

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

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

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-First Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALLUM, James	Fort Garry-Riverview	NDP
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	NDP
BINDLE, Kelly	Thompson	PC
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	Ind.
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	Rossmere	PC
MORLEY-LECOMTE, Janice	Seine River	PC
NESBITT, Greg	Riding Mountain	PC
PALLISTER, Brian, Hon.	Fort Whyte	PC
PEDERSEN, Blaine, Hon.	Midland	PC
PIWNIUK, Doyle	Arthur-Virden	PC
REYES, Jon	St. Norbert	PC
SARAN, Mohinder	The Maples	Ind.
SCHULER, Ron, Hon.	St. Paul	PC
SMITH, Andrew	Southdale	PC
SMITH, Bernadette	Point Douglas	NDP
SMOOK, Dennis	La Verendrye	PC
SQUIRES, Rochelle, Hon.	Riel	PC
STEFANSON, Heather, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
SWAN, Andrew	Minto	NDP
TEITSMA, James	Radisson	PC
WHARTON, Jeff, Hon.	Gimli	PC
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
WISHART, Ian, Hon.	Portage la Prairie	PC
WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC
YAKIMOSKI, Blair	Transcona	PC
<i>Vacant</i>	St. Boniface	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, March 20, 2018

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

Please be seated. Good afternoon, everybody.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

**Bill 20—The Employment Standards Code
Amendment Act (2)**

Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade): I move, seconded by the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Eichler), that Bill 20, The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act (2), be now read for a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Pedersen: Madam Speaker, I am pleased to introduce Bill 20, The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act (2). This proposal will amend the Employment Standards Code to—four things—align with recent changes to federal employment insurance legislation, adding a six-month extension to parental leave and improving leaves to care for ill family members. It will also replace child employment permits with an online readiness course and raise the minimum working age to 13. It will establish a new process to allow employers and employees to agree on a modified work schedule while reducing red tape, and it will restrict the filing of frivolous and vexatious complaints.

Madam Speaker, I'd like to welcome my guests in the gallery today: John Graham, from the Retail Council of Canada; Tom Farrell, president of Manitoba Association of Senior Centres; Dave Shambrock, executive director of Food & Beverage Manitoba; Jennifer Gurke, executive director, palliative care Manitoba; and Stephanie Schreiner with her daughter, Lily.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

**Bill 24—The Social Services Appeal Board
Amendment Act**

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Families): I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen), that Bill 24, The Social Services Appeal Board Amendment Act, be read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Fielding: These amendments are being made in response to a Court of Appeal's decision related to the jurisdiction of the Social Services Appeal Board. We believe that the court is the appropriate venue for consideration of constitutional challenges to legislation and the granting of Charter remedies.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

**Bill 25—The Non-Smokers Health Protection
and Vapour Products Amendment Act
(Prohibiting Cannabis Consumption
in Outdoor Public Places)**

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): Good afternoon, Madam Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Stefanson), that Bill 25, The Non-Smokers Health Protection and Vapour Products Amendment Act (Prohibiting Cannabis Consumption in Outdoor Public Places), be now read for a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Goertzen: I am pleased to introduce this bill to the Legislature this afternoon. It will prohibit in outdoor public places the smoking and vaping of cannabis, subject to exceptions that may be specified in regulation. It will be unlawful to smoke or vape cannabis on streets, sidewalks, parks, beaches, schools, playgrounds, patios or decks of restaurants or on the grounds of health-care facilities, to name a few.

The purpose of the bill is to protect the public and to prevent the normalization of this activity in outdoor public places when cannabis is legalized by the federal Liberal government. It also recognizes that cannabis is an intoxicant and treats it in a similar fashion to alcohol.

In combination with other legislation, cannabis smoking and vaping will be unlawful in indoor public places and workplaces and outdoor public places, including on federal jurisdiction. This approach adheres to our government's priority to ensure that safety of all Manitobans is the No. 1 concern when it comes to the legalization of marijuana by the federal Liberal government, Madam Speaker.

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

**Bill 26—The Impaired Driving Offences Act
(Various Acts Amended)**

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I move, seconded by the Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living (Mr. Goertzen), that Bill 26, The Impaired Driving Offences Act (Various Acts Amended); Loi modifiant diverses lois en matière de conduite avec facultés affaiblies, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mrs. Stefanson: This bill provides further tools for law enforcement and further sanctions to address drug-impaired driving. It will help protect the public health and safety of Manitobans as we address the consequences of the federal government's decision to legalize recreational cannabis.

Madam Speaker, this bill directly responds to the federal Bill C-46. It introduces new provincial sanctions for drivers who fail an approved drug screening test and for drivers who commit one of the new Criminal Code low drug, high drug and mixed drug and alcohol offences created by Bill C-46.

Beginner drivers may also be prohibited from operating or having care or control of a vehicle if an approved drug screening device detects the presence of a drug at or above the screening threshold.

Madam Speaker, this legislation is part of the third phase of our government's three-pronged approach to managing cannabis legalization. We will continue to put the health and public safety of Manitobans first.

And I just want to welcome all of our stakeholders to the gallery today and thank them for their input in these bills.

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

**Bill 27—The Fiscal Responsibility and
Taxpayer Protection Amendment Act**

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living, that Bill 27, The Fiscal Responsibility and Taxpayer Protection Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la responsabilité financière et la protection des contribuables, be now read a first time.

* (13:40)

Motion presented.

Mr. Friesen: Madam Speaker, our government inherited an almost \$900-million deficit. It was clear to all Manitobans that more accountability was necessary on the part of government to ensure that government reduces deficits and then stays out of deficit once that goal is achieved.

These amendments strengthen incentives to reduce the deficit by more than the current \$100-million reduction requirement in the event of a previous year's one-time significant reduction. As part of these amendments, a detailed annual accounting of each minister's salary reductions will now be required. As well, the bill contains amendments to more clearly define the baseline deficit amount.

Bill-Budget 2018 shows that we're making real progress on delivering on our promise to fix the finances. This requires accountability and this balanced budget legislation amendment is an important part of our commitment to accountability. Where the NDP amended legislation for balanced budgets to weaken it, we are amending this legislation to strengthen it.

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

Committee reports? Tabling of reports?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Madam Speaker: The honourable Minister for Sustainable Development (Ms. Squires), and I would indicate that the required 90 minutes notice prior to

routine proceedings was provided in accordance with our rule 26(2).

Would the honourable minister please proceed with her statement.

Journée international de la Francophonie

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister responsible for Francophone Affairs): Merci beaucoup, Madame la Présidente.

Madame la Présidente, j'ai le plaisir de prendre la parole aujourd'hui pour souligner la Journée internationale de la Francophonie au Manitoba.

Aujourd'hui, nous nous joignons à plus de deux cent cinquante millions de francophones sur tous les continents qui célèbrent leur langue et font partager leur culture.

Je suis encore plus heureux de célébrer la Journée internationale de la Francophonie au Manitoba cette année car nous fêtons aussi le bicentenaire de l'arrivée de l'abbé Joseph-Norbert Provencher dans la Colonie de la Rivière-Rouge.

Son arrivée a signalé 'l'établissement' de la première mission catholique de l'Ouest canadien, ainsi que le début de l'éducation en français au Manitoba.

Deux cents ans plus tard, notre système francophone comprend non seulement vingt-quatre écoles, mais aussi une université qui propose toutes un enseignement de qualité en français.

Madame la Présidente, le gouvernement du Manitoba continue à appuyer la vitalité de la communauté francophone du Manitoba, par exemple à travers de la Loi sur l'appui à l'épanouissement de la francophonie manitobaine.

En ma qualité de ministre responsable des Affaires francophones, je suis fière de rendre hommage à la communauté francophone du Manitoba et de célébrer ses contributions à la diversité économique et culturelle de notre province.

Vive la francophonie!

Translation

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I have the pleasure of rising today to acknowledge International Francophonie Day in Manitoba.

Today, we join more than 250 million francophones on every continent who are celebrating their language and sharing their culture.

I am all the more pleased to be celebrating International Francophonie Day in Manitoba this year as we are also marking the bicentenary of the arrival of Reverend Joseph-Norbert Provencher in the Red River Colony.

His coming marked the establishment of the first Catholic mission in western Canada, as well as the start of French language education in Manitoba.

Two hundred years later, not only does our francophone system have 24 schools, but it also includes a university that offers quality education in French to all.

Madam Speaker, the government of Manitoba continues to support the vitality of the francophone community in Manitoba, through the Francophone Community Enhancement and Support Act, for example.

As Minister responsible for Francophone Affairs, I am proud to pay tribute to the francophone community of Manitoba and to celebrate its contributions to the cultural and economic diversity of our province.

Long live the Francophonie!

English

And I would like to welcome all the representatives from the francophone community that are here today.

Thank you. Merci beaucoup.

Mr. Wab Kinew (Fort Rouge): Merci, Madame la Présidente. Je suis fier de pouvoir considérer le Manitoba mon chez-moi.

En cette journée internationale consacrée à la reconnaissance et à la célébration de la langue, de la culture et du patrimoine françaises, je suis extrêmement reconnaissant de la diversité culturelle qui existe dans notre communauté francophone ici au Manitoba. Elle est plus inclusive et diversifiée que jamais auparavant, en partie grâce aux nouveaux arrivants qui apportent dans nos communautés leur langue française et leurs expressions culturelles.

Depuis la fondation du Manitoba, le fait français fait partie intégrale du patrimoine et de l'histoire de notre province, assujetti, à la fois, à des défis et à des triomphes dans le cadre des droits

linguistiques. La communauté a dû se battre pour ses droits, et la lutte continue à ce jour. Il est donc important de réfléchir au développement de la communauté et de la langue française, et à la façon dont elle peut continuer de prospérer dans notre province, dans notre pays et dans le monde.

En 2018, des efforts sont encore nécessaires pour offrir des services en français aux Manitobains. Pourtant, nous voyons que l'offre d'espaces pour les écoles d'immersion française ne peut tout simplement pas satisfaire la demande sous ce gouvernement.

La communauté francophone a également plus de voix en ce qui concerne les services d'éducation en française depuis l'élimination du poste de sous-ministre adjoint du Bureau de l'éducation française par le gouvernement Pallister.

Madame la Présidente, nous reconnaissons aujourd'hui le rôle important que la langue française ait joué dans le façonnement de l'histoire et de l'identité et du développement de notre province, et les efforts qui sont encore nécessaires pour la mettre en valeur.

Bonne Journée internationale de la Francophonie.

Translation

Thank you, Madam Speaker, I am proud to be able to consider Manitoba my home.

On this international day devoted to recognizing and celebrating the French language, culture and heritage, I am very grateful for the cultural diversity that exists in our francophone community here in Manitoba. It is more inclusive and diversified than ever, thanks in part to the newcomers who are bringing their French language and cultural expressions.

Ever since Manitoba was founded, the French fact has been an integral part of the heritage and history of our province, subject to both challenges and triumphs where language rights are concerned. The community has had to fight for its rights, and the struggle continues. It is therefore important to reflect on the development of the French community and language, and how it can continue to prosper in our province, our country, and the world.

In 2018, efforts to provide French language services to Manitobans are still required. However, we see that the spaces provided for French immersion

schools under this government simply cannot meet the demand.

