

Second Session – Forty-First 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
Forty-First Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALLUM, James	Fort Garry-Riverview	NDP
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	NDP
BINDLE, Kelly	Thompson	PC
CHIEF, Kevin	Point Douglas	NDP
CLARKE, Eileen, Hon.	Agassiz	PC
COX, Cathy, Hon.	River East	PC
CULLEN, Cliff, Hon.	Spruce Woods	PC
CURRY, Nic	Kildonan	PC
DRIEDGER, Myrna, Hon.	Charleswood	PC
EICHLER, Ralph, Hon.	Lakeside	PC
EWASKO, Wayne	Lac du Bonnet	PC
FIELDING, Scott, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
FLETCHER, Steven, Hon.	Assiniboia	PC
FONTAINE, Nahanni	St. Johns	NDP
FRIESEN, Cameron, Hon.	Morden-Winkler	PC
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GOERTZEN, Kelvin, Hon.	Steinbach	PC
GRAYDON, Clifford	Emerson	PC
GUILLEMARD, Sarah	Fort Richmond	PC
HELWER, Reg	Brandon West	PC
ISLEIFSON, Len	Brandon East	PC
JOHNSON, Derek	Interlake	PC
JOHNSTON, Scott	St. James	PC
KINEW, Wab	Fort Rouge	NDP
KLASSEN, Judy	Kewatinook	Lib.
LAGASSÉ, Bob	Dawson Trail	PC
LAGIMODIERE, Alan	Selkirk	PC
LAMOUREUX, Cindy	Burrows	Lib.
LATHLIN, Amanda	The Pas	NDP
LINDSEY, Tom	Flin Flon	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Flor	Logan	NDP
MARCELINO, Ted	Tyndall Park	NDP
MARTIN, Shannon	Morris	PC
MAYER, Colleen	St. Vital	PC
MICHALESKI, Brad	Dauphin	PC
MICKLEFIELD, Andrew, Hon.	Rossmere	PC
MORLEY-LECOMTE, Janice	Seine River	PC
NESBITT, Greg	Riding Mountain	PC
PALLISTER, Brian, Hon.	Fort Whyte	PC
PEDERSEN, Blaine, Hon.	Midland	PC
PIWNIUK, Doyle	Arthur-Virden	PC
REYES, Jon	St. Norbert	PC
SARAN, Mohinder	The Maples	NDP
SCHULER, Ron, Hon.	St. Paul	PC
SELINGER, Greg	St. Boniface	NDP
SMITH, Andrew	Southdale	PC
SMOOK, Dennis	La Verendrye	PC
SQUIRES, Rochelle, Hon.	Riel	PC
STEFANSON, Heather, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
SWAN, Andrew	Minto	NDP
TEITSMA, James	Radisson	PC
WHARTON, Jeff	Gimli	PC
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
WISHART, Ian, Hon.	Portage la Prairie	PC
WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC
YAKIMOSKI, Blair	Transcona	PC

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, November 22, 2016

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Madam Speaker: O Eternal and Almighty God, from Whom all power and wisdom come, we are assembled here before Thee to frame such laws as may tend to the welfare and prosperity of our province. Grant, O merciful God, we pray Thee, that we may desire only that which is in accordance with Thy will, that we may seek it with wisdom and know it with certainty and accomplish it perfectly for the glory and honour of Thy name and for the welfare of all our people. Amen.

Please be seated.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Madam Speaker: Introduction of bills?

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Standing Committee on Crown Corporations

Third Report

Mrs. Colleen Mayer (Chairperson): Madam Speaker, I wish to present the Third Report of the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations.

Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk): Your Standing Committee on Crown Corporations—

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on CROWN CORPORATIONS presents the following as its Third Report.

Meetings

Your Committee met on the following occasions in the Legislative Building:

- September 8, 2015 (4th Session – 40th Legislature)
- October 21, 2016 (1st Session – 41st Legislature)
- November 16, 2016 (1st Session – 41st Legislature)

Matters under Consideration

- *Annual Report of the Manitoba Liquor Control Commission for the year ended March 31, 2014*

- *Annual Report of the Manitoba Lotteries Corporation for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2014*
- *Annual Report of Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries Corporation for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2015*
- *Annual Report of Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries Corporation for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2016*

Committee Membership

Committee Membership for the September 8, 2015 meeting:

- *Ms. ALLAN (Vice-Chairperson)*
- *Mr. ALTEMEYER*
- *Mr. CULLEN*
- *Mrs. DRIEDGER*
- *Mr. GAUDREAU (Chairperson)*
- *Hon. Ms. IRVIN-ROSS*
- *Hon. Mr. LEMIEUX*
- *Mr. PEDERSEN*
- *Hon. Mr. SARAN*
- *Mr. SCHULER*
- *Mr. WIEBE*

Substitutions received during the committee proceedings on September 8, 2015:

- *Mr. MARCELINO (Tyndall Park) for Ms. ALLAN*

At the September 8, 2015 meeting, your Committee elected Mr. MARCELINO (Tyndall Park) as the Vice-Chairperson.

Committee Membership for the October 21, 2016 meeting:

- *Mr. ALLUM*
- *Mr. CURRY*
- *Hon. Mr. EICHLER*
- *Mrs. GUILLEMARD (Vice-Chairperson)*
- *Ms. KLASSEN*
- *Mr. LINDSEY*
- *Mr. MARCELINO (Tyndall Park)*
- *Mrs. MAYER (Chairperson)*
- *Mr. REYES*
- *Hon. Mr. SCHULER*
- *Mr. SMITH*

Committee Membership for the November 16, 2016 meeting:

- Mr. ALLUM
- Mr. CURRY
- Ms. FONTAINE
- Mr. LAGIMODIERE
- Ms. LAMOUREUX
- Mr. MARTIN
- Mrs. MAYER
- Mr. MARCELINO (Tyndall Park)
- Mr. REYES
- Hon. Mr. SCHULER
- Mr. TEITSMA

At the November 16, 2016 meeting, your Committee elected Mrs. MAYER as the Chairperson.

At the November 16, 2016 meeting, your Committee elected Mr. TEITSMA as the Vice-Chairperson.

Officials Speaking on Record at the September 8, 2015 meeting:

- John Stinson, CEO
- Tannis Mindell, Chairperson of the Board
- Kadri Irwin, Director of Licensing with the Liquor and Gaming Authority
- Tracy Graham, Chief Financial Officer
- Corrine Scott, Director of Compliance with the Liquor and Gaming Authority

Officials Speaking on Record at the October 21, 2016 meeting:

- Peter Hak, Acting CEO
- Polly Craik, Chairperson of the Board

Officials Speaking on Record at the November 16, 2016 meeting:

- Peter Hak, Acting CEO
- Polly Craik, Chairperson of the Board

Motions

At the October 21, 2016 meeting, your Committee agreed to the following motion:

- That Committee rise.

Reports Considered and Passed

Your Committee considered and passed the following reports as presented:

- Annual Report of the Manitoba Liquor Control Commission for the year ended March 31, 2014

- Annual Report of the Manitoba Lotteries Corporation for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2014

Reports Considered but not Passed:

Your Committee has considered the following reports but did not pass them:

- Annual Report of Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries Corporation for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2015
- Annual Report of Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries Corporation for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2016

Mrs. Mayer: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Fort Richmond (Sarah Guillemard), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Ron Schuler (Minister of Crown Services): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to table the Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board Quarterly Report for the six months ended September 30, 2016.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Madam Speaker: The required 90 minutes' notice prior to routine proceedings was provided in accordance with rule 26(2).

Would the honourable First Minister please proceed with his statement.

Manitoba Joins New West Partnership

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Madam Speaker, I am proud to advise the House that Manitoba has officially joined the new west trade agreement.

During the recent election campaign, our government committed to bring Manitoba into this historic partnership, Madam Speaker, with Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia, our neighbours in the Confederation, and we have delivered on that promise.

With the inclusion of Manitoba, the New West Partnership is now the largest trading force in the country of Canada, representing a market of 11 million people—a hundred-and-some million people, hundreds of millions of people and a combined GDP of about \$750 billion.

Now, this agreement will reduce trade barriers and red tape, harmonize regulations and diversify markets, while supporting job creation and economic prosperity. It will streamline regulations for many industries, making it easier to do business across provincial boundaries. And we know that Manitoba, Madam Speaker, is made up of trading businesses and a trading people.

It will streamline regulations, as well, in respect of allowing freer trade, stronger partnerships for Manitoba companies. It will create procurement and investment opportunities here at home. It will also provide opportunities to promote trade and commerce in international trade missions by exploiting—exploring new markets for key Manitoba exports, including in areas like agriculture and food production.

Manitoba has enormous potential from its resource wealth and its central location in North America, which will be amplified under this key economic partnership. By restoring Manitoba's place as a gateway for goods destined for foreign markets, it will help attract international investment and growth opportunities, as well.

