Office

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Dewar), that Bill 1, An Act Respecting the Administration of Oaths of Office; Loi sur la prestation des serments d'entrée en fonction, be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: It is my great honour and pleasure at this time to introduce the 10 students who have been selected to serve as pages at this session of the Legislature, and they are, beginning at my extreme right, Mr. Zachary Berry, Ms. Samantha Booth, Ms. Shannon Furness, Ms. Veronica Kessler, Ms. Vanessa McKay, Ms. Hannah Payumo, Ms. Lara Penner-Goeke, Mr. Nicholas Warsza, and Mr. Joshua Wiebe.

On behalf of all members of the Assembly and all of our guests here today, I'd like to welcome our pages.

Hold on. Did I forget one? Did I forget one of the pages? I did. Well, there I go; my first mistake already.

So, Ms. Vida Ebadi. My apologies to Ms. Vida. I jumped ahead in my agenda. I—my apology to you.

* * *

Mr. Selinger: I move, seconded by the Minister of Family Services (Ms. Irvin-Ross), that the speech of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor be taken into consideration tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker: Prior to reading the motion back to the House on adjournment, I'd like to—or, yes, for the Throne Speech—pardon me. It's a good thing I've got my Clerk here; apparently I'm getting flustered already. I'd like to thank all of our guests. On behalf of all honourable members of the Assembly, I'd like to thank all of our guests for coming out here this afternoon. It is indeed an honour for us for you to join us here, and so we'd all like to thank you for your participation here this afternoon.

It has been moved by the honourable First Minister, seconded by the Minister of Family Services, that the speech of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor be taken into consideration tomorrow.

Is that agreed? [*Agreed*]

Mr. Speaker: Now, I hope I'm at the right point on the agenda.

* (14:40)

Mr. Selinger: I move, seconded by the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (Mr. Robinson), that this House be now adjourned.

Mr. Speaker: Apparently, I was anxious to get to the reception. So, prior to reading this motion back to the House, I would like to again thank our guests for coming this afternoon, and I would like to remind each and every one of you that you are invited to a reception that will occur across the hallway in room 254 immediately with the adjournment of the House.

And so thank you for attending here this afternoon.

It has been moved by the honourable First Minister, seconded by the honourable Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (Mr. Robinson), that this House do now adjourn.

Is that agreed? *[Agreed]*

This House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow morning.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, November 20, 2014

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