The francophone community also no longer has a voice with regard to French education services since the assistant deputy minister position in the Bureau de l'éducation française was eliminated by the Pallister government.

Madam Speaker, today we recognize the important role that the French language has played in shaping the history, identity and development of our province, and the efforts that are still necessary to make the most of it.

Happy International Francophonie Day.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madame la Présidente, je voudrais parler au—en réponse du ministre.

Translation

Madam Speaker, I would like to speak to—respond to the minister.

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

Mr. Gerrard: Madame la Présidente, je parle aujourd'hui de la Journée internationale de la Francophonie. C'est une occasion de mention les grandes contributions de la France, de la langue française et des régions avec les peuples qui parlent française dans notre monde.

Ici, au Manitoba, nous avons beaucoup qui parlent française et nous avons une culture francophone vibrante qui existe et contribué jour à jour à notre province. Le nombre des enfants qui sont 'régistrés' dans notre programme d'études en française augmente année par année. Malheureusement, notre gouvernement Pallister a décidé de couper des fonds pour le Secrétariat des services en langue français, et de couper sévèrement le Bureau de l'éducation française. Le gouvernement a aussi éliminé une sous-ministre adjointe qui parle française et a laissé une personne en haut de ce section de gouvernement qui ne parle ni écrit la langue française.

Il y a une façon mieux de faire gouvernement au Manitoba, qui respecte mieux la communauté francophone et la culture francophone dans notre province.

Bienvenue à toutes les membres de la communauté qui sont ici, et heureusement pour tout pour le Journée internationale de la Francophonie.

Translation

Madam Speaker, today I am talking about International Francophonie Day. It is an opportunity to mention the major contributions of France, the French language and the regions in the world with French-speaking peoples.

Here in Manitoba, we have a lot of people who speak French and we have a dynamic francophone culture that exists and contributes to our province day in and day out. The number of children enrolled in our French learning programs is increasing year after year. Unfortunately, the Pallister government has decided to cut funds for the Francophone Affairs Secretariat and to severely cut the Bureau de l'éducation française. The government also did away with a French-speaking assistant deputy minister and left a person at the senior level in this part of government who does not speak or write French.

There is a better way to govern in Manitoba that better respects the francophone community and culture in our province.

Welcome to all the members of the community who are here, and happily for all, for International Francophonie Day.

Madam Speaker: The Minister of Agriculture, on a ministerial statement, and I would indicate that the required 90 minutes notice prior to routine proceedings was provided in accordance with our rule 26(2).

Would the honourable minister please proceed with his statement.

Agriculture Awareness Day

Hon. Ralph Eichler (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, agriculture in Manitoba isn't just our business, it's our passion, our way of life. Today, Manitoba is celebrating its 13th annual Agriculture Awareness Day.

Formalized in The Farm and Food Awareness Act, the third Tuesday of March is set aside each year to highlight and celebrate the significant role that agriculture plays in Manitoba's economy.

Our province can be very proud of the fact that for generations our producers been supplying quality, safe products that are shared across Manitoba, Canada and around the world. In fact, this year our province broke the record for the highest farm cash receipts, over \$6.2 billion.

Madam Speaker, this morning I had the opportunity to join students from across Pembina Trails School Division in celebration of Ag Awareness Day, in the constituency of the member of Fort Richmond. The day's facilities included a made-in-Manitoba breakfast that involved producers sharing their products from many different ag sectors, in addition to hosting a career panel in co-ordination with this year's theme, Careers in Ag. While I was fortunate to address many of the student's questions, I had the pleasure of promoting ag-focused careers in areas such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

Madam Speaker, I would like to thank all Manitobans who have made agriculture a way of life that is beloved and celebrated. I am proud to acknowledge that our government will always recognize the contributions our 'farmlies' have made to the health and prosperity of Manitoba.

* (13:50)

Joining me in the gallery today is James Battershill from Keystone Ag Producers. I ask the House to join me in commending their contributions, as well as all of Manitoba's farm families, on Agriculture Awareness Day.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview): Manitoba is known for its rich agricultural heritage. For generations Manitoba families have produced some of the highest quality crops for people in our province, Canada and the world to enjoy.

Agricultural awareness day ensures that our province's heritage and our citizens' contributions are both recognized and celebrated. Today helps to bring a greater awareness to the tireless efforts of our farm families and Manitoba producers.

The diversity and breadth of the industry is truly amazing. Not only do the producer and employees benefit from our rich agricultural land, but all Manitobans do every time we go into a grocery store, sit down at our kitchen table or visit a local restaurant.

Agriculture is a way of life for many in our province. But the 'livehood' of hard-working Manitobans—Manitobans faces an uncertain future. From concerns over trade to the railway backlog that is keeping Manitoba grain from moving to market, there are many storm clouds looming over our producers. This hardship could have been lessened

if the current government had not supported the termination of the Canadian Wheat Board. Not only that, but grain shipments through the Port of Churchill have ceased, while the Pallister government continues to pass the buck, as these are only federal issues. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Allum: Today is about recognizing and celebrating agriculture in our province. But actions speak louder than words, Madam Speaker, and this government is failing to give the support the agricultural community truly needs. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, I ask leave to speak to the minister's statement.

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

Mr. Gerrard: Madam Speaker, agriculture in Manitoba is alive, doing well and is the cornerstone of our provincial economy. Agriculture is the base for our food processing industry and the base for nutrition in our province. Its impact on the economy and on the health of Manitobans is large.

It always bothers me when the agriculture sector is not given its full credit. The government's climate change plan credits the agriculture sector with producing 30 per cent of our greenhouse gases. But because the government report doesn't include fossil fuels used, agriculture's share is closer to 40 per cent.

I want to praise Sean Goertzen and the Keystone Agricultural Producers for a well-written report and proposals to reduce greenhouse gas production by agriculture in Manitoba. It's to be hoped that the government will realize its error in not including agriculture in its own plan and will take up the solutions proposed by KAP as well as looking at other options.

Our agricultural industry also needs attention and investment by government to improve water management and to decrease the consequences of either high levels of precipitation or droughts.

I welcome the—those representing the many organizations in our agricultural sector who are here today for agricultural awareness week and I look forward to working with all of you in the days and months and years ahead.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Gladstone Curling Club

Hon. Eileen Clarke (Minister of Indigenous and Northern Relations): Madam Speaker, it gives me great pleasure today to recognize the Gladstone Curling Club. This weekend, the club will host a bonspiel with the celebration of its 125th anniversary. This celebration is a sold-out event with 64 teams entered, a banquet and a massive social evening being planned.

The very first bonspiel in Gladstone was March nineteen eighty—1894 with only nine rinks and 36 curling club members. The club has seen many changes over the years, including several buildings and a dynamic membership. The present-day curling rink officially opened January 16, 1971, and a highlight at that time was Don Duguid's world- and Brier-championship rink coming to play the local rink from zone 6 champions: Jim Younger, Jim McBride, Malcolm Graham and Duncan Broadfoot. This was a huge honour for a rural club.

In 1976, Gladstone resident Jamie Adamson served as the president of the Manitoba Curling Association, and in 1990, resident Jim Younger was elected and served as president of the MCA also. This was a very distinguished honour for Mr. Younger and the local club, as no other rural rink has had more than one MCA president 'electsted' from its midst. Both the club and the community take great pride in this rare accomplishment.

Over the many years the club has had representation in the Manitoba men's, ladies' and mixed provincial playdowns, provincial and Canadian high school championships and many more. The club remains an active and vital part of Gladstone's community life.

I'd like to thank the board members, the many volunteers and organizers and who have assisted in the preparation for the celebration, and to the club membership who continue to encourage the importance of maintaining a sense of community through the love of curling.

I'd like to also acknowledge our Premier, Brian Pallister, for this is where he had his eight-ender—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Order, please.

I would just remind all honourable members that when referring to a member of the House, that they be referred to by their title as minister, premier or by their constituency name.

Ms. Clarke: I would to acknowledge our Premier (Mr. Pallister) for his eight-ender in the Gladstone Curling rink.

I'd also like to ask that all members of the House join me in congratulating the Gladstone Curling Club on their 125th anniversary.

Madam Speaker: The honourable Minister of Indigenous and Northern Relations.

Ms. Clarke: Madam Speaker, I'd ask that—leave to have the members in the gallery names recorded in Hansard.

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

Gladstone Curling Club Members: Sylvia Hayward, Nicole Lehmann, Kristyn MacDonald, Jeff Mowat, Tom Otto, Verna Otto, Allistair Scott, Ross Stewart, Geoff Trimble

Kildonan-East Collegiate Hockey Team

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): Madam Speaker, determination and teamwork were very apparent with the exceptional young women playing for the Kildonan-East Collegiate hockey team this year. Their dynamic team had many grade 9s, previous ringette players and one person who had never even been on skates before. But they overcame these obstacles and became a true team.

After working incredibly hard and finishing fourth in their regular season, they knew it was going to require a lot of hard work to take the championship title, but they didn't fall short.

Heading into playoffs they were—they defeated the first-ranked West Kildonan Wolverines to move on to the finals. There, the Reivers faced off against the third-ranked Glenlawn Lions in the division championship series.

The determination of both teams was apparent throughout. With the Reivers winning game one of a—with a close 3-2 win, they knew they had to give it their all in the next game.

In game 2 both teams played to win. The score was neck and neck with six seconds left in the second period when the Reivers broke away and scored the final goal of the period, giving them a one-goal lead.

The Lions fought hard to make a comeback, but fell short, ending with a final score of 5-4 for the

Reivers. The Kildonan-East Collegiate Reivers were division 3 champions.

Behind the team's success was five coaching staff who volunteered their time, helping them to grow and to unite. Without dedicated individuals like these, high school sports would not be possible.

The Reivers women's hockey only began last year when a group of determined grade 11s fought to have a team. Thanks to these young women, many students will now be able to benefit for years to come.

I'd like to congratulate the entire Reivers team and the coaching staff for the division championship. Well done.

Madam Speaker, I'd like to ask leave to have the names of the team recorded in Hansard.

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

Kildonan-East Collegiate Reivers 2017-2018 women's hockey team: Hannah Alexander, grade 10; Julianna Baptiste, grade 9; Brittany Becker, grade 11; Hillary Bozlovitch, grade 10; Shaelynn Cooke, grade 12; Emma Ducharme, grade 11; Makenna Ducharme, grade 12; Emily Fontaine, grade 9; Naomi Fontaine, grade 11; Brooke Goulet, grade 12; Boppy Kavanagh, grade 9; Macy Neish, grade 9; Sam Robert; Madison Rolland, grade 9; Kayleen Tetreault, grade 12; Raisa Willis, grade 12; Meghan Young, grade 12

Kildonan-East Collegiate staff: Jamie Giasson, Darlene Martineau, Vanessa Romans, Taylor Wilgosh

St. James 55+ Centre

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Families): I'd like to recognize one of the most important and influential organizations in St. James area, and that organization is the St. James 55-plus.

The St. James area is home to some of the highest amount of seniors across the province, and the St. James 55+ Centre is an excellent resource for many of the seniors.