This agreement will help leverage the powerful brand of western Canada to better market Manitoba as a great place to do business and invest. It will make Manitoba business more competitive and more confident in their economy, province and future.

With this agreement, our government is sending a strong message that Manitoba is, once again, open for business, and that the only thing better than today in Manitoba is tomorrow in Manitoba.

Mr. Kevin Chief (Point Douglas): Madam Speaker, Manitoba's geographic location is a key advantage in making us a centre for trade. Our focus has always been on breaking down trade barriers to the east, west, north and south, and across the globe. That's why we hope to see this government pursue a strong national agreement, as well.

As it stands, over 50 per cent of Manitoba's exports go to Ontario and Quebec. In fact, our record shows that we have the highest proportion of trade with Canadian jurisdictions out of all provinces—that's something this government inherited. We have been recognized to have one of the strongest economies, with one of the lowest unemployment rates—something else this government inherited. Manitoba leads the country interprovincial exports as a percentage of total exports.

We have always supported strong businesses, strong economy, as well as good jobs, and we recognize that establishing more trade ties helps build our province's economy. That's why we invested in trade-related infrastructure, including CentrePort Canada Way, the Trans-Canada Highway, Highway 75, Highway 10, Highway 6, Highway 9, just to name a few.

Madam Speaker, we hope trade builds our province and works for all Manitobans. We look forward to seeing what opportunities there are with the New West Partnership Trade Agreement will bring to all Manitoba.

As we harmonize our trade relations with the Western provinces, we must also follow their path in making life affordable for Manitobans. As we look to the west for trade opportunities, this government should also follow their lead with minimum wage increases, as well.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook): Ask for leave to respond to the Premier's (Mr. Pallister) statement.

Madam Speaker: Does the member have leave to respond to the ministerial statement? Agreed? *[Agreed]*

Ms. Klassen: I rise to speak today to congratulate the Premier on the New West Partnership Trade Agreement.

The Manitoba Liberals have long supported this agreement and we are glad that today we can count on Manitoba as being included as a partner in this historic trade agreement.

* (13:40)

As we have been saying a lot in this House recently, working together is what will build a better Manitoba. We are pleased that today we can say that we are also working effectively with our Western provinces for that same goal.

This agreement will open up markets for—to Manitoba businesses and also acts as a stepping stone for internal trade across Canada.

We look forward to the details of this agreement being shortly tabled in this House.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: The honourable Minister of Health.

And I would indicate that the required 90 minutes' notice prior to routine proceedings was provided in accordance with rule 26(2).

Would the honourable minister please proceed with his statement?

Opioid Use in Manitoba

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): I would like to update the House about the issue of the use of opiates, both prescription and illicit, in Manitoba.

I'd first like to acknowledge the many lives that have been tragically impacted by addiction or death as a result of opiates such as fentanyl and carfentanil.

While there has been discussion and debate about defining this collectively as an emergency or a crisis in Canada, we need to be clear that the families who have lost a loved one to an overdose, for them, this is clearly a crisis. For those who are battling an addiction, this is clearly an emergency.

I am informed by the Medical Examiner's office that there have been a total of nine overdoses where fentanyl was confirmed as either the primary cause of death or a contributing factor in the first five months of 2016.

I've been further advised after asking for information that this number is expected to go up, but that there are a number of 'toxology' reports that are outstanding. Based on what the Medical Examiner is advising me as of today, we have seen at least 24 overdose deaths where opiates of all classes were found to be present in the 'toxology' reports in 2016. Sadly, we know that as test results come back from other suspected overdose cases, that number will rise and will almost certainly be higher than in the previous years.

Every province is facing a tragedy of opiate addiction and deaths that are resulting. Last week, I, along with a number of other ministers of health and the Chief Public Health Officer of Manitoba, met in Ottawa for a national summit on opiates.

I want to extend our province's thanks to the federal minister, Dr. Jane Philpott and Ontario minister, Dr. Eric Hoskins, for hosting this summit.

Health professionals from across Canada, representing dozens of organizations, came together and committed to specific actions within their disciplines. There will be ongoing accountability and reporting of the success of those commitments.

The entire joint statement of action developed at the summit is available for members of this House and the public on the Government of Canada's Health Department website under the substance abuse topic.

Madam Speaker, Manitoba, along with other provinces, made several commitments. Together with other jurisdictions, we have committed to better tracking and reporting of overdoses so that we can better determine the depth of the problem and the expectations of improvement.

As well, we are committed to providing specialized education for service providers and parents, and a renewed public awareness effort. Many of those who are dying from fentanyl and carfentanil are unaware it is the drug that they are taking and unaware of the deadly consequences. More awareness and education is critical.

As well, we will expand the availability of naloxone to help reverse overdoses. However, it must be stressed that having a naloxone kit is not a safety net. It may mitigate but it cannot eliminate the incredible risk inherent with using these drugs in an illicit fashion.

We know that drugs and those who sell them do not respect provincial boundaries. That is why we need a national effort on this issue. Last week, Manitoba again emphasized this to the federal government and advocated, and we will continue to advocate, for the restriction of the sale of pill presses, along with stronger enforcement against the importation of fentanyl from countries such as China and the enhanced ability of the Canadian Border Services to better detect fentanyl coming into our country. These were measures that were supported by law enforcement at the summit.

Madam Speaker, while government can and must take action, it is not a problem that can be legislated away. Addiction is very much an issue of the heart, often broken, often wounded and often hurt hearts. We need all Manitobans and organizations to take up the call to support each other, neighbours helping neighbours, students helping students and friends helping friends.

Finally, I'd like to make special mention of those who are on the front lines responding to the far too many difficult overdose calls that they are receiving. Our emergency responders and medical professionals are also dealing with the trauma of these situations,

and we cannot remember them often enough for the very difficult work that they do.

Madam Speaker, I thank the House for this opportunity to provide an update, and I thank all members for their concern that I know they have for this issue.

Thank you.

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): Madam Speaker, addictions and illicit drug use have far-reaching and heartbreaking effects on families in Manitoba, and in the past couple of years we have seen an exponential growth in the devastating effects that opioids leave in their wake. Last year alone there were 29 fentanyl-related deaths that we know of and the numbers continue to rise.

Opioid use is posing a severe and persistent threat to our first responders. In the last month alone, five people have died from fentanyl overdoses and, just this past weekend, another two people succumbed to the shattering effects of this drug.

With countless overdose calls every single day, we must see provincial action.

Manitobans are taking this issue into their own hands. Paramedics are sharing best practices and seeking new training. Firefighters are paying out of pocket for naloxone kits in order to increase the availability among first responders.

We believe the government needs to take action now to make naloxone kits widely available to all first responders, as well as fentanyl users and their families.

Families are also taking action in order to put an end to this crisis. Mothers like Arlene Last-Kolb and Chris Dobbs continue to advocate for a comprehensive response to the crisis after losing their children to fentanyl overdoses.

I am proud to stand in this House and honour the memories of their children and so many others. They are fighting to have a family advocate to assist patients and families in the treatment process, and they have fought to see public education around harm reduction and overdose responses for families.

Fighting the opioid crisis needs an immediate—needs to be an immediate priority for this government. Our families need action.

Our front-line workers also need action, and this public health emergency—this is a public health

emergency and the government should acknowledge it as such.

We ask the government to stop evading and waiting for our federal government to act and to take steps today to protect our communities.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): Madam Speaker, I ask for leave to speak in response to the ministerial statement.

Madam Speaker: Does the member have leave to respond to the ministerial statement? *[Agreed]*

Ms. Lamoureux: Yesterday when we sat in this House we heard the government's intentions for the upcoming legislative session. It was mentioned that the government would be developing a strategy to improve accessibility to and the co-ordination of mental health and addiction services across Manitoba.

This crisis needs to be addressed immediately, as people are dying. Deaths from overdoses have now surpassed deaths from motor vehicle accidents in adolescents and young adults.

It is time to take action, which is why our caucus recently released a report on brain health where we spoke of prevention and the treatment of addictions based on research and evidence. It reinforces that those who suffer from addictions have a dire need of timely access to a clear treatment path which has to include providing detoxification in a controlled and appropriate setting, along with follow up.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Take Your MLA to Work Day

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): Madam Speaker, as some members will already be aware, Friday, October 28th was Take Your MLA to Work Day.

As part of Disability Employment Awareness Month, Manitobans with disabilities are encouraged to invite their MLA to visit their workplace. The objective is to raise awareness of the contributions made by Manitobans with disabilities to workplaces throughout Manitoba.

I had the extreme honour to be invited this year by Jennifer Halipchuk—not holopchi—Halipchuk. Jen has never heard that one before.