The St. James 55+ Centre is independently operated, charitable, non-profit organization that provides or offers a variety of different programs and services. The programs range from things like fitness and sports programming, support groups, educational workshops, organized outings and a 'myramid' of a

whole bunch of different services and supports that are out there.

* (14:00)

The St. James 55+ Centre plays an important role for seniors in the St. James area for quite some time, has steadily grown their membership and—over the last number of years. Just in the last year alone, we celebrated the 25th anniversary over this past year with over 850 members, Madam Speaker.

I want to thank the people who have volunteered and are big part of this 55-plus centre. I also do want to recognize a number of people, including Connie Newman, who's been a vocal supporter of all things seniors in St. James for many years. I know the member from St. James very much, along with myself, would like to congratulate her.

I'd also like to welcome and recognize Gerald Knutson, president of the board, who is here with us today in the gallery. I want to thank you for your leadership, Gerald. I want to thank you for everything that the St. James 55+ Centre does for seniors in St. James.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Family Enhancement Program Community Visit

Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook): I was given permission to share this story. I hope it touches your heart as it did mine.

Through the Family Enhancement Program, a group of workers were able to co-ordinate a home community visit along with a gathering event for some children in care that are fostered here down south.

The kids were excited to be travelling, but the worker could sense that they were also very anxious.

One teenager in particular seemed a little afraid. To draw her out, a worker kept trying to engage her in conversation. She asked the teen, where are you from? The teen responded, I'm from—and named a small town close to the Manitoba-US border. The conversation kept on and soon the teen was talking and laughing along with the rest of the kids.

It took all day to travel, but they finally reached their destination. Many people came to partake in welcoming the tiny visitors to their community. That despondent teen was elated to find out that she had relatives that came to the event in search of her. That worker was so happy to see that her family would always seek her out and that the teen sat with them

throughout the events as the days went on. That teen was hearing all kinds of funny stories about her family's lives. The worker loved hearing her laugh.

All too soon, they had to leave that remote First Nation, one of Manitoba's most northern and remote First Nations. However, connections were made, family ties were rekindled and strengthened and, most importantly, these kids knew they were still loved by their birth families.

The worker asked that teen again, where are you from? The teen, proudly beaming, stated, I'm from—and named that First Nation.

Miigwech, Madam Speaker.

Julia Todd

Mr. Andrew Micklefield (Rossmere): Two years ago, Rossmere resident Julia Todd wanted to help newcomers from all around the world settle in North Kildonan. A three-time immigrant herself, Julia knows first-hand the difference friendly locals can make to those finding their way in a new culture.

Along with eight friends from her church, Julia started a conversational English class in January 2017 with just 11 students. Now, 15 months later, 25 volunteers serve over 40 students from 16 countries.

Here's how one student described her experience: My family and I arrived to Canada from Ukraine almost five years ago. The conversational English classes at Gateway Church helped me improve my English. After the class about government and politics, I successfully passed my citizenship exam. After the class about employment, I found a new job. At these classes, I've found new friends. The volunteers donate their time and skills to help us. Their help and support has made me a stronger person and I will forever be grateful.

But in blessing others, the volunteers are enriched, too. One volunteer writes: The EAL program offers a place to belong and the beginnings of community. Hope is coming. Most newcomers go through set stages of culture shock and adjustment and many lose hope. I believe we are bringing hope through improved language and a growing belief that Canada could actually feel like home someday. The whole atmosphere is one of genuine friendliness and welcome.

Madam Speaker, volunteers and students from this group are visiting with us today and I invite all members to join me in welcoming them.

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 St. Gerard School 17 grade 4 students under the direction of Heather Pollock, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe).

And also seated in the public gallery from HBNI-ITV out of Fairholme School, 21 grade 9 students under the direction of Evelyn Maendel, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Education and Training (Mr. Wishart).

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

ORAL QUESTIONS

Nova Scotia Legal Challenge Manitoba Government Involvement

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Madam Speaker, the Premier is taking a page from the Nova Scotia government's playbook, and the people of Manitoba are paying the price.

You know, Nova Scotia had an aggressive plan to close emergency rooms. Now the Pallister government is closing ERs across Winnipeg and rural Manitoba.

Nova Scotia hired a high-priced consultant who recommended closing mental health beds and cutting services. Guess who the Pallister government decided to hire: the very same person.

Nova Scotia attacked teachers, replacing educators with accountants and passed an—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: —unconstitutional law. The Pallister government heard that and said, that's a terrible idea; how soon can we do it here?

The services Manitoba families rely on—health and education—are paying the price as a result of this Premier's ideology.

When will the Premier stop his plans to cut the health care of Manitoba families?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Well, Madam Speaker, interestingly, the member is defending the

indefensible again here in the House. Under the NDP government we had the longest wait times in emergency rooms in Canada. He's suggesting we should make them longer. We're going to make them shorter.

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

Mr. Kinew: For reasons known only to this Premier, he's ordered his Justice Department to intervene in another province's legal reference case.

Now, this is not a case before the Supreme Court of Canada. It is at the Nova Scotia Court of Appeal. The Premier's interfering in another province's affairs. I can't imagine how he would feel if a minister or a premier from another province like Quebec or somewhere else came here to interfere in Manitoba's cases. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: Why is the Premier sending Manitoba tax dollars to east coast lawyers and accountants? Why? The Premier's running to another province to argue in court that it's okay to break promises to retirees. Apparently that's what the Premier thinks is value for money.

Will the Premier tell this House how much money he has sent to the east coast in his attempt to fight this legal battle?

Mr. Pallister: Well, one thing you learn pretty early in public life, Madam Speaker, is to be a little more humble than the member demonstrated with that preamble. He should talk to the fellow on his left about intervening.

The previous government intervened in numerous cases around the province and around the country, I should say, Madam Speaker. But I would tell the member to just go no further back than the NDP's intervention and court case where they paid \$100,000-plus to lawyers so that Manitobans wouldn't have the right to vote in a referendum on a PST that they promised they wouldn't hike, which they hiked.

Madam Speaker, that's a waste of money. That's a waste of money, and that's what the member's talking about.

What we're talking about here in terms of consultation costs, in terms of intervention costs, is about \$3,500. That's what the member's on about today, but he's ignoring \$300 million that his party

took away from Manitobans with a PST hike nobody wanted and that they promised they wouldn't bring in.

*(14:10)

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

Rail Line in Churchill Transportation Agency Filing

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Thank the Premier for confirming that he is, in fact, spending money on fighting a court case in the east coast of Canada. You know, he ordered his Department of Justice to intervene in November 2017 in this Nova Scotia case.

I'd remind everyone in the House that the town of Churchill has been without a rail line since May 2017. Now, we started a case before the Canadian Transportation Agency in August of 2017. That means that instead of supporting the people of Churchill in their fight to hold OmniTRAX accountable, the Premier has decided instead to spend money fighting a court case in Nova Scotia. He can't lawyer up to help the people of Churchill, but he will lawyer up to go fight a battle that has to do with a Nova Scotia law, with a Nova Scotia government fighting Nova Scotia teachers.

Will the Premier stop wasting his money on pointless legal challenges and instead join our fight against OmniTRAX at the Canadian Transportation Agency?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Landmark day, Madam Speaker, for this new government when the best they can come up with is a \$3,500 question.

Now, the member just sent out a mailer all over the place, paid for by taxpayers, cost multiples of that, doesn't have any reference to the NDP on it, doesn't have any reference to his past on it, doesn't have any reference to his future on it. All it is is pretty pictures. But the people of Manitoba paid for that. He doesn't have a problem with that. He shouldn't have a problem with us standing up for the people of Churchill while he sits there quietly and does nothing.

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

Manitoba's Carbon Plan Electric Transit Recommendations

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): You know, if he spent half the time standing up for the people of Churchill as he did examining my literature, we might be getting somewhere in this province.

It's getting harder and harder to believe the Premier and his ministers. We know that one day the Minister of Infrastructure (Mr. Schuler) tells us they're going to spend \$500 million, and the next day, oh, no, I think it was closer to \$350 million. Then the Minister of Sustainable Development (Ms. Squires) gets up and says that she's eagerly awaiting the release of a report, which we now know that they've had in hand since July 2016, nearly two years.

Now, the Premier counted the impact of electric buses in his carbon plan. I'll table those pages to remind him. But he's hid the report from Manitobans that would actually call on them to act and spend money from this year's carbon tax to get some of those electric buses on the road.

When will the Premier give real support for transit for the people of Manitoba?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): I assure the member it didn't take much time to go through his literature, because it was all pretty pictures. There wasn't much else in it.

We've spend a lot of time focusing on the people in northern Manitoba, focusing on their future, focusing on saving jobs in The Pas, focusing on getting the federal government involved in their constitutional areas of responsibility so we could protect the people of Churchill, focusing on developing job opportunities in the North, focusing on developing mineral protocols so that exploration could resume in the North, which ceased under the previous government, and its inaction was evident, Madam Speaker.

Our action is most evident to those people.

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

Mr. Kinew: Question was about transit. Not sure why the Premier is rattled.

We know that the Premier's carbon plan is making life less affordable for the people of Manitoba. Under his watch, costs are going up,

hydro rates are going up, MPI rates are going up, transit is more expensive. Manitobans will now have to pay more to fill up their cars and heat their—
[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: —homes because of this Premier.

But is there any money to help Manitobans adopt a greener lifestyle? No, not in this budget. Nor are there any details on how we are supposed to electrify the transit fleets across this province. We know that the Premier has had expert advice in his hands for going on two years now, urging them to act on electrifying buses across the province.

So why isn't there any action in this year's budget? Is it the Premier can't be bothered to read the report, or is that he's simply doesn't believe that transit has an important role to play in a green tomorrow?

Mr. Pallister: The member believes—honestly believes—if he speaks fast enough and includes enough rhetoric in his preamble, that everyone won't notice the fact that the NDP never had a plan, after 17 years, for protecting our environment. He's hoping we can gloss over that. He leaves it out in his brochures, doesn't reference the NDP, runs away from their record, runs towards what, no one knows, Madam Speaker. He criticizes our green plan yet has none of his own.

Our plan was designed by Manitobans, and it is Manitobans he criticizes when he criticizes a plan that is better for our environment and better for our economy.

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

Mr. Kinew: So, again, the Premier has had a report in his hands calling for action on electric busses since June of 2016. He announced his carbon plan in October of 2017, re-announced the very same plan a few weeks ago. It's now nearly April of 2018, and there's still no details about how the Premier will help Manitobans tackle the challenge of climate change.

Now, it's been said that Manitobans can't count on next year's harvest. You know, they can't count on the government's broken promises. Madam Speaker, they look for grain in the bin. This year, the Premier's taking more grain from their bins.

Gas taxes are going up, and Manitobans aren't seeing anything from this Premier. Life is getting—
[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: —less affordable.

Is he not acting because he doesn't believe in investing in a transition to green energy, or does he simply refuse to act because he wants to dump all of the carbon taxes into general revenue?

Mr. Pallister: Finally, Madam Speaker, after months as leader, I get an ag question. It's about time. I appreciate it.

Speaking of reports, Madam Speaker, there was a report commissioned by the previous government in respect of the hog industry. It was commissioned and tabled in April of 2014, but it never saw the light of day because the NDP covered it up. Why did they cover it up? Because, after shutting down the hog industry—for no good reason—in Manitoba, the report confirmed that they had wrongly and unfairly singled out the hog industry for additional restrictions, that—the report recommended expansion of the industry, and the government didn't want that, of course, because it was concerned about singling out an industry for perceptual reasons. Now, they covered up that report. It cost families their businesses, it cost the economy of our province tremendously and it gave zero benefits to our environment.

That's not how we approach environmental sustainability in this province, Madam Speaker. We're going to be investing in public transit; we're going to be investing electrification of buses. It's on page 15 of our report, if the member would choose to read it rather than just wasting his time with empty rhetoric in this Chamber.

Workplace Safety and Health Workplace Death Condolence

Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas): On behalf of the House, I'd like to extend condolences to the family of Todd Maytwayashing, who passed away after a workplace accident at a Manitoba Hydro site in Gillam last month.

Todd lived in Lake Manitoba First Nation and was a vibrant, caring part of his community. His sudden passing has shocked and devastated his family, co-workers and friends.

Madam Speaker, Manitobans deserve to come home from their shift every time. We must ensure

workplaces are protected so this 'tragedy' does not happen again.

Will the minister resolve to increase safety measures for all workers?

Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade): Madam Speaker, the death of any worker at any worksite across Manitoba is one that we never want to see, and unfortunately this one did happen. There has been an investigation into it. Workplace Safety and Health continues to investigate in this, and SAFE Work Manitoba continues to train—work with all our employers across the country—and—across the province and all employees to make sure that all workplaces are safe places to work.

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

Department Staff Reduction

Ms. Lathlin: This government has made an \$800,000 cut to his workplace health and safety department staff. These are civil servants dedicated to reviewing and renewing and—workplace health and safety policies that keep Manitobans safe. We need investments in these areas, not cuts.

Will the minister reverse his cut?

*(14:20)

Mr. Pedersen: Again, Madam Speaker, I thank the member for the question, and it does raise the issue of—SAFE Work Manitoba has targeted investigations and Workplace Safety and Health have targeted investigations to make sure that we work with employers where there is a—possible unsafe working conditions rather than blanketing the entire industry with people we're making sure that all workplaces are safe every day.

We—the—it's the utmost 'urgency' to have all workers return home every night safe and sound.

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

Request to Reinstate Advisory Council

Ms. Lathlin: Last session this government introduced a bill to dissolve the advisory council on workplace health and safety, and then announced more cuts in their budget.

Workers need more protections. Health and safety regulations are not red tape. They keep

workers alive so they can go home at night to their families. One death on the job is too many.

Will this minister reinstate the council and restore funding so that workers are protected?

Mr. Pedersen: The five-year review of the Workplace Safety and Health continues. The report is in the department. It's being reviewed right now. That will continue on a five-year basis, and any reports that are coming through in the interim go to that committee to be reviewed.

We will continue to make safety the utmost importance for all workers and for all employers across all of Manitoba.

Legal Aid Manitoba Funding and Salaries

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): Under this Justice Minister Manitoba is ranked the worst legal system in Canada amongst provinces for the second year in a row.

Our courts are struggling to—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Fontaine: —keep up with the second highest violent crime rate, the Remand Centre is bursting at the seams and, as an 'opioid' and meth crisis spirals out of control, the criminal justice system feels the pressure. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Fontaine: Yet, funding for Legal Aid services has remained flat, and salaries for Legal Aid lawyers have not moved an inch, Madam Speaker.

Why has the minister failed to fully support Legal Aid?

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I welcome any questions from members opposite when it comes to our criminal justice system and on the reform that we are—the modernization of the system that we're embarking on.

It's something, certainly—we had the highest violent crime rates back when they were in government, Madam Speaker. Members opposite chose to do nothing. We have developed a modernization strategy that we think will be very beneficial towards the safety of all Manitobans.

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

Ms. Fontaine: We know that Legal Aid is a critical component in Manitoba's legal system. Government has a responsibility to ensure people have their constitutional right to counsel, regardless of how much money that they have.

Our Legal Aid lawyers are the second lowest paid in the country. They are even paid 8 per cent less than the minister's Crown attorneys doing the same job. Manitoba's criminal defence association have had enough and are organizing to hold a vote to strike if the minister does not immediately increase the funding.

What is the minister going to do with this?

Mrs. Stefanson: Members opposite had 17 years to do something in this area, and they chose not to, Madam Speaker. Where they failed, we will deliver.

But I will say, Madam Speaker—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Stefanson: —that our criminal justice modernization strategy is committed to building safer communities and providing more timely access to justice for all Manitobans.

Where they failed, Madam Speaker, we will deliver.

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

Ms. Fontaine: The federal government has given Manitoba \$2 million to boost Legal Aid services this year. Yet, Legal Aid funding has not increased.

This government has a habit of taking dedicated funding and making it disappear. That money was supposed to help people waiting in remand access the legal services that they are entitled to—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Fontaine: Legal Aid lawyers are threatening to strike if the minister does not increase the funding.

Did the minister put the \$2 million into general revenue and ignore Legal Aid?

Mrs. Stefanson: Legal Aid is a very important part of our justice system, and we respect the work that they do.

Madam Speaker, it's very important to understand that members opposite, when they had the chance for 17 years when they were in government, they did nothing. Crime rates were on the rise, it

was—violent crime rates were on the rise under the member for Minto when he was the minister of Justice and Attorney General—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Stefanson: Madam Speaker, we took a different approach to things. We have introduced our criminal justice system modernization strategy with a four-point plan that we believe will deliver safer communities and more timely access to justice for all Manitobans.

Health-Care Services Federal Funding Available

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): Yesterday, in Interim Supply, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen) confirmed that in the upcoming fiscal year Manitoba will be getting close to an additional \$40 million in new money under the health-care accord. We know that's targeted funding for mental health and addictions services, home and community care, yet the budget shows an increase of about a million dollars for home-care services and nothing else for any of these priorities.

The Minister of Health has now had a week to figure out where the money's gone: Can he today tell the House and Manitobans, where's the rest of the \$40 million?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): Madam Speaker, it's great to finally get a Health question in the House.

We saw the unusual spectacle last Friday of the opposition—the combined opposition, the NDP and the Liberals—filibuster their own question period. Not four days after the Minister of Finance had introduced his remarkable budget, the opposition decided to filibuster their own questions.

Unprecedented, Madam Speaker, that after four days they'd completely run out of questions. That speaks volumes about how much they support this budget.

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

Mr. Swan: Well, I don't think Manitobans are going to be satisfied with this answer from a minister who appears to have misplaced \$40 million.

We looked in the budget, page 78—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Swan: –zero increase for the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba, in spite of an opioid epidemic and a meth epidemic that's affecting Manitoba; zero increase for home-care services, aside from \$1 million; and zero increase for community and mental health services.

The federal government has given \$40 million over 10 years for these priorities, yet we can find \$1 million in this year's budget.

Why has the minister misled the people of Manitoba?

Mr. Goertzen: Madam Speaker, the member opposite talks about home care. When he had the opportunity to support our enhanced home-care program, he didn't. He went out publicly and he said he didn't support the enhanced home-care program.

Why didn't he support it? Did he not support it because it wouldn't help patients? Well, no, it clearly helped patients. Did he not support it because it would reduce the amount of time people were waiting to get out of hospitals? Well, no, because it's proven to do that. Oh, that's right. He didn't support it simply because there weren't unionized workers providing the service. That's his priority.

We stand up for patients, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Swan: Well, Madam Speaker, we know this government's going to receive an additional \$350 million from the federal government this year. That includes \$40 million in new money from the federal government for addictions, mental health, home care and community care. But the minister didn't include the money in his budget. He's not hiding \$1 million or \$5 million or \$10 million, he's hiding \$40 million in services that Manitobans in every part of this province are counting on.

Will this minister apologize for misleading Manitobans last summer when he tried to paint himself as a hero, when it turns out, Madam Speaker, he's really a zero?

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

*(14:30)

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

May I caution members on the use of language, which seems to be getting more and more provocative as we go along.

It is true that, in this House, we are used to strong language. But at times we get carried away, one side saying something about the other side and the other side retaliating.

When language use transgresses our parliamentary rules, I will be obliged to intervene, and I would urge the honourable member, who just put forward a—what I feel is an unparliamentary comment, to be very cautious with the comments that are used. I think I have been clear that name-calling in this House is not something that I'm going to accept, and I would ask the member for Minto if he would apologize for what he said.

Mr. Swan: Madam Speaker, I do apologize for that word.

Madam Speaker: Thank you.

Mr. Goertzen: Madam Speaker, I accept the member's 'apolog'. I know that it was given in a heartfelt manner. But I didn't take it personally because I'm not trying to be a hero.

We as a government are trying to stand up for patients. We are trying to reduce their wait times. We are trying to make their medical experience better when they enter the health-care system. We want them to get the right care in the right place. Those are the things we're interested in. We're investing in an expansion of the emergency room at St. Boniface Hospital, we're investing in an expansion of the emergency room at the Grace Hospital—all the things that the member opposite is voting against.

So he can call me any name he wants; we'll continue to stand up for patients, Madam Speaker.

Customary Care Legislation Review by First Nations

Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook): We all suspected provincial movement on CFS after the joint AMC-federal MOU, which I will table.

Madam Speaker, why does this—does the minister remember when Chief Walter Spence—that he was trying to trust him, and then he pulled out the legislation provided to the northern authority for review. Minister, why, instead of sharing the legislation with First Nations, was it shared with a nongoverning body? It would've been the best time to ensure the legislation was seen by our First Nation leaders.

I know it's pointless to ask how many had a hand in drafting, so how many of the 63 chiefs actually received the customary-care legislation for review?

Madam Speaker: I would just like to indicate to members, just a reminder again, that all questions should be directed through the—and addressed through the Chair.

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Families): Reforming the child-welfare system is something that our government very much takes seriously. We have had—hosted, with the chiefs—which, by the way, I can say the customary care legislation is supported by the MKO grand chief, by the SEO grand chief, as well as by President Chartrand, and the Manitoba Metis Federation stand in support of the customary-care legislation.

I can tell you through our process consultations, we had summits with the Southern Chiefs' Organization, with the northern chiefs' organizations, as well as the Manitoba Metis Federation.

This is good legislation. I encourage the Liberals to support this to ensure vulnerable children are protected in a more meaningful way here in the province of Manitoba.

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

Ms. Klassen: I have to say that I'm extremely guarded, but I hope the legislation results in positive change for my youngest bosses.

However, not one of the chiefs at yesterday's event said they received a copy of Bill 18. I'd like to quote O-Chi-Chak-Ko-Sipi First Nation Chief Stephanie Blackbird: We have the right to self-determination and to use our own laws and protocols as part of the nation-to-nation relationship with Canada. We will not simply administer the laws, policies and directives of another government. I will table that quote.

Can the minister tell me what this government is doing in respect of allowing my leaders jurisdiction over our own children?