Jen graduated from Springfield Collegiate in 2009, joined Supportive Employment Options in May of 2010 and joined the Beausejour Tim Hortons team on May 22nd, 2016.

On the morning of the 28th Jen put me straight to work. We had to put together twelve 12-packs of coffee. This pack had to have 12 cups, 12 lids, 12 stir sticks, 12 creamers, 12 sugars and, you guessed it, 12 Splendas. Not one more or less. There would be a quality control check so it would be—it had to be correct, Jen assured me. We also had to make sure that the display shelves were well stocked and properly fronted.

* (13:50)

The staff at the Tim's in Beausejour are a fine example of a great team. I would like to thank store owner Scott; manager Reauna; multi-unit manager, Kim; supervisor, Pat; Jordan and Robyn from SEO; and, of course, Jen for the amazing work experience.

Jen was asked who has been her main supports in life. She said, her mom and dad; Dawna, her house mom; Jordan, Melissa and Robyn from SEO—and no, they didn't have to pay her to say that—and, of course, her grandmother Susan.

Take Your MLA to Work Day shows that people with disabilities can succeed in employment in their communities. I encourage more businesses and MLAs to get on board.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Lac du Bonnet.

Mr. Ewasko: I would like to ask leave to enter their names, of our guests into Hansard.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave to have the names entered in Hansard? *[Agreed]*

Supported Employment Options: Jordan Beer, employment specialist; Robyn Furnish, program co-ordinator

Tim Hortons: Jennifer Halipchuk, employee; Scott Johannson, owner; Kim Riddolls, multi-unit manager; Reauna Vinck, store manager

Standing Rock-Dakota Access Pipeline

Mr. Wab Kinew (Fort Rouge): I stand with Standing Rock.

When water is brought into a Dakota sweat lodge, we are taught to say, mni wiconi wakan, or sacred water of life; holy water, if you will.

That mni wiconi is now the rallying cry for the people of Standing Rock as they oppose the Dakota Access pipeline tells you that theirs is a spiritual movement. On Sunday night, this movement took a heartbreaking turn as images of peaceful water protectors, injured by water cannons and tear gas, flooded social media.

My hunka aunt, a pensioner, told me through tears how worried she is for her grandson who is on the front lines. Yet rather than ask him to come home and get his books for college, she bought him a gas mask.

Why, you may ask. Well, traditional indigenous people do not see Standing Rock as activism. For people who have heard the words mni wiconi since birth, this is simply answering the call of duty. To underline this point, my aunt's son, a US Army veteran, packed up his gear Monday and joined his nephew on the front lines.

Madam Speaker, though we may not all agree on how to fight climate change, we should all recognize that the situation in North Dakota is a powerful lesson for us in how not to pursue reconciliation. In Standing Rock, we see what can happen when development starts without the consent of indigenous peoples.

I encourage all Manitobans to reflect on your grandparents. Think of the values they held close to their hearts. Now think of how strong they would have to believe in those values in order to let their grandchildren go into harm's way to defend them.

When you understand that, you will begin to understand the people of Standing Rock, the Great Sioux Nation, and how they feel about the words mni wiconi, water is life.

Ten Thousand Villages

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): It's my pleasure to honour in the Legislature today Ten Thousand Villages, the oldest and largest fair trade organization in North America.

Ten Thousand Villages began 70 years ago when Edna Ruth Byler, a Mennonite Central Committee worker, visited Puerto Rico and helped teach sewing classes in an effort to help improve the lives of women living in poverty. Believing in both the products and their mission, she purchased several pieces to bring home to sell to friends and family.

Today, Ten Thousand Villages helps create opportunities for artisans in developing countries to earn income by bringing their products and stories to our markets. This partnership also sees the artisans receive respect, dignity and hope from working hard and earning fair value for their work. Volunteerism remains a big part of who they are, with close to 3,000 volunteers sharing their expertise throughout Canada alone.

I'm proud to say that for nearly 30 years the Steinbach location of Ten Thousand Villages has been open and is run by the Steinbach Community Assistance Inc. Board. This Christmas, they will be hosting a gift campaign where you can make a donation on behalf of a loved one towards a project in a developing country, giving a family the gift of food, clean water or livestock. Last year, they were able to raise \$21,000 locally.

With us today in the gallery are some of the more than 30 volunteers and staff of Steinbach Ten Thousand Villages. Colleagues, please join me in recognizing manager and assistant manager, Heidi Martens and Trudy Esau; board members Darlene Reimer, Susie Harder and Gordon Kornelson; and volunteers Liz Chapman, Virginia Fast and Eleanore Thiessen.

Barbara Mitchell Resource Centre

Mrs. Colleen Mayer (St. Vital): Madam Speaker, I'd like to share with you a fabulous story of what a community organization can do to make a difference in the lives of seniors in their neighbourhood.

The Barbara Mitchell Family Resource Centre, run by the Salvation Army in my riding of St. Vital, saw the need for a seniors group in the community, and in 2013 they hired Sheila Keyes as the seniors' program co-ordinator. Sheila began to reach out to seniors and STARS—and the STARS program was born. And STARS stands for senior Tuesdays a.m. recreation spot.

They posted flyers in nearby blocks. One by one, people started to come out, and a group was formulated. Soon the numbers were growing, and they began to have presentations on health, safety and money matters. From there, they grew to taking field trips to places like the zoo, the mint, Lower Fort Garry and even out to the Mennonite Heritage Village in Steinbach. They also have a morning exercise program called Stepping up with Confidence, which accommodates 18 or more seniors who are involved in active living.

Birthday celebrations are—take place each month, and I had the privilege to join them in August, where I had the opportunity to see how much this program means to the participants. In fact, they've even offered to teach me how to play pickleball, and in the new year I plan on getting out there to do just that.

I'm so pleased that this organization, who sees a need for the community, takes the initiative to fill that need. And, today, I'm honoured to have, from the Barbara Mitchell Family Resource Centre, Major Roxanne Jennings, executive director; Sheila Keyes, senior program co-ordinator; and Florence Quan, family life co-ordinator, in the gallery. Please join me in congratulating them on being stars in my community.

Seniors Forum

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): This past weekend, our party hosted a public forum about senior care. Together with four panellists, we had an open dialogue to share ideas about how the government can best care for seniors here in our province.

All too often, Manitoba's seniors are being forced out of their homes due to preventable reasons. After numerous conversations with my constituents and with those at the forum, there is consensus that many seniors want to be able to remain independent as long as possible. In order to achieve this, the government needs to enhance the possibility for home care under a model that is efficiently financed.

Four suggestions that were an outcome from Sunday's forum included: (1) training seminars for those who are not health-care professionals, however, would like to assist their loved ones out of the comfort of their homes for as long as possible; (2) we need to put in more effort to keep senior couples together; not only separating a couple is hard on their emotions while they're happily married, but it's difficult financially to pay for two rents; (3) as seen at Deer Lodge Centre, investing in multidisciplinary-type models; (4) currently, there are daily fees for the majority of senior-care facilities while waiting for a room. This fee should be eliminated or, at the very least, reduced.

It's time to broaden the scope. In British Columbia, they have a seniors' advocate to monitor and analyze senior services as well as provide the government with recommendations to address issues. And, in Ontario, there are dementia villages which

operate as a safe space for individuals that suffer with severe dementia, allowing residents to live in a community that at the same time acts as a nursing home.

I urge this government to take action, as our baby boomer generation is aging. I advocate for this on behalf of all Manitobans and for everyone here in this House. We don't know what the future holds. Thank you.

* (14:00)

Introduction of Guests

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

We have seated in the public gallery from Neepawa Area Collegiate 24 grade 9 students under the direction of Amy Spring, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Indigenous and Municipal Relations (Ms. Clarke).

And also in the public gallery from Gonzaga Middle School, 20 grade 6 students under the direction of Siobhan Faulkner, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Point Douglas (Mr. Chief).

And I would like to also draw the attention of all honourable members to the Speaker's Gallery where we have with us today members for the organization Equal Voice: Denise Siele of Equal Voice National; Delaney Cohelo and Alexandra Shkrandrij of Equal Voice Manitoba.

And also in the Speaker's Gallery are Paul, Braedon and Dillen Jones, who are my guests and residents of Charleswood.

On behalf of all of us to all of you, we welcome you here to our Manitoba Legislature.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Front-Line Workers and Services Public Sector Wage Costs

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Leader of the Official Opposition): Yesterday we heard the government has an agenda that lays the groundwork for cuts to front-line workers and opens the door to privatization of front-line services. This attack on front-line services breaks their election pledge to protect front-line workers. Cuts to jobs and to wages of front-line workers were not part of the Premier's election pledge, but they are his real agenda.

Instead of growing the economy the government has decided to reach into the wallets of Manitoba's workers and to take money from them.

When will this government realize they should protect services rather than attack them?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Madam Speaker, I would like to just add a word of welcome to the young people from Gonzaga and say I had the great chance to meet with them and many other young people.

I know the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Selinger) enjoyed We Day, and it's certainly an energizing experience, and we thank the Kielburger brothers for their great work in respect of organizing this tremendous effort, nationally.

I just wanted to mention one particular student, if I could, Madam Speaker, Olivia McKay [*phonetic*], because Olivia [*phonetic*] is celebrating a birthday today, and I think that's just tremendous and wanted to wish her a happy birthday today, Olivia [*phonetic*].

What yesterday's Throne Speech is—was about and what our agenda for change and improvement and repair is about, is about young people like Olivia [*phonetic*], and we'll continue to keep our eye on the future because it isn't just about today, is it, Madam Speaker? It's about the future for our young people in this province.

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

Ms. Marcelino: Cuts to wages and cuts to jobs do not provide hope for Manitobans or for our young birthday celebrant. They undermine our front-line workers and undermine the important services they deliver. It is disrespectful to ask our front-line workers to do more with less, and the Premier should know it.

The Premier has broken his election commitment to protect front-line workers that he made less than a year ago. The Premier didn't tell Manitobans that his pledge to protect front-line workers was written in disappearing ink.

Will the Premier admit that cutting front-line services is what he had planned all along?

Mr. Pallister: Madam Speaker, I understand that the members opposite are grieving and can't accept the result of—Manitobans gave them a few months ago in

the provincial election, and I do understand that, and I understand, also, their desire to be cynical in respect of promises made when they have such a record on that side of the House of breaking theirs. I mean, they ran for election on a promise they gave at the door to Manitoba home residents and homeowners where they knocked and they promised. They looked right in the eyes of people, working men and women across the province, and they said, we won't raise your taxes, when they knew they were going to and when they proceeded to do so.

Madam Speaker, so now this quaint expression of concern for those very same people is understandable, I suppose, and political posturing, but it's weak because it's not rooted in the actual actions of the previous government.

And our actions equate very nicely to what we promised to do. We promised to fix the finances. We promised to repair the services. We promised to rebuild the economy and, Madam Speaker, we will stay focused on those goals on behalf of all Manitobans.

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

Ms. Marcelino: The Premier forgot that he promised not to sell MTS during his time in—when he was part of the Filmon government.

Madam Speaker, it is disappointing to see this Premier avoid responsibility for his actions. This government trumpeted fake savings in their last budget that they couldn't produce and inflated the deficit numbers by over \$150 million for partisan purposes. Instead of taking responsibility and finding new innovative ways to grow our economy and create good jobs, the Premier has manufactured a crisis to justify an ideological attack on workers.

Will the Premier admit that fake prices do not justify cutting our front-line workers?

Mr. Pallister: Again, Madam Speaker, we're steadfast on this side of the House in keeping our word, and in respect of our word, our commitment to Manitobans, we committed to helping to turn the ship in a safer direction to a safer shore for all Manitobans, and we will continue to focus on doing so.

The members opposite, their party, of course, is in a crisis, and so I understand the member's propensity to use that word on a regular basis. But I would mention to her that the actual reality of the

situation is that we have increased investments in every department of government except in my own at the top by reducing the size of our Cabinet, and we'll continue to focus on reducing the top-heavy nature of our government to protect our front-line workers, Madam Speaker, and to make sure that we don't do what the previous administration did, which was to continually spend more, provide less, and go back to Manitobans and say you owe us, you pay higher taxes.

We won't do that Madam Speaker, because we know a more secure Manitoban leads to a more secure Manitoba.

Front-Line Workers and Services Public Sector Wage Costs

Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview): You know, I don't want to blame the Premier for last night's snowfall, but there's no doubt that his Throne Speech sent a big chill over Manitoba's economy yesterday.

Several weeks ago we learned that the government had fired 200 civil servants under false pretenses, and now we've learned that they are going to reach into the wallets of front-line workers, of social workers, nurses, child-care workers, safety officers and many, many more.

Will the Premier just admit that his goal was never to protect the front-line workers and his real objective was to punish them instead?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Madam Speaker, I don't think it's appropriate, the word punishment—although it does accurately describe what Manitobans did to the NDP in the last election, and they did that because they were fed up with broken promises by the previous administration.

Now, we are keeping our promises to Manitobans. We said we would focus on fixing the finances of our province. We are going to do so. We're going to do it with the co-operation and support of our union-leader friends and of our front-line workers.

Madam Speaker, our focus continues to be to provide security to the people of Manitoba, including our workers, because front-line services are important to Manitobans and so, too, are the people who provide those front-line services.

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

Mr. Allum: Well, Madam Speaker, you know, the only Manitoban who got a hefty pay raise this year is the Cabinet and the Premier of this province. It cost the people of Manitoba \$320,000 for their pay raises for the chosen 12 and a half across the way, and the Premier himself got \$30,000 extra dollars and yet he wouldn't give minimum wage earners one red cent increase.

So what we want to know today is: Will the Premier apologize to front-line workers and withdraw his intention to punish them over and over and over again?

*(14:10)

Mr. Pallister: Well, again, Madam Speaker, I know the member opposite never lets the facts get in the way of a good rant, but let him understand that the actual budgetary allowance for the Executive Council went down by \$182,000 or 4.2 per cent last year. We trimmed at the top where the other side, when they were in government, enlarged and emboldened the top to such a degree that they actually, after promising not to raise taxes, did, and then gave themselves a vote tax subsidy of over \$1 million to a political party too lazy to raise money, too lazy to go to the same doors that they went and knocked on they knew would say, no, you broke your promise. We're not going to help you.

So, to relieve themselves of the pressure of raising money and working like any political party candidate should, they decided to give themselves a vote tax subsidy, Madam Speaker. There's no congruence in the member's arguments. We'll stand up for Manitobans. I know he'll just stand up for his party.

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

Mr. Allum: Well, actually, Madam Speaker, the public subsidy for political parties was less than the \$320,000 that the Premier put in his own pocket. He should be apologizing for that today.

So, will the government say today, and will the Premier or the Finance Minister or whoever's making decisions across the way in the confused state tell us who's next on their hit list? Will it be social workers? Will it be nurses? Will it be child-care workers, or will it be all of the above? They're at home with their families. They want to know, can the Premier tell us today who's next on his hit list?

Mr. Pallister: I thank the member for raising the topic of waste and mismanagement in government, a

topic he is quite familiar with, as he was part of propagating it on the people of Manitoba.

We will eliminate waste, overlap, duplication. We will find savings within, but what we will not do, Madam Speaker, is go back to the people in the homes of this province and in the small businesses of this province and say to them what the previous administration said to them, which was, we can't correct our own House or get our own House in order; we're going to your house and we're taking money from you.

We won't do that, Madam Speaker, because we want to strengthen the economy of this province, and we'll do it by keeping our word and by working with Manitobans effectively, including our civil servants.

Front-Line Workers and Services Cabinet Salary Increase

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): Yesterday, the government broke its promise to protect front-line workers. It is fundamentally disrespectful to ask Manitoba front-line workers like social workers and nurses to do more with less. Instead of supporting our Manitoba front-line workers, the Premier and his Cabinet took a 20 per cent salary raise while at the very same time reaching into the wallets of front-line workers and their families.

Will the Premier admit that it is actually quite disrespectful and reprehensible to offload his problems onto the backs of those who provide for our most important, critical and valuable services?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Two points, Madam Speaker. First of all, it was the people of Manitoba who voted us into government, and therefore we got a increase in pay and it was thanks to the people of Manitoba, and we thank the people of Manitoba for the trust they've shown in us. We appreciate it.

Secondly, Madam Speaker, of course the member uses words that are torqueing words, you know, reprehensible and so on, to describe exactly what the previous administration did to the people of Manitoba and to civil servants. They demanded that they take zero. They demanded they take zeros at MPI. They demanded they take zeros at Liquor & Lotteries. They demanded that they take zeros at Manitoba Hydro too. They demanded that they take zeros, and now she describes our attempt, when the deficit is much higher, when the taxes are much higher, when the projected growth in our revenues is much lower and when our health-care transfers are

on the verge of being reduced by the federal government, the member opposite claims something is reprehensible that she and her colleagues did in better times, richer times financially.

There is no congruity to that argument. It doesn't relate to the facts at all. We'll do the right thing and we'll work with our front-line workers to protect them, Madam Speaker.

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

Ms. Fontaine: The message the Premier (Mr. Pallister) is sending to Manitobans could not be more clear: If you are a minimum-wage earner, you get frozen out. If you are a front-line worker, the Premier is going to reach into your wallet and reduce the money that you have for you and your family. At the same time, the Premier has the audacity to take a fat salary increase.

Madam Speaker, I ask the Premier what kind of message this government is sending to Manitoban front-line workers and to workers everywhere.