Mr. Fielding: Before we introduced customary-care legislation, we called a leadership council meeting, which was attended by Grand Chief Daniels from the Southern Chiefs' Organization; by Chief Baker, who represented Grand Chief Sheila North, from the southern—from the northern—for MKO; as well as President Chartrand, who saw the legislation, who

asked us to bring it before the summits that were there.

That's the type of consultation this government will do and will continue to do until we get and fix the child-welfare system that was left by the NDP government, Madam Speaker.

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

Ms. Klassen: Grand Chief Arlen Dumas stated: One of the tools for success is for First Nations to relearn traditional parenting ways that were taken away by residential schools, the '60s scoop, the current CFS system, and the intergenerational trauma impacts of all these.

A provincially legislated system will not be able to achieve this. We have to be in charge of our own children and families to make these changes happen.

Communities have done so much with so much less. Perhaps it's time to let go of the control and let us demonstrate what we can do.

Will this government finally be the catalyst for our inherent right to our own children?

Mr. Fielding: Ensuring that vulnerable children are protected is something—in fact, I would say, this is the most serious issue we face as a government, and our government has taken this issue head on.

I can tell you there's a legislative review committee that has been out. In fact, I know the member from Rossmere, the member from the House—Chamber here, has had contact with close to 15,000 individuals—or 1,500 individuals that have made comment of how we reform the child-welfare system.

We've worked with the legislative authorities and agencies that are—that run the child-welfare system, including the Southern Chiefs' Organization, the MKO as well as the Manitoba Metis to get this right.

We are going to do this in consultation and we're going to get it done in a way that makes sense for our communities to keep our vulnerable children protected, Madam Speaker.

Budget 2018 Municipal Funding

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): Madam Speaker, our PC government is ensuring the sustainability of the front-line services that Manitobans depend

on, while taking a responsible and moderate approach to balancing the budget. Recently we've seen other jurisdictions, like Saskatchewan, reduce their funding to municipalities, but this is not the case in Manitoba.

Can the Minister of Municipal Relations tell us how our PC government is working with municipalities by giving them their fair say, unlike the NDP, who had no respect for municipalities in Manitoba, Madam Speaker?

Hon. Jeff Wharton (Minister of Municipal Relations): I'd like to thank the member from Brandon West for that question.

Madam Speaker, our government has taken a different approach from the old NDP way of doing business. We are providing respect, sustainability and fair say for our municipal partners.

Budget 2018 maintains unconditional funding at the same level as 2017, giving them flexibility they deserve to address local priorities. Municipalities recognize our approach is better, Madam Speaker. Here is what Mayor Shelley Hart said about the relationship with the current government, and I quote: Better than ever—better than it's ever been. It's really made a difference. I think the province now respects the fact and recognizes the fact that municipalities have a big stake in everything they do. End quote.

The NDP now has an opportunity, Madam Speaker, to reverse—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Labour Negotiations at University of Manitoba Government Involvement

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): Madam Speaker, last year during labour negotiations at the University of Manitoba, the Premier said in this House that, quote: It would be unprecedented and unhelpful to enter into the foray in the middle of negotiations and certainly that is not what we did. End quote.

I ask the Premier: Would he take this opportunity to retract those statements and apologize to the people of Manitoba for his interference at the University of Manitoba?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Were the allegations of any substance I would, Madam Speaker, but the answer would be no, of course not. No apology is warranted or necessary.

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

Mr. Wiebe: Madam Speaker, page 60 of the Labour Board ruling says that, quote: The new government mandate and its compulsory nature were very clearly outlined by the Premier's own staff. End quote.

* (14:40)

Yet the Premier said over and over again in this House and to the media that his actions were simply, quote, input.

But the Labour Board ruling says that the Pallister government imposed compulsory conditions, even sending top officials to make sure that the job got done. It's clear the Premier went to great lengths to hide his interference and pressure—the tactics.

I ask him again: Will he retract his statement from last year and apologize for his interference at the University of Manitoba?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance): I thank the member for his question, even if it is quite far off base again this time.

Madam Speaker, in Bill 28 we clearly outlined that in order to fix an almost \$900-million deficit, we needed to have all hands on deck. This will take all of us, as Manitobans, to address the enormous challenge that we are facing, and Bill 28 provided a framework in which all hands truly come on deck.

Now, we are neither the employer or the employee, but government has a responsibility, and that is to set mandates and we will set those mandates, and those will be helpful in this process.

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

Mr. Wiebe: Madam Speaker, page 61 of the Labour Board ruling says that the Pallister government imposed directives on the university during labour negotiations. It states that the university, quote, effectively succumbed to whatever directives the government elected to impose. End quote.

It's bad faith and, in the Premier's own words, unprecedented in the history of Manitoba. And it's not just an affront to fair bargaining, Madam Speaker. The Premier's interference will end up costing \$2.4 million, money that comes directly from the University of Manitoba, and it's ultimately the students who will see cut programs and increased tuition.

I ask the Premier: Will he retract his statements from last year and apologize for his interference at the University of Manitoba?

Mr. Friesen: Well, I want to reassure this member, and I know that Manitobans are assured, that the bargaining process in the province of Manitoba is alive and well.

Now, the government is neither employer nor employee in the dispute that this—that the member describes. But let us be clear: in the absence of mandates, the NDP had labour trouble and they brought a strike at Brandon that they took too long to take any action with. They sat around while that strike went on and on and on.

Now, we have set mandates which are appropriate, progress is being made, the bargaining process is alive and well. We hope that all parties at that table to—continue to engage in that bargaining process.

Crown Services Revenue Staff Reduction Inquiry

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): The Pallister government is projecting nearly 20 per cent increase in net revenue from our Crown corporations.

I ask the minister: What's he planning to cut next to achieve that, or is he just counting on massive rate increases?

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Crown Services): I certainly appreciate finally getting a question on Crowns and certainly I think this question also goes along of the message about NDP messes that we have to clean up.

Madam Speaker, first thing we did when we came into government, we brought in—forward the Crown corporations governments and accountability act. This particular framework provides relationships and accountability for Crown corporations. That is a step in the right direction to clean up the messes the NDP left our government. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

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

Mr. Lindsey: The Pallister government is deleting 8 per cent of staff across core departments of government. It's budgeting a 20 per cent increase in revenue from our Crowns this year.

And, again, I ask the minister: Does he intend to bring staff reduction targets to our Crown corporations? Does he intend to delete hundreds more jobs in Manitoba?

Mr. Cullen: Clearly, reckless decisions—political decisions—made by the previous government left our Crowns in some peril.

Clearly, we've got great boards in place that are making tough decisions. We certainly won't apologize for creating efficiencies in Crown corporations. That's what the—we're asking our boards to do. That's what they're delivering on. If the result is more net income for services for Manitobans, we don't know—won't make apologies for that.

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

Mr. Lindsey: This minister uses euphemisms like efficiencies while, in fact, the budget speech did not contain—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Lindsey: —one word about Manitoba Hydro, one word about Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Lindsey: —or Manitoba Public Insurance. Yet the minister intends to increase net revenue from the Crowns by nearly 20 per cent over the coming year: a \$137-million increase.

The minister should be clear about these changes: Does he intend to impose an 8 per cent staff reduction across Crown corporations? Does he intend to delete hundreds more jobs? Please be clear with Manitobans.

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): We intend to work with the Crown corporates and make them work far, far better than they ever did under the previous administration, Madam Speaker. That's what's going to happen here.

I just—I wanted to say two things quickly, Madam Speaker, if I could. I wanted to say thank you to our folks who are here from Gladstone and congratulate them on a wonderful curling club. It's indicative of the kind of communities we're proud and we—filled with gratitude to have here in Manitoba, so I congratulate and thank them.

I also wanted, on behalf of the government, to say congratulations to the AAAA provincial basketball champions: St. Paul's boys and the Oak Park girls. Tremendous accomplishments, Madam Speaker; I know, given their presence in your riding, you might agree.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: The time for oral questions has expired.

PETITIONS

Medical Laboratory Services

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

The provision of laboratory services to medical clinics and physicians' offices has been historically, and continues to be, a private sector service.

It is vitally important that there be competition in laboratory services to allow medical clinics to seek solutions from more than one provider to control costs and to improve services for health professionals and patients.

Under the present provincial government, Dynacare, an Ontario-based subsidiary of a US company, has acquired Unicity labs, resulting in a monopoly situation for the provision of laboratory services in medical clinics and physicians' offices.

With the creation of this monopoly, there has been the closure of many laboratories by Dynacare in and around the city of Winnipeg. Since the acquisition of Unicity labs, Dynacare has made it more difficult for some medical offices by changing the collection schedules of patients' specimens and charging some medical offices for collection services.

These closures have created a situation where a great number of patients are less well served, having to travel significant distances in some cases, waiting considerable periods of time and sometimes being denied or having to leave without obtaining lab services. This situation is particularly critical for patients requiring fasting blood draws, as they may experience complications that could be life-threatening based on their individual health situations.

Furthermore, Dynacare has instructed that all patients requiring immediate results, STAT's patients, such as patients with suspicious internal infections, be directed to its King Edward location. This creates unnecessary obstacles for the patients who are required to travel to that lab rather than simply completing the test in their doctor's office. This new directive by Dynacare presents a direct risk to patients' health. This has further resulted in patients opting to visit emergency rooms rather than travelling twice, which increases cost to the public health-care system.

Medical clinics and physicians' offices service thousands of patients in their communities and have structured their offices to provide a one-stop service, acting as a health-care front line that takes off some of the load from emergency rooms. The creation of this monopoly has been problematic to many medical clinics and physicians, hampering their ability to provide high-quality and complete service to their patients due to closures of so many laboratories.

*(14:50)

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to request Dynacare to reopen the closed laboratories or allow Diagnostic Services of Manitoba to freely open labs in clinics which formerly housed labs that have been shut down by Dynacare.

(2) To urge the provincial government to ensure high-quality lab services for patients and a level playing field and competition in the provision of laboratory services to medical offices.

To urge the provincial government to address this matter immediately in the interest of better patient-focused care and improved support for health professionals.

Signed by Leonard Ducharme, Louise Brodeur, Tracy Carriere and many others.

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

University of Manitoba Students' Union Act—Amendments

Mrs. Sarah Guillemard (Fort Richmond): Madam Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The University of Manitoba Students' Union Act (Act) was enacted in 1975 to outline and govern a corporation for the benefit of students at the University of Manitoba and was subsequently translated into French in 1985.

(2) Since that time the corporation has developed greatly, evolving to best serve the needs of the student body.

(3) Students have recently expressed a strong desire for an overhaul of the ways in which fees can be changed and assessed, as well as a noted interest in specific language to protect the autonomy of the corporation when working with other similar entities and a goal of updating the language in the act to be gender neutral.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To amend the existing University of Manitoba Students' Union Act by:

- (a) Adding provisions requiring referenda of the membership to increase UMSU fees;
- (b) Mandating referenda of the membership to join external organizations;
- (c) Mandating regular votes to maintain membership in external organizations; and
- (d) Updating language so as to be gender-neutral.

This petition was signed by Jehan Moorthy, Tanjit Nagra, Allison Kilgour.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, would you continue debate on the budget motion?

BUDGET DEBATE (Fifth Day of Debate)

Madam Speaker: Resuming the debate on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen) and the amendment and subamendment thereto, standing in the name of the honourable member for Point Douglas, who has 19 minutes remaining.

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): This government will be leaving a legacy of broken promises. They have gone from cutting to now chopping.

Manitobans are afraid to even think what's to come next. They're thinking that they're going to start the chainsaw and start chopping, which seems, you know, to be the direction that this government's headed in. They're leaving carnage in their trail of broken promises.

Madam Speaker, this budget is a failure to listen to Manitobans. Manitobans didn't ask for this government to put money before people. They asked for real investments in people.

Madam Speaker, Manitobans didn't ask for front-line services to be cut but, again, this government isn't listening. They're receiving a failing grade on listening skills.

Manitobans feel as if this government has permanent ear plugs in and that they just don't care.

Why does this government continue not to care about Manitobans? Why won't they listen to Manitobans? They—why do they continue to ignore Manitobans? Why? Why not? Why won't this government invest in people, in Manitoban people?

This government is taking our province in the wrong direction. This Premier (Mr. Pallister), he must change his course of direction. It's not too late. He can still do it. He can still shift that course and invest in those who need it the most.

Madam Speaker, this government claims that they're lifting 30,000 people out of poverty and off the rolls. Well, I can tell you Manitobans will not have the wool pulled over their eyes. They know that \$16 more a year in their pockets is not going to lift them out of poverty, especially when this government gives them a mere 15-cent increase to 'mimum' wage while they take a 20 per cent increase in their wages. They're even taking even more back with the other hand, so they're giving with this hand but they're taking way more with the other.

What will lift them out of poverty is increasing the minimum wage to \$15 and actually investing in education, investing in our children—as they keep saying, well, we have to make sure that there's money for the future for these children. The only way we're going to have a future is if we invest in children.

Oh, wait, this government decreased spending and is only providing a 0.5 per cent increase to Manitoba school divisions and they forced them to make hard decisions by keeping their spending to 2 per cent. This isn't going to provide positive

results. There'll be less teachers working with kids, larger class sizes. It'll mean less one-on-one time with teachers. It means learning support teachers are going to have to support more children and it means kids with complex needs will not get the same support.

Madam Speaker, why does this government want our children to fail and to not get the full support that they need? Children are our future. We need to invest in them. I have heard on the other side reference many times the children, children, children. Well, I don't see the pudding in a pie—pudding in the pie when it comes to providing the support and the same level of support that each of these kids need. This broken-promise budget means that kids will be falling through the cracks. And our graduation rates, well, they're going to start to fall even further under this government. Broken-promises budget that this government has put out is failing these children.

I learned last week from a parent who called my office that this broken-promise budget is forcing school divisions to make some tough decisions. These decisions are affecting the quality of education that these children are receiving.

We have always, always in this province valued education, but since this government took government, they don't seem to have the same value in our children or our education. They're sending a message loud and clear that they don't value the work being done by our teachers in Manitoba. They froze their wages which—you know, Manitoba teachers do an amazing job at supporting our kids in schools and making sure that our graduation rates increase, but this government doesn't seem to think so. They don't want to invest in our teachers. School divisions, in essence, are being told to suck it up and figure it out. Is this the kind of message that we want to send to our teachers, our students, our parents, our province—suck it up? I don't think so.

Teachers work hard each and every day, and I speak from knowledge, having been an educational assistant, a teacher and then an administrator, that educating our children takes a tremendous amount of support not just from our community but from our Province, something that our current government isn't providing. Our schools deserve the resources that they need to educate. Our schools are entrusted with our children, but, you know, this government seems to think that less money to these schools means better education, better outcomes, increases in

graduation rates. I don't think so. We have to put more money and more resources into schools.

Recently, I learned that some students in a metals class were unable to finish their projects because they couldn't afford to buy another load of metal. This government is forcing schools to make cuts that are affecting our kids' education. Shame.

Mr. Doyle Pivniuk, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

Why does this government speak of children's futures when they're not investing in them? Nobody has to look too far to know why—where these cuts are coming from. This isn't okay. We should be investing in children. Instead, this government has hiked tuition rates and are taking the health-care benefits away from international students. This government has got it all wrong. We must invest in those who need it the most, not the reverse, which is what this government is doing.

It's not too late. I said earlier this Premier (Mr. Pallister) can switch directions. These MLAs on the other side can quit sitting on their hands and stand up and speak for their constituents and stand up for them but, you know, they seem to be taking direction—and the wrong direction. He can reverse these damages that he's doing to our province.

* (15:00)

This government has failed to build one social housing unit from May 2016 to October '17, and now, once again, this budget fails to build another single social housing unit. Where does this government expect families to live, especially when they have a limited income and they rely on social housing at 28 per cent?

Why does this government continue to raise rents? It went from 25 per cent to 28 per cent of someone's income. Well, I can tell you that extra 3 per cent is either coming out of their grocery bill or maybe their lights are getting shut off and they're falling further and further behind on their utilities or they're not getting their medications that they need.

Rents are high and people are already taking from their food budgets to cover this. They continue to hike it. Where does this Premier think the money's going to come from? It's going to come from, of course, like I said, other places like having to wear a winter jacket outside. I see many people in my constituency wearing fall jackets because they couldn't afford a winter jacket because this

government hiked their rent, which came from their clothing budget.

Do my colleagues know, on the other side, what it's like to dumpster dive for a meal? I doubt it. But many of my constituents in my community know what it's like because that's what they have to do sometimes to survive, unfortunately. But this government doesn't want to invest in people. They'd rather invest in other places and cut—just to cut their deficit. They're worried about money over people, which is the wrong direction.

Why is this government continuing to fail them? Why are they continuing to sit on their hands and keep their earplugs in and wear blinders? Why? Why does this government continue to do this? We need real investments in social housing. We need them to quit fighting with the feds and to sign on to the Canadian National Housing Strategy because everyone knows we ain't got no strategy here in Winnipeg and in Manitoba under this current government. We don't even have one that addresses poverty, homelessness, education, housing, violence against women, growing the economy—zero, failing grade, no plans.

Madam Speaker, this government has decreased Rent Assist which has put people in hard situations, actions that are forcing them—forcing them—to choose their rent or feed their bodies or get the much needed medication that they need to keep their—or to keep their lights on.

Why does this government continue to turn its back on the most vulnerable? On our Manitoba families, why? Why don't they like Manitobans? There are 'miminal' emphasis on the child-welfare system here in Manitoba, meanwhile, the numbers continue to grow. We have more than 11,000 kids in care. Why is this government offering to—or increase subsidies to foster parents to adopt children? This is not what families want. Children want to be with their families. They want to be with their parents. They want to be with their mom, their dad, their granny or their aunt, whoever it is that is raising them. But this government feels that it's okay to give subsidies to foster parents to adopt these kids. Parents want their kids and their children at home with them, not in some foster home. We need to make real investments in making sure that kids are staying in their homes. Families need extra support to keep their children at home, not adopt them out. Shame on this government for not even considering this.

This government also plans to ease restrictions on guardianship and make it easier for indigenous children to be separated from their families. This does more harm than good. We're not only taking indigenous children away from their cultures, language and traditions, but we're putting them in non-indigenous homes. Many families and First Nation communities are worried about this, and they certainly will not be sitting on their hands and let this government do that.

AMC's family advocate, Cora Morgan, said, and I quote: This is putting indigenous children at risk of being in non-indigenous homes permanently when close to 90 per cent of indigenous children in care right now are placed in non-indigenous homes and they have little to no access to culturally appropriate services or meaningful connections to culture and identity. She says she has trouble with this government's plan. End quote.

Madam Speaker—or Deputy Speaker, I grew up not knowing who I was as an indigenous young girl, wasn't until I was 23 and I started learning about myself as an indigenous person and learning the language, the cultures and the traditions that I started to become a part of my community. I started to, you know, be proud of who I was as an indigenous person and I began to lift myself out of poverty. Unless we invest in these things, that's not going to happen for these children. We're just going to have another '60s scoop, and in 30 years this government will be apologizing for the damage they've done.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission prioritizes placing indigenous children into culturally appropriate care always—always—but that isn't happening. It also affirms that Aboriginal government has the right to establish and maintain their own child-welfare agencies. This government must make real investments in prevention, making sure that children aren't leaving their homes, that there's support in their houses so that kids can stay home, so that their families can stay together and not have to worry about their kids becoming permanent wards and perhaps even being adopted out.

Permanent guardianships must ensure that children in care maintain their cultural identities. This is imperative. This government must follow the customary-care model that we, the NDP, introduced that allows communities to find solutions for families as well as use traditional tools to support them. We on this side of the House are committed to the TRC's calls to action on reconciliation and we are certainly

doing our part, but we need this government to do theirs.

I'd like to talk about child care in Manitoba and how this budget fails the over 16,000 Manitoba children sitting on the wait-list—and this is from November of last year. We don't know how many more children have been added to that list because it's been frozen. This 2018 budget repeats its broken promises in creating just 739 new spaces while there's over 16,000 children waiting. It became clear in this broken-promises budget that clearly they are not listening to Manitoban families and that actually only 392 of those spaces will be in new school projects that actually won't be built for years. This means that this government really has only committed to 347 spaces this year when we have over 16,000 children waiting on this list.

Unlike every other province, the government refused to chip in any funding to bolster the \$45 million that the federal government gave to this province. This means that we have one of the weakest child-care plans than any other province in Canada.

Where are the preschool spaces? Not one preschool space was announced in this broken-promise budget, and now Manitobans are having to suffer another year without any spaces. This budget fails to address the issues of affordable child care for families in our province.

In response to the budget, Pat Wege of the Manitoba Child Care Association stated, and I quote: We've been waiting for some multi-year funding, long-range, comprehensive, multi-pronged plan for child care. I was hoping that today would have been that day, but it wasn't. Still, there are still 16,000 names on the child registry and no real plan to adjust that. She went on to say: I am disappointed, as I did not see any new provincial money on child care. End quote.

This Premier (Mr. Pallister) promises a child-care strategy and that they would invest new money into building child-care spaces but, yet again, another broken promise.

This Premier has—his government has cut child-care regulations that keep families safe. Bill 9 will give the government authority to punish low-income families who use child-care 'subsidies.' Instead of working with families, they want to take them to court.

* (15:10)

This government has abandoned children with disabilities in their budget when he tried to freeze funding for inclusive supports in daycare and attempted to ban parents from transferring these supports to a different daycare.

Ninety-five per cent of parents want the government to focus on universal child care, and 57 per cent said that it should be a priority of this government, a top priority, and this was according to probe research done December 5th, 2016.

This broken-promises budget fails to build the spaces Manitobans need. It fails to address the gaps in federal funding for school-age children and it fails Manitoba parents.

Poverty reduction strategy: another budget failing, to address the needs of people living in poverty. A poverty reduction strategy is long overdue and was supposed to be done and completed last year, but this government decided that, because they had no strategy, that they'd leave it to the end and then consult. No surprise, just to cover up the fact.

Kevin Rebeck of the Federation of Labour stated, and I quote: Ontario, Alberta, BC, they get it. They're increasing a minimum wage to \$15 an hour so that a job is a path out of poverty. Our government, instead of trying to address things like that—that side when it's a much higher reward for high-income people than low-income people. End quote.