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance): I thank the member for the question.

And, first of all, let's acknowledge the hypocrisy of the question that the NDP, when they were in power, sought, at certain times, and received concessions. And what they cited at the time was the backdrop: it was the mandate. They described it; they sought those things. So it's a complete hypocritical situation that she now puts forward.

But when that member says, reach into your wallets, Madam Speaker, when that member says, reach into your wallets, I cannot believe that she would use that phrase understanding that the members of the NDP reached into Manitobans' wallets. That cost to them now is over \$300 million a year, over \$1.5 billion already received through an 8 per cent PST. We will reverse that.

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

Ms. Fontaine: The bottom line is that the Premier broke his promise to Manitoba front-line workers and minimum wage earners are also left out on the cold.

The front-line services Manitobans depend on, like nurses, teachers and child-care workers, are being left behind by this government, yet the Premier and his Cabinet take hundreds of thousands of

dollars in increases to their own salaries for them and their families. The Premier had a choice. He could've said no to this increase.

Will he do the right thing and lead by example and rescind their salary increases today?

Mr. Friesen: Well, first of all, this member should understand, if she doesn't, that there's a commissioner responsible for members' allowances. If she claims that she should choose her own salary and the—and the salaries of people of this House, she should say so clearly so that could be put on the record.

Second of all, Madam Speaker, clearly, when she says people being left behind, that's not the case. This government has already indexed tax brackets, has already raised the basic personal exemption, has already applied an income test to other tax measures.

We have been clear that we want no Manitoban left behind. An insupportable tax regime that they fostered and promoted is the kind of thing that leaves Manitobans behind. We'll make sure that we are creating conditions for all Manitobans to succeed.

Front-Line Workers and Services Public Sector Wage Costs

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): It's become quite clear why this government refused to name a labour minister: they pick partisan fights with working people rather than trying to work with them.

We know the minister—how the minister consults with front-line workers; he doesn't. He doesn't talk to them. Madam Speaker, this minister has broken a pledge to protect front-line workers and is dumping their financial problems onto the backs of working people.

Will this government take some responsibility for its actions today and stop the attack on front-line workers?

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade): I appreciate the member's question. It gets—it gives us an opportunity to set the record straight.

Clearly, the decisions that we make today will impact front-line services. Clearly, the decisions that were made in the past are having a bearing on our budget and, obviously, we want to protect front-line services in Manitoba. The way they did it before, with the NDP, is not right. Changes have to be made

to protect front-line services. We of our government—that proposes and will do that.

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

Mr. Lindsey: The Premier's pledge to front-line workers is not worth the paper it's written on.

The Premier won't define what a front-line worker is. Instead, he wants to instill fear and uncertainty in all our service providers. He won't even say that he will protect those workers. Everything is a moving target, Madam Speaker, when you're launching an ideological attack on front-line workers.

Will this government stop its partisan attacks and respect the work of our front-line workers?

Mr. Cullen: Well, let's talk about protecting workers.

* (14:20)

Now, we look back at the previous government and their philosophy of short-term political bailouts, and I'll reference Tolko, for instance, Madam Speaker, what happened in Tolko. We know the \$20 million that members of opposite provided to Tolko over the last few years did not work. Clearly—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Cullen: Clearly, partnerships investing in the long term are the solution.

We were happy to support the new corporation that came through, happy to support the 320 jobs directly associated with Tolko and the hundreds of other jobs that we saved as a result of positive partnerships.

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

Mr. Lindsey: Madam Speaker, the workers at Tolko saved their jobs. The Town of The Pas saved their jobs. This government did nothing to save their jobs.

This government continues to show that they'd rather pick an ideological fight than stand up for front-line workers.

Madam Speaker, will this government admit that it's making working people pay for the government's ideological plan?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Well, Madam Speaker, I appreciate the rhetoric of the member opposite very much because it allows me to highlight the differences in approach. The approach that we've taken is to work co-operatively with the community and to praise the workers and to praise the community and to support them in their efforts.

That's the approach we took. The previous administration didn't involve the community, didn't involve the workers, took money from every working family in the province and went up and did press releases and announcements, grabbing all the credit they could while they handed out \$20 million. And how did that work, Madam Speaker? Didn't work well.

So the new approach is a teamwork approach, and I'm happy to praise the workers and the union leaders who assisted in getting this job done for all Manitobans and for a better future for The Pas.

Front-Line Workers and Services Public Sector Wage Costs

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): Madam Speaker, yesterday's Throne Speech made it very clear this Premier's approach is heading down his worn, old path of cuts and privatization.

During the last election, this Premier committed to Manitobans that he would respect front-line workers. He said it makes no sense to ask our front-line public servants to do more with less. But now Manitobans are noticing that the Premier spends his energy generating the appearance of crises so he can reach into the wallets of Manitoba workers and put more jobs at risk.

Will he simply apologize today for breaking his promise to Manitoba's front-line workers?

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I'm pleased to stand before the House and Manitobans today and speak in favour of what was a fantastic Throne Speech yesterday.

The member opposite will note that there were many references to our justice system and all the great things that we're going to do with it. We are going to work with front-line services as part of that. We are visiting—we are working with our counterparts across the country, including the federal government as well, to deal with court backlogs and delays, much of which has—had happened in—within the previous government as well.

But we will continue to work with front-line workers towards a solution to these very problems.

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

Collective Bargaining Process Proposed Legislation

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): Well, I'd recommend this Justice Minister take her nose out of her mandate letter and notice that this Premier actually says one thing and does another. He wants us to believe that he respects collective bargaining, but then he sends in his agents to interfere in labour negotiations, which provoked a strike at the University of Manitoba that affected nearly 30,000 students.

This Premier says he'll protect front-line workers, but then he reaches into their wallets and puts their jobs at risk. The government now says that it'll propose legislation to curtail the right to fair bargaining.

I ask the Premier: Will his government table this legislation before we rise in December, or will he just continue to interfere in the collective bargaining process until spring?

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I'm not sure if the member opposite was at the same Throne Speech that I was at yesterday, Madam Speaker, but I can tell you that, certainly, it had a number of positive factors that will be very, very positive for front-line workers and, indeed, for all Manitobans.

So I'm very proud of the Throne Speech that came about yesterday. We look forward to working with all Manitobans towards making this a better province to live, work and raise our families.

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

Mr. Swan: I would recommend that the Minister of Justice realize that the right to fair collective bargaining is protected by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. That right has been upheld by the Supreme Court of Canada. Yet, the government now says it intends to bring forward legislation that could undermine this constitutional right by imposing mandates, freezes, determined by the government.

I would ask this Minister of Justice: Does she have a legal opinion on the constitutionality of this legislation that would undermine the collective

bargaining process and will she advise this Premier to back away from this new attack on Manitoba workers?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): The member references attack and he references the inability to keep promises. He's an expert on both those things. He has so little respect for the actual rules within his own party that he led a rebellion to try to take out the man in front of him because he didn't think his leadership suited his party. He placed the jobs of his own people in his own party, candidates from his own party at risk, Madam Speaker, which doesn't concern me.

But he also demonstrated he had very little respect for the people of Manitoba in respect of the protections they deserve from a continuing stable government. He destabilized his own government and now he's attempting through attack to imply that this government is going to have some of those same inherent qualities. It does not.

It is a strong and secure government rooted in principle and very, very focused on achieving improvements in the quality of life for all Manitobans and protections for them through better services not only today, Madam Speaker, but in the future, as well.

Northern Manitoba Communities Search and Rescue Resources

Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook): I pray to Creator that I am doing this in a good way. Everyone knows my heart; this is not for theatre.

My original question had been in relation to a young 14-year-old who went missing in Gods Lake Narrows 48 hours ago. I was told two hours ago that they found her body. We were too late.

There is a dire need for mental health resources in our northern communities. I am also worried for our band-funded and RCMP search-and-rescue services.

After delivering an austerity Throne Speech yesterday, I ask: What is this government doing to make sure our loved ones won't be affected by cuts to essential front-line services like search-and-rescue resources in Manitoba's smaller communities?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member for asking this question and the manner and respectful way she has done so.

We—our hearts—all of our hearts go out to the family of this tragic incident, and I know that all of our thoughts and prayers will be with the family.

Upon learning upon the—about the incident earlier, I've contacted the Minister of Health's office in Ottawa. They'll be doing an assessment of the current resources that are available and what additional resources might be needed as a result of this tragic incident.

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

Gods Lake Narrows Trauma Support Team Request

Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook): Thank you. I appreciate that answer.

My priority today is to make sure that this young girl's friends and family are not at risk, but I know they are, and I am terrified.

I will be going to this community to lend my support because there are no emergency care procedures in place to deal with the aftermath of this suicide crisis. But I know that by simply showing up, demonstrates support for the entire community.