No worker should have to subsist on poverty wages. One of the best ways to lift people out of poverty is by raising the 'mimum' wage. *[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Smith: Our side of the House—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Smith: —will not be voting in favour of this broken-promise budget that fails to listen—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Smith: —to Manitobans. Come 2020, and I quote Slim Shady: Guess who's back, back again.

Miigwech, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Scott Johnston (St. James): Now, for something completely different.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to rise to speak in favour of this budget, but first, before I do, I would like to put on the record as I always try to do when I'm speaking to the budget or the Throne Speech, to express my appreciation to the people of St. James for allowing me to have the privilege to speak in this honourable place.

As you continue to work through your experience as an MLA, you always try to tell yourself and remind yourself of how much of a privilege it is to be here and speak to the benefit of Manitobans—and even though the members on the other side of the House, certainly, the opposition, we don't agree—but the reality is we are here for the benefit of the people of Manitoba. Thank you.

Madam Speaker, I'm so proud to be associated with the group of people that Manitobans have chosen to govern their province. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen) is dedicated and committed to guiding the province of Manitoba's finances into the future of Manitoba.

Our government has had to address the most challenging economic situation the province has ever had to deal with. Our government was facing a financial situation left to us by the previous government that had to be addressed, and, Madam Speaker, we are addressing it.

Running a deficit projected at over \$1 billion in a province of 1.3 million people is unheard of, and yet, Madam Speaker, that is the position our government found ourselves in. To address this critical situation the people of Manitoba elected our Progressive Conservative government to do what needs to be done. Under the leadership of the Premier (Mr. Pallister), his Cabinet and his caucus, we have undertaken the task of bringing Manitoba's finances under control, and this budget reflects that, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The strategy started with our plan to bring the deficit under control. Last year's budget planned a decrease in our deficit of \$147 million, leaving the deficit at \$764 million. This was done by finding effective cost-savings in all departments while maintaining our commitment to ensuring that services to Manitobans weren't compromised.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it takes a strong team to address change, and we have that team. Our Premier continues to indicate all-hands-on-deck approach to help us through our challenges. As mentioned, our government team shows leadership.

However, there are many other contributors to the process of change. First and foremost, the people of Manitoba understand changes need to take place. The civil service, business, unions, municipal government, educators, health-care professionals and people involved in agriculture—they all and many more understand the direction that the Province was going under the previous government was just not sustainable.

Our government developed this budget by consulting with Manitobans. We are proud of the most extensive public consultations ever taken place by a Manitoba government. I was pleased to have hosted consultation in my own constituency of St. James. It was very well attended and I was very impressed with the engagement of the attendees at St. James Collegiate. We discussed many issues, including our green plan, tackling the deficit, execution of cannabis, health reforms, protection, education and child care—just to name a few.

We took the results of our discussion back to the Minister of Finance. My compliments to the Minister of Finance, because he personally reviewed the input received from these consultations. The Minister of Finance also, too, personally engaged the MLAs who hosted these consultations for further discussion and their opinions and thoughts.

I also had the opportunity of attending the regional consultation with stakeholders that was also hosted in St. James. This was another example of our government's attempt to seek input from stakeholders as well as the public to participate in this budget process. This regional consultation was hosted by the Minister of Finance, Minister of Families (Mr. Fielding) and myself as MLA. Some of the stakeholders attended were the St. James 55 seniors, Assiniboia Chamber of Commerce, Manitoba Hotel Association, Keystone agricultural, Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council, Retail Council of Canada, Siloam Mission and abilities of Manitoba.

The feedback from our stakeholders was valuable, as it gave a varied perspective. The varied perspective I found very beneficial, as did my colleagues. The whole exercise was to have people express their opinions, and they did. The budget consultations—both regional and at the constituency level—helped form the budget presented, which I support today, and I was proud to participate.

This budget presents both a short-term and long-term initiative. It seeks to address the needs of Manitoban services today, as well as address the

long-term financial strength that the province of Manitoba needs. First, Manitobans can create—Manitobans can take great comfort knowing that the deficit continues to be addressed. The deficit is projected to be significantly decreased, the budget projecting a deficit reduction over \$200 million, which reduces the deficit to \$521 million. Our goal is to balance the budget, Madam Speaker, and we will get there—Mr. Deputy Speaker.

At the end of our term, we as government MLAs will be able to indicate that our government kept our promises. The budget allows us to say just that. As our Premier (Mr. Pallister) has promised, we are going to reduce the PST by the end of our term. And the Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen), working with his government, is on the way to achieving that goal.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to highlight some of the many initiatives in this budget I feel my constituency view as very positive. I see the increased tax relief as a real benefit to the modest-to modest-income Manitobans. Many of my constituents fall into that category. The basic personal amount increasing January 19th and again January 2020 is a significant tax relief; \$2,020 in total represents a substantial commitment by our government to enhance the disposable income of those who need it most.

*(15:20)

We heard clearly at our consultations tax relief and moderate-income families was in need. This initiative will help seniors on fixed incomes, single parents as well as students.

I have many small and medium-sized businesses in my constituency of St. James. The increase of the small business tax consideration to \$500,000 from \$450,000 is long overdue. We will now bring these businesses in line with the benefits similar-sized businesses in other provinces have. When small businesses—when small business flourishes, everyone in this province benefits, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I heard—Mr. Deputy Speaker, I heard quite clearly in our consultations that people were concerned about how cannabis would be executed in this province. The budget indicates a neutral revenue from cannabis. This is uncharted territory for us. I agree with the assessment of not being fully able to assess the projected costs and revenues at this time. We know there will be costs associated with the initiation of cannabis. Our Minister of Justice (Mrs. Stefanson) moved to ensure safety first, and

that is in keeping with the wishes of the people that we heard from on this issue. It is just too early to project revenues when so many factors exist. Safety costs, social education, health risk, black market competition—all create challenges to projecting the revenues.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, with the establishment of the liquor, gaming and cannabis authority, we will need some time—they will need some time to come to terms with the understanding of what the potential revenue exists.

And, Mr. Speaker, I believe that our government was extremely wise in utilizing the authority that we have in place right now for alcohol beverages. I believe that they're extremely capable, and I believe they will meet the challenges that this particular initiative face—or brings forward.

Madam Speaker, there was much discussion on a made-in-Manitoba green plan during our consultations. Public consensus at our meetings was that Manitoba be not penalized, as we are a green province. A made-in-Manitoba green plan allows us to address our needs while not being taken advantage by Ottawa. The Minister of Sustainable Development (Ms. Squires) is a visionary who is looking out for Manitoba's best interests, contrary to some of the pessimists across the way.

The auditor of Manitoba indicated that the Province of Manitoba did not have a plan previous.

Madam—excuse me. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the largest department expenditure continues to be Health, Seniors and Active Living. The budget recognizes the ongoing challenges to servicing health-care costs in Manitoba. The budget increasing—increases spending in this department to close to \$6.2 billion. Our Minister of Health continues to address wait times and has created 60 new full-time paramedic positions in this budget. Wait times was the No. 1 issue at our budget consultations.

I would like to indicate my support for this budget's support of five new schools in Manitoba. This investment in new schools was well overdue and is an investment into the future. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wish to compliment the Minister of Education as well as the Minister of Infrastructure (Mr. Schuler) for recognizing that the P3 model wasn't a good fit for this school initiative at this particular time. We are a government that takes care when analyzing projects as well as exploring options.

We don't feel compelled to proceed when the evidence indicates an alternative course is required. The people of Manitoba can take great comfort in knowing that our government will do its due diligence.

Madam Speaker, the budget continues to address the debt servicing costs that the previous government left the people of Manitoba. Our plan doesn't include wasting Manitobans' hard-earned money on paying interest. Our Premier (Mr. Pallister) is committed to keeping our revenues in Manitoba for Manitobans.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, families are the foundation of our province, and, in today's society, they are under more and more pressures.

The minister of family services indicated a \$60.5-million increase in the department's budget over 2017, which is a very substantial increase to meet the challenges of Manitobans.

Madam Speaker, I have—Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have highlighted just some of the many positive initiatives in this budget. This budget addresses the short-term needs of Manitobans as well as the long-term prosperity for Manitobans. I am pleased to support this budget and look forward to our government implementing it.

Mr. Ted Marcelino (Tyndall Park): My colleagues, in the august Chamber of the Legislative Assembly, this could be my final speech—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Marcelino: I said this could be—[interjection]—I always can change my mind.

But I wish to start by, of course, thanking the—my constituents in Tyndall Park for re-electing me for a second term, I think for four years, and it is always an honour to represent them, especially considering that, at my age, I'm still here. And I was claiming that I was the eldest, but then somebody else, who is the member from Emerson, who will celebrate his birthday sometime in May, so he's six months older than me.

The usual adulation that comes from members of government, I saw that before when it was the—our party that was in government—and considering the nature of a budget, a budget is supposed encapsulate, illustrate with a sketch, with a dream, put a vision in front of our people. It is not just a mere document that's printed in blue or whatever colour that was, and it is supposed to give us direction as to where we are going. And I found that it was supposed to give

us a vision of where we'll find ourselves, say, five years from now, or 10 years from now, or 20 years from now.

During those 20 years, let's say, I figure some of the numbers that are put in the budget and the general direction of the budget would have been to improve the lives of Manitobans, and I thought that that was the general trajectory. And I was wrong. It was a step back to the 1980s when I first arrived.

* (15:30)

This budget, this 2018 budget—and even the one before that—were all meant to foster a program of austerity. And the cuts—the cuts—that were imposed on the people by indirectly asking them to put in a little bit more sacrifice and suffer a little bit more pain is a—is very hurtful. I didn't—they are those cuts that are really meant to bleed the body politic, the population of the province, one drop of blood at a time. It's not fair, because a government has to be a little bit more than just a board of accountants or a cabinet of super mathematicians. It has to have—the Cabinet of a government of the day has to have the heart—the heart that's filled with compassion, a heart that's filled with love for our people. And it is not fair that those who are suffering are made to suffer a little bit more. It's not fair. It's not fair for those who are on welfare and for those who are homeless and for those who are not employed gainfully to be asked to suffer a little bit more.

A government has to be a little bit more than just a—an agency that would project, oh, this is our target, our budgetary target.

And most of the time it forgets—the government forgets that it involves the lives of people, people that are suffering. Our province had been a have-not province for so long and I still chose to come here. I knew that from way back when I first arrived in 1980 that Manitoba is not compatible to the number of population and the economic strength of Ontario.

I was in Ontario during the first few weeks and I left. I didn't like the lifestyle there. I love this province, and I'm very proud of it. And to be able to speak in this Chamber and say things about our vision and our dream of providing for every Manitoban every need that they have—every need that they have which are the basic needs, housing. And what has the Minister of Families (Mr. Fielding), what has he done? He has done nothing. No socialized housing has ever been built and nobody should tell me otherwise.

How about the Minister of Health (Mr. Goertzen)—is complicit in the cuts, long-term cuts to our health-care system. And the reasoning behind it is always, oh, let's balance the budget. Balancing the budget—*[interjection]* well, somebody's piping in about the wait times. It's true. It's true that there had been mistakes—don't get me wrong—in much the same way that there had been other mistakes on the part of the other governments from way back. And let's not kid ourselves. The only way that we could really engage ourselves in a viable governing process is by being honest to ourselves.