Can the Premier (Mr. Pallister) tell me what this government is doing today to make sure that mental health support is received in Manitoba communities. Will a trauma support team be sent immediately to Gods Lake Narrows?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): Madam Speaker, I think that the effort of the member is commendable and I don't know that there is a greater act that she could demonstrate than by reaching out to the family in the way that she is, and I commend her for that. I applaud her for that. Her heart has been evident on these issues in this House many times, never more so than today.

Madam Speaker, I will be following up later today with the federal Department of Health to see what action has been taken. I'm more than welcome to relay that information to the member in whatever way she feels is most appropriate.

*(14:30)

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

Shamattawa First Nation Suicide Prevention Plan

Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook): I feel the teamwork in this House today.

I recently joined one of my counselors, Liberty Redhead of Shamattawa First Nation, and our Grand Chief Sheila North Wilson, a call to action for our astronomically high number of suicide attempts in Shamattawa: 99 last year, four complete; 92 this year, with one complete.

This would be a crisis situation if it happened here in Winnipeg. Our Liberal caucus submitted the—to the government our Brain Health Report with 98 recommendations that would curb this crisis.

Is this government prepared, where necessary, to make up-front investments now, as we recommended in our report, that will create long-term savings in the long run?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): I thank the member for the question.

I had the opportunity to receive the report on Monday morning after returning from the opiate summit in Ottawa. I did read the report and the 98 recommendations. I certainly think there are some recommendations that could be acted upon. I'm happy to have that discussion with the member and the Liberal caucus.

There was also reference in the report in some of the recommendations about working together with the federal government. I know she's made that offer; I appreciate that offer, and, certainly, those recommendations that involve federal support, we could work together, and there are other recommendations that might be able to be implemented as well, Madam Speaker.

Manitoba's Finances Government Review

Mr. Andrew Smith (Southdale): In the Speech from the Throne our government is setting a new course for Manitoba. After a decade of debt we are focused on fixing our finances. After a decade of decay we are focused on repairing our services and after a decade of decline we are focused on rebuilding our economy.

Madam Speaker, can the Minister of Finance tell this House more about our government's commitment to fixing Manitoba's finances?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance): I thank the member for the question.

Our government has begun the hard work of fixing the finances, repairing our services, rebuilding our economy. We're in the second phase of our fiscal performance review, working to get value for money. We are listening to Manitobans on how to protect front-line services.

Our government will create regulatory accountability through our red tape reduction task force comprised of business, labour and community groups. Through our management review we are reducing the senior executive levels of government that have grown four times the rate of the overall civil service. And through our Budget 2017 consultations, we are listening to Manitobans and Manitobans are recognizing it.

Together, as Manitobans, we will fix the finances, repair the services that Manitobans rely on and rebuild our economy along the way as the Throne Speech demonstrates and as we are committed to do.

Fentanyl Crisis-Reduction Strategy Government Treatment Plan

Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview): The Health Minister will know that fentanyl has had a devastating impact in Fort Garry-Riverview as it has all across Manitoba.

I know that the Health Minister met with families at the end of October and I appreciate him taking the time to do so. But those families want to do more than just tell stories. Madam Speaker, they're looking for the government to show leadership and take real action.

Can the Health Minister tell the House today when he's going to start putting real investments into harm reduction strategies and treatment options for Manitobans?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): Madam Speaker, one of the great challenges with the issue of fentanyl and carfentanil is that so many individuals who are dying and—not just in Manitoba, but in other provinces, and we know, certainly, in British Columbia there are hundreds that are dying—is they never actually get the treatment because they're not aware of what it is that they are taking. And so part of the solution, part of the challenge for us is ensure we get as much information out.

Those who are using drugs and might be putting themselves in risky situations just simply by using drugs don't understand the degree of the risk when it might be mixed with fentanyl and carfentanil. That is an education issue. That's part of what we need to do and we've committed to doing that, and we will, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Allum: Well, Madam Speaker, public education on this question is critically important, but the government has an obligation to do more than just hang posters across Manitoba.

Families are asking the government to show leadership and take real action for a-harm reduction strategies and for treatment options for those suffering from addiction.

We need to get by the minister's procrastination on this file, and we're asking him right now, today, to tell us: What's his plan for Manitobans?

Mr. Goertzen: Well, Madam Speaker, I was hoping this wouldn't turn political, because I don't think it should be a political debate. I know that earlier this year when the former government was still in government, they took action on fentanyl by putting up posters in bus stops and around the city. I was never critical about that because, I think, that that's actually not an unimportant thing to do in terms of education. I think more needs to be done with that. I've already indicated and I indicated earlier today before question period that we'll be expanding the use of naloxone.

There are different things we could look towards when it comes to alternative treatment therapy, but one of the great concerns that I have, Madam Speaker, is that many of the people who are dying have never gone or looked for a treatment, because they don't know what it is that they're taking and they don't know the outcome, potentially, of taking drugs that might be mixed with fentanyl.

So it's not just about putting up posters, but that's not a bad thing, and his government did it as well.

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

Mr. Allum: Well, of course, I conceded the point, Madam Speaker, that public awareness was important, but we actually had a fentanyl task force that engaged in real harm reduction strategies for

Manitoba families affected by the impact of opioids including fentanyl.

The time for discussion and the time for feet dragging is over. The families in my constituency want to do more than just tell the minister the—about their stories. They want him to show leadership and take real action and find the resources to support those actions.

Will he confirm for the House today that that's what he's prepared to do?

Mr. Goertzen: Well, Madam Speaker, the former government appointed a task force that seldomly met and that didn't have a specific mandate.

We have, in the time that we've been elected—and I'm—indicated already that we have made a commitment to expand naloxone. We've made a commitment to have better reporting, and that started today when I made a ministerial statement on this issue, Madam Speaker. We've talked about greater public awareness. We are working with our federal partners. We are looking for restrictions on pill presses. We're pressing to ensure that that that's being imported—fentanyl and carfentanil from countries like China—that there can be legislation to prevent that. I think we're going to get a positive result out of the federal government.

I understand, there's—but there's more that we'd like to do and that everybody would like to do, but I think we've done a good deal in the short time that we've been in government and there's more to come, Madam Speaker.

Fentanyl Crisis Naloxone Kit Distribution

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): The truth is for months now this government has failed to act on the growing crisis of fentanyl despite day after day of tragic headlines, questions in this House and families calling for action. We can't wait for the federal government to solve this problem. We need action now.

Naloxone distribution is key, and getting into the hands of those at risk and their families by any means necessary needs to be priority No. 1 of this government.

Can this minister tell the House what steps he's taking today to get naloxone kits into the hands of pharmacies, schools, public places and, most importantly, into the hands of users and their families?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): Madam Speaker, we have indicated, as a government, we will expand the distribution of naloxone, but I want to be clear again and restate what was stated earlier in the House, and this is a message that I heard from families as well: that we do not want to send the message that naloxone is somehow going to make what is inherently a dangerous activity somehow not dangerous.

It is dangerous to be taking drugs that may be mixed with carfentanil and fentanyl and taking other opiates in an illicit way, and no one should be trying to send the message that somehow this is a safety net. Because there are many people, there are many tragic situations where people have died with that naloxone kit beside them because they weren't able to administer it or nobody was there to administer it for them. So he shouldn't put it on the record this is somehow fail-safe, Madam Speaker.

* (14:40)

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

Public Health Emergency

Mr. Wiebe: Madam Speaker, seven people have died in this province over the last month.

This government has finally agreed that there's a fentanyl crisis in Manitoba. First responders have been calling this a crisis in Manitoba. The mayor is calling this a crisis in Manitoba. Even the federal minister agrees that this is a public health emergency, and it now lies with the Minister of Health to declare it as such and to open up the resources needed to save lives.

A public health emergency would allow the chief medical officer to create a temporary safe injection site and get resources to front-line workers within days.

Will the Health Minister declare a public health emergency so that action can be taken today to prevent anymore deaths in Manitoba?

Mr. Goertzen: Well, Madam Speaker, in the member's politically charged statement about what should be a non-political issue, he misleads Manitobans.

The federal Minister of Health talked on the weekend about it being a public health emergency,

but they did not declare it a national public health emergency. And I did have with me, in Ottawa at the summit, Manitoba's public health officer who, by legislation, is actually able to call a public health emergency. She was at the meeting. I'm glad that she was there.

The member might not like what the legislation said, but it was the same legislation when they were in government.

Madam Speaker: The time for oral questions has expired.

Petitions?

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

THRONE SPEECH

(First Day of Debate)

Mrs. Sarah Guillemard (Fort Richmond): I move, seconded by the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Bindle), that the following address be presented to Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor: We, the members of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, thank Your Honour for the gracious speech addressed to us at this Second Session of the 41st Legislature of Manitoba.