In this Chamber, I see answers that are deflections, answers that never answer the questions, and I'm—it's one of my frustrations. I don't know if I'm the only one who feels that, but it is part of—it's one of the reasons why I'm thinking of leaving this life—not killing myself, but just this life, this life as a legislator, because the frustration that I feel is that we do not have—the current government we have, we do not have anything going for us. It is a government that's bungling along, is stumbling along—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Marcelino:—and picking a fight every time they get it with the federal government. Always last in, well, signing on, even to the health-care accord or even—it's not really easy for me to keep on just harping on the wrong things that have been done, but there have been lots. *[interjection]* Two years—two years in April and I don't see anything new.

The deep, long-term cuts to the services that Manitobans count on have been really hurtful. One nurse from Seven Oaks who has been there with the hospital for the last 28 years said it's demoralizing. When your front-line servants are saying that they are demoralized, when the public servants are saying we don't need this anymore, I'll just take my retirement, only because they do not know from day to day what would happen. Because there have been mixed messages from this government—as in, we're cutting 15 per cent, you might not have a job tomorrow. And it's one of the lousiest types of feelings that an employee would have if he is not sure that his life will be stable enough that he could move forward, walk forward, borrow money for his house or at least borrow money for a new car. It is very uncertain. It is a safe—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

There's getting too be too much of the heckling in this Chamber so if—I'll ask—respect each other's—listen to the speaker and we'll continue with the honourable member for Tyndall Park.

Mr. Marcelino: Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I understand that some of the words that I use and the tone of my voice sometimes riles people up, and I like it.

There have been some instances where people would go to my constituency office and ask for help regarding their workman compensation and, of course, I tell them that the only way that you will feel safe in your job is you should return as soon as you can because nobody is safe anymore. Even if you were injured, even if you were—even if you still had still a healing wound, just go back, because as soon as management sees an opportunity to dismiss and fire you, they will. And that's the type of atmosphere that's there. And, as far as I understood, that's the way that most of those who are working for the government or the private sector, even, are feeling now. They feel the uncertainty, the instability of this province.

* (15:40)

One of my nephews has moved his family to Calgary. And he says, how come that's—there's NDP there? I said, yes, but we have a Conservative government here. He says, oh, I thought they would be better. He says, I even voted for them. I said, what did you do? He says, I voted for the MLA. He lives in St. Norbert. And I said, why would you be transferring and moving your family to Alberta? He says, my job has just been deleted.

Deletion is a word that has been used by this government in order to say you're fired. Deletion—or, you have been deleted, is a very hurtful word that does not sum up anything that's—maybe it's not even intended to hurt. But his job was deleted.

And, from my point of view, I feel safe in this job that I'll be here until maybe 2020 or my death, whichever comes first. But my fear—my greatest fear is that the cuts that are being made by this government—this government of the day—will have a very long-lasting effect, that there's amputations that are being done and we don't even see it. There's heads that are rolling down the aisle, and we don't even know it. And people are getting upset, which suits me fine because it will assure that this is—this Progressive Conservative government will be a

one-term government. And I pray that that happens. Thank you.

Mr. Len Isleifson (Brandon East): I'm happy to say, though, that if there was a 'brank'-break-dancing competition, the NDP would certainly win because they do a lot of spinning. And it doesn't matter what we put out there, they can take it and run with it, which they've been doing for 17 years when they were in power.

But, on a more recent note, though, I do want to talk about the budget and why it's important that we have this opportunity to stand in the House and talk, and talk passionately about how we feel as individual MLAs and how we serve our constituents.

I have said in this House before that I truly believe that everyone here gets involved in this profession because they care. And, again, when we look at people doing things because they care, they can dedicate themselves for four years, they can dedicate themselves for eight years, or they can dedicate themselves for even longer. Some people dedicate themselves on different ideas, and with that I do want to—before I continue, I do want to congratulate our member from Swan River, who has dedicated himself enough that tomorrow he will be inducted into the Manitoba football hall of fame. So I want to congratulate you on that, sir.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I mention that because it's well-deserving, but it's also important to realize that we get involved in different aspects of our life for different reasons. And, of course, when I look at why did I get involved in being an MLA. Yes, sometimes it's tough to sit in the House and listen to some of the bantering back and forth, but it is a free country, and that's what we're here to ensure that we maintain.

And, again, when I look back on April 19th, 2016, I wake up every day feeling so blessed that I'm able to come into this House or even sit in my constituency office and work with constituents because that's why I gave up a 21 career in health so that I could, hopefully, leave this—the world in a little bit better place than certainly what I found it in.

We've all witnessed the demise of our province at the hands of the NDP over failed workings. Again, there are certainties, though, and I will tell you I've made a list of some certainties, because I know under the former government it was certain that taxes would go up and it was certain that the deficit would go up. *[interjection]*

I'm not making it up, the member from Minto is saying no, no. Check previous budgets; check history; it's there. Because when we look at certainty from our government, personal taxes are going down and the deficit is going down and those are facts, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

These failed efforts had a profound effect on my constituents in Brandon East and, again, I must say that when I had people coming to me talking about what was happening in the province over those 17 years and how could we make things better, it wasn't something I jumped up in the one morning and said, oh, I'm just going run for an MLA and I'm going to fix it, because I know that's not the case. I know it's impossible for one person to come in, but everyone in this House working together can certainly contribute to building a better province.

I know with the Progressive Conservative government we talked about—of fixing our finances, repairing our services and rebuilding our economy, and that's what this budget does, is it keeps our promises and provides real progress for Manitobans.

Again, I've had numerous conversations with individuals who have expressed some very serious concerns and valid concerns that we must do better than the previous government. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is time to step up and put the future of Manitobans on the table and lead change that will have a positive outcome for many generations to come. It's not about spending money today for today; it's about spending money for today, tomorrow and our future. It's time to start thinking about the future of our grandchildren and their children.

I will admit, Mr. Deputy Speaker, every day is a new experience and I approach every conversation with constituents with an open mind and a willingness to listen, to learn and understand their views.

The opposition and the independents from the Liberal Party are standing up and playing their part by speaking against one of the best—I heard the other day—or not—the best budget ever released in Manitoba—the best budget ever.

So when the opposition and—does that, to me it looks like they're just making some false claims simply because that's their job. They're in opposition, and even when a great budget such as this one is presented they reluctantly oppose it. I know deep down that they want to support the amazing work of

the Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen), but I understand they have a job to do.

I feel for them, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because they have to work extra hard to make this stuff up and try to convince Manitobans otherwise.

We need to look at why is a budget so important, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We stand in the House and we look at various aspects of the different departments and we look at why we put things where we put things. I think if we step back a little bit and look at our own selves and figure out do we live by budgets—absolutely.

I know when I was—my wife and I were first married and we had our son we moved out on our own, got our own place, and, you know, we had to budget. There were times went by when our son was a baby that we would get to two days before payday and go, wow, you know, do I have enough for diapers? Do I have enough for milk? I will admit, you know, we're young and we're out there and we're spending money because we're making money, but when that happens it makes you sit down and go, wow, I've got to start budgeting or this is not going to work.

* (15:50)

So we have done that and we've carried that on to life. We've carried that throughout. Both our children are very successful. Unfortunately, they moved out to Alberta but, again, that's something they had to do at the time when the NDP was in government. But, again, we need to budget. If my wife and I—still, to this day, if we want to go on a vacation, we want to go somewhere, we make sure that we just don't spend the money. We make sure that we budget.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, lots of things happen in this Chamber, lots of things come out. I see things from the opposition on the doorsteps of my constituents in Brandon East so much that I even took one of the articles, took it to The Brandon Sun because it was false information. And they were very happy to put that out there and let others know. So I do got to say, with information that's going out, they will not fool members of Brandon East nor any other Manitoban.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this year almost 35,000 people provided their input into Budget 2018 as part of their—our prebudget consultations. This budget addresses their priorities, their concerns and their dreams for a future Manitoba that is full of hope,

security and opportunity. In Brandon East in particular, we also held a prebudget consultation one evening and had a number of individuals come out, and I know people are sitting back right now in the opposition saying, oh, yes, but they were all PC supporters. And, no, they weren't. We opened it up; we had people come out. We had a great dialogue around the table where we took all ideas. Some were very valid and I will admit some probably weren't as valid, not as reasonable, but every single comment from those dialogues went to the minister's office and were, you know, under consideration when the budget was developed.

Again, our government has promised to fix the finances and this budget continues to do just that with a further reduction of \$319 million to the provincial deficit. So if we want to talk about cuts that our government is making, we're cutting the deficit and that is something that we need to do, again, because we're not looking out just for today. We're looking out for today, tomorrow and in the years to come. We have a long way to go, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we realize that, but the hole left by the NDP is slowly getting filled.

We can take a closer look at Budget 2018 in itself and we can see that our government has increased funding by \$13.7 million in Education and Training. Let's ask ourselves: Why would we do that? Because Manitobans deserve it.

Our government, Mr. Deputy Speaker, has committed to do something for my constituents that has not been done since 1991—that is build a new school in Brandon East. The previous NDP administration talked about a school for years but, as usual, nothing ever transpired. In fact, the last school built in Brandon was in Brandon West by the—pardon me—by the Filmon PC government. So again, I go forward today and I commend the Brandon School Division and the City of Brandon, the council, for working closely together and closely with our government to put education first.

In regards to families, with family growth and more families arriving in Brandon East on a regular basis—all of Manitoba's expanding with the diversity of new families coming into our communities—this budget addresses the need for an additional \$60.5 million towards Manitoba families. We are seeing an increase of almost \$9 million to improve affordable housing and I'm happy to say an additional \$13 million more for Community Living disABILITY Services.

Our Province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in this budget that was released last Monday, includes additional funding for home care—pardon me, for the Home Cancer Drug Program, for rare disease drugs, dialysis treatment and the creation of 60 new full-time paramedic positions. We have an additional \$10.4 million invested in health-care projects, which include the hospital bed expansion at the Brandon Regional Health Centre.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in addition to highlighting Brandon East, this budget addresses the needs of not only health care and education but infrastructure, agriculture and Manitoba's north.

I want to read a quote, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and because of some of the names in it I'm going to alleviate just a little bit so that I don't reveal the names in it. I mean, it was in *The Brandon Sun*, but it's 'improper' to our rules for me to read the actual names. So I'm just going to make one quote here and this is from a *Brandon Sun* columnist who says: It's going to be difficult for the NDP to battle Premier Brian Pallister and his Tories if they keep delivering budgets—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Isleifson: My apologies.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Sorry, order.

I just wanted to remind—for—not to mention the person's name, but the premier or minister of whatever department or the MLA for a constituency.

Mr. Isleifson: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I apologize for that. I actually stroked out the first name when they mentioned someone else. I missed that one, and I was reading it in one try. So I apologize for that. I appreciate that.

One other quote I want to read in here. It says here, in the 2016 provincial election Manitobans clearly chose the PC's two pledges: getting our financial house in order while not cutting front-line services, even though the NDP certainly promised a great deal more. Evidently, voters