Motion presented.

Mrs. Guillemard: There were words of hope and clear direction in the Lieutenant Governor's speech yesterday. Manitobans have been asking for this clarity and needing a reason to hope. I am grateful that our new government is listening to what matters most to our province, and I am confident that the direction we are leading will produce results and success for all Manitobans. I would like to thank Her Honour for setting the tone as we work towards becoming the most improved province in Canada.

The necessary changes that this province needs will not happen overnight and, certainly, not without much work. Manitobans are known for pulling up their sleeves and getting down to business in order to benefit the wider community. We are known as the most generous province in both time and heart. Our licence plates are proof that we place relationships over personal gain, as Friendly Manitoba reflects our heart for others.

Madam Speaker, this is the key to our province's success: forming relationships that are authentic, and this requires rebuilding trust. After the past decade of

unsustainable spending by the former government it has become apparent that our citizens have lost trust in government, and who could blame them? These individuals are hard-working and honest people, and they expect the same from those entrusted to handle the Province's business and finance.

The only way to right this wrong is to do better, be accountable and transparent, and this is exactly what our government has been doing and we will continue to do. There is a helpless feeling that comes when you see millions of hard-earned dollars being spent on deficit maintenance, and knowing that it didn't have to be this way if proper planning and decision-making had occurred earlier.

My mother always advised me that when I found myself in a hole, I should stop digging. I wish the previous government members had had a mother like mine but, instead, it seems it kept digging the hole of deficit spending.

The silver lining, of course, is that now we have a government who has decided to stop digging. Not only that, but we have also brought with us tools that will help Manitobans climb out of debt so that we can all experience financial stability.

The first step that we took as a government was to reduce the size of the provincial Cabinet. This did not include a reduction of the workload, Madam Speaker, because we believe in our collective abilities to work together and share the burden as a team. There is no greater feeling when faced with a steep challenge than to know your team has your back. Our team includes all the voices in this great province, and that is what keeps us confident that success is close at hand.

The path to a more successful Manitoba is not solely focused on our finances, as our services have suffered over the years with poor supports and mismanagement. We have seen tragedies in the child welfare system that reveal a need to approach these cases from a different angle. Understanding the underlying causes of pain and suffering and learning effective ways to support those most vulnerable is important work that our government is undertaking to address these needs.

Madam Speaker, our new government will develop a comprehensive plan that addresses the recommendations that help children succeed with proper supports. Success will mean fewer children in care because of the stronger relationships that will form between families and communities. These

relationships and trust will be a part of our plan towards greater public accountability through better co-ordination of services. The children of Manitoba deserve better and they will receive better.

It is no secret that our health-care system is struggling to meet the needs of Manitobans. We have some of the most dedicated health-care professionals in the country, yet the demands have grown over the years and our systems are stretched. Our wait times are the worst in the country, and this has created much anxiety among our citizens.

Over the last few months our government has learned of the many band-aid solutions offered by the previous government. Instead of helping matters, they created a mess that Manitobans will have to clean up for many years to come.

This government is committed to reviewing all health-care systems in order to identify and eliminate wasteful spending while implementing strategies to improve outcomes for all Manitobans.

Numerous front-line workers have come forward to share their input regarding savings within our system and their feedback will help shape the direction of this government and we will follow and set expectations for better results.

Programs within the mental health field have struggled without proper supports, and it is one of the fastest growing areas of needs in our society today. I am proud of our government for taking a closer look at mental health and committing to developing a strategy to respond to the increasing need for addiction services. Access to services and co-ordination between programs will go a long way for the long-term success of those in need.

We need to recognize the heroic actions of family members who have been working tirelessly to support their loved ones through mental health issues. The constant advocating and daily efforts just to stay afloat in a sea of uncertainty is to be commended, especially given the frustrations the current system can cause.

*(14:50)

I am thankful for my own family who were able to help me through a parent's worst nightmare, as I sought support for my child who had suffered through trauma. Without my parents, my husband, sister and the supports of my brothers and their

families, I don't think we would have made it through without further trauma.

My heart breaks for the families who have to navigate these systems on their own. Health and education are two of the most important elements of any successful society. Sadly, Manitoba has been trailing behind other provinces in both of these areas. There are no excuses that will ever make up for the generation of students who did not receive adequate preparation for university or life in general.

Our government is prepared to stop the digging in this area as well. As part of our plan for the future economic success, the government will focus once again on the fundamentals for quality education, which will include a focus on early-years literacy and numeracy. Investing in professional development for educators in—is imperative if we want to achieve success, and this will require support for school divisions as we aim to measure and report on student improvements in key areas of learning.

I am truly encouraged by this initiative, Madam Speaker, as I found myself filling in many educational gaps for my own children. They had wonderful teachers, all of whom had to learn a new curriculum introduced by the last government. The new curriculum was an experiment that clearly turned out to do more harm than good for students and left many unprepared for the higher levels of school.

My concerns as a parent were shared by other families and we brought our concerns forward numerous times, but to no avail. Many of us ended up paying private tutors to help supplement the education our children were receiving.

My hope is that these new initiatives will build trust once again in our public school system by showing the results all students are capable of achieving.

C'est avec grande fierté que mon mari et moi avons choisi d'élever nos enfants dans une maison bilingue. L'utilisation des écoles d'immersion française et la croissance au sein de la DSFM démontre que de plus en plus de familles voient la valeur de parler plusieurs langues et les bénéfices que cela apporte. Le Projet de loi 5 a été un message de bienvenue à la communauté francophone qui affirme que leur travail de promotion de la langue française est important pour le gouvernement. Et je me réjouis à l'idée que cette relation continue de croître et de prospérer.

Translation

It's with great pride that my husband and I have chosen to raise our children in a bilingual household. The use of French immersion schools and the growth of the DSFM are proof that more and more families see the value of speaking more than one language and the benefits this brings. Bill 5 was a message of welcome to the Francophone community affirming that the work of promoting the French language is important to the government. And I rejoice at the idea that this relationship will continue to grow and prosper.

English

It is with great pride that my husband and I chose to raise our children in a bilingual home. The use of French immersion schools and the growth within DSFM demonstrates that more families are seeing the value and gifts speaking multiple languages can bring. Bill 5 was a welcome message to the francophone communities that their work to promote the French language is important to this government, and I look forward to seeing that relationship continue to grow and thrive.

Madam Speaker, each day presents new opportunities for our government to build on relationships with our fellow Manitobans. I recently attended a function put on by Wiping Away the Tears organization. One elder spoke of the absolute devastation that residential schools brought on entire communities. He did not speak of retribution or vengeance, but rather healing and restoration. I was captivated by the raw honesty and the open nature of his insights. There was an acknowledgement of the anger, disappointment and sadness that can consume a hurting soul, yet the beauty of rebuilding relationships through love can cover a multitude of past actions.

One of the members from the event had approached me before I left and mentioned that most government officials only come and say a few words and then they promptly leave. This woman shared that it was good that I stayed to listen, that it meant more than the words I had shared. This is the message that she wanted me to bring back to my colleagues in government, that being present is important and listening impacts more than speaking.

Madam Speaker, we are a government who listens. We hope Manitobans continue to share their thoughts and feedback and join us on this journey to a better tomorrow.

I would like to end with another one of my mother's common phrases: Doing the right thing is not always easy, but it is always right.

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Merci.

Mr. Kelly Bindle (Thompson): Not just with some Manitobans; our government stands with all Manitobans. And, as MLA for Thompson representing northerners, I'm proud to second the motion made by the member from Fort Richmond to support yesterday's Throne Speech, our government's commitment to Manitobans, and I'm proud to speak to it today.

I consider myself very fortunate to be a part of this government because we are a team with strong leadership and an unwavering commitment to do what is right for Manitobans, united in our goal to build a better Manitoba. I'm proud of our team's accomplishments over the past six months and I'm proud of the vision we have for the future of Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, after a decade of debt, decay and decline, Manitobans feel betrayed by the previous government's culture of deceit, and all Manitobans want what they deserve. Manitobans want government to do its job. It's time government did its job, and our government is doing that job.

Over the past six months we have followed through on the commitments we ran on in the past election, and we will continue to meet our commitments to Manitobans by following through on the commitments outlined in the Throne Speech—commitments designed to fix the finances, restore services and rebuild the economy of Manitoba.

We are, and will continue to restore Manitoba's trust in government through our actions. We will continue to show our integrity by being open and honest, by listening to Manitobans, by facing the storm from the previous government's misaligned, misguided and mismanaged decisions, and by focusing on what is best for all Manitobans.

Manitobans want answers that provide value for money, opportunity, long-term sustainability, security and peace of mind, and our government is committed to making Manitoba the most improved province in Canada by providing real answers to tough questions.

Over the past six months, I've had the pleasure of hosting, in my riding of Thompson, the Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade (Mr. Cullen), the

Minister of Justice (Mrs. Stefanson), the Minister of Families (Mr. Fielding), the Minister of Crown Services (Mr. Schuler), Minister of Indigenous and Municipal Relations (Ms. Clarke) and recently the Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen), in consultations with community members, business and union representatives, indigenous leaders and city councillors, so northerners could help our government understand issues affecting people in the North.

I've also travelled with a delegation including the Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade (Mr. Cullen) and the Minister of Families (Mr. Fielding) with representatives from the chamber of commerce, Travel Manitoba, the media, northern business leaders and investors, to the town of Churchill and held many consultations with local groups to discuss the effects of the layoff of workers at the Port of Churchill. Our government responded quickly and travelled to Churchill as soon as possible, long before the federal government or even the owners of the port made any effort to contact stakeholders in Churchill.

Although the opposition calls this a waste, we continue to be committed to Churchill and to bringing key players together to provide long-term, sustainable economic solutions for our northern communities.

Madam Speaker, by engaging Manitobans in budget consultations, our government is getting a real understanding for what Manitobans feel is important. Unlike the previous government's process of consultations with no budget, all preparation leaving Manitobans with the H, hemorrhaging money, our government budget consultation process will be comprehensive and actually produce a budget that focuses on long-term sustainable measures to fix our finances, improve services relied on by our citizens, spark the rebuilding of our economy and put our province on a responsible fiscal track benefiting all Manitobans.

Manitobans saw their democratic rights eroded under the previous government. Our government is committed to keeping our campaign commitment to restore those rights. Because of government—because our government stands with all Manitobans, we will continue to implement policies to restore democratic rights for all Manitobans.

Under the previous government, Manitobans saw their democratic rights eroded when the NDP took away their right to vote on major tax

increases, after the NDP increased taxes when they promised—in fact, ran on the promise of not increasing them. Once elected, the NDP did exactly what they promised they wouldn't do: they raised taxes.

*(15:00)

First, they expanded the taxed items that weren't taxed before and then they increased the tax. Manitobans found themselves paying 8 per cent tax on items that weren't previously taxed at all, like home insurance and other essentials.

Manitoba did not have a revenue problem; the NDP had a spending problem. And, instead of looking for savings within government, they increased their spending and taxed citizens with a PST hike to cover it.

Why did they tax citizens? For the same reason Jesse James robbed banks, because that's where the money is, and Manitobans felt robbed.

Our government has eliminated the vote tax subsidy, a hideous tax rejected in principle by our PC team, whereby taxpayers' money was given directly to the NDP party and others for running campaigns. I know I felt robbed when I learned about that tax.

Our government is in the process of dissolving the wasteful East Side Road Authority, where close to half a billion was spent constructing only 88 kilometres of roadway without local communities seeing the benefits they were promised, and our government will continue to look for savings in government and keep our promise to lower the PST back down to 7 per cent in our first term.

Over the past session our government brought in legislation to improve transparency and make disclosure of payouts to staff more timely. This legislation was necessary given the payouts by the previous government to NDP staffers to leave after supporting unsuccessful candidates in their leadership fiasco. Those payouts amounted to \$700 at the time—or \$707,000 in today's dollars, using the interest rate, an expression used by the opposition in the House to describe past legitimate payouts to government employees on this side of the House, adjusted for inflation, in an attempt to downplay and smokescreen the nature of the cover-up and magnitude of the NDP's undefendable payouts to former staff.

From those statements it's obvious that at least some NDP staff were familiar with the concept of

inflation and the increasing costs of living, yet their government was unwilling to increase the basic personal tax exemptions for Manitobans or index it for inflation the entire time they were in office.

Our government realizes this is a financial hit to Manitobans and has increased the basic personal tax exemption for Manitobans, indexed it for inflation, and effectively removed thousands of Manitobans from the tax roll for 2017. This helps all Manitobans.

Under the NDP, Manitoba saw their democratic rights further eroded when they took away the right to a secret ballot for union certification. We ran on restoring that democratic right to a secret ballot. We were mandated by the voters of the province of Manitoba to do it, and we did it.

During the election I was confronted by union representatives saying our party was trying to destroy unions. That's how the NDP was spinning it to try to gain support, which, of course, didn't resonate with voters because it's such a ridiculous notion. Furthermore, they knew it wouldn't resonate with voters, so they deliberately left out any mention of the word secret ballot, and just said the bill would destroy unions. No wonder the NDP allowed education scores to drop to last in the country. It gave them a better chance of selling their spin.

All they were doing was trying to manufacture outrage bait. The NDP tried to bait people into outrage. Of course, I realize it's good to fight for good social causes, but what the NDP does is bait people into outrage and they're encouraging the media to bait people into outrage.

What they are doing is using our social sensitivities to bait people, sell papers, and get social media traffic, so they can spread more outrage, so more people can get upset, so they can get more traffic. They're manipulating people. That is the most outrageous thing of all.

So this is what I want people to do: Next time you read or hear something that sounds like people are outraged, then ask yourself: Are they really outraged, or is it just outrage bait? If so, ignore it, delete it, and move on. I'm outraged just thinking about it.

The reality is the secret ballot protects workers from intimidation from their bosses and employers, from union activists, and from fellow workers. It completely deflates the ability for any side of the decision from imposing their will on others. It deflates the ability for any side to bully, intimidate,

or threaten workers to vote their way. It provides the opportunity for people to determine their own future without fear of retribution.

Just imagine a vote for unionization without a secret ballot. Workers would have to face bullying and intimidation from union activists, not unlike that orchestrated here in the House last session applauded and encouraged by the NDP, when Bill 7 was being introduced.

Union activists stood in this very gallery trying to intimidate this government from tabling Bill 7 and threatened their members by saying things like: This first bullet is for you, and watch your back. It was absolutely pathetic, and it is a classic example of why this legislation is necessary.

That behaviour took place in this gallery where our members are protected with security. There's a separation from the gallery, and we don't feel threatened enough to alter our vote.

But can you just imagine the influence it could have on that worker sitting in a union hall meeting being threatened to vote a certain way having no security, no distance and having to work the next day or for a long time in the future with these activists? That is a very real threat, and it could very much influence their vote.

Conversely, a company owner can try bullying workers with threats of firing, layoffs, mistreatment or otherwise to influence their workers away from voting against their wishes. This could affect their chances of promotion, opportunity for training and the way they are treated by their bosses.

Thanks to our government, Manitoba workers can now rest assured their democratic right to a secret ballot has now been restored.

The indigenous and Metis people of Manitoba have as much right to be here as the trees and the stars. Our government realizes indigenous people need more than a handout. They need a hand up from a government that works beside them; understands their past and present situations; and is willing to do all it can to reconcile the past; restore cultural and social pride and identity; and create opportunities for all Manitobans to learn, succeed and contribute.

Teamwork is how past generations survived on this land. Teamwork built a province in the North, and teamwork is required to build a better province.

At the mining and minerals conference last week, I met with many major—many junior and

senior mining executives to discuss investments in exploration, expansion and development of mineral resources, and how our government can reduce red tape. The atmosphere was very positive with an optimistic outlook for northern Manitoba, and many of the companies are actively planning to invest in exploration. I was pleased to hear many companies are involved in meaningful discussions with First Nations' stakeholders, approaching negotiations in an atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding and treat this process as a natural progression.

Our government is also in the process of preparing a fair and equitable duty-to-consult framework that is acceptable to all parties and will encourage future investment in Manitoba.

In a meeting this week with AMM members, our government is listening to concerns from community leaders and developing an understanding of the challenges they face.

I'm proud of our team and our record and, although our inherited challenges are significant, including multiple long-term contracts signed by the previous government just before the last election, we are up to the challenge. We know that decisions today can affect tens of thousands of people for generations, and we take that responsibility very seriously.

Our government has also committed to predictable, sustainable and transparent investments in tendering infrastructure projects, because we know they will drive economic recovery and

make Manitoba affordable and attractive to investors. Our government is promoting active, sustainable, economic diversification with a focus on tourism. As we continue to fix the finances, restore services and rebuild the economy, we will focus on helping people in need today while protecting our ability to provide services to future generations.

I'm proud of our record, proud of our vision and proud to continue to work with Manitobans to become the most improved province in Canada.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Leader of the Official Opposition): I move, seconded by the member from Elmwood, that today's debate be adjourned.

Madam Speaker: It has been moved by the interim Leader of the Official Opposition, and seconded by the honourable member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), that debate be adjourned.

Agreed? [Agreed]

Mr. Jim Maloway (Official Opposition House Leader): Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. I was wondering if it's the will of the House that we call it 5 o'clock.

Madam Speaker: Is it the will of the House to call it 5 o'clock? *[Agreed]*

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, November 22, 2016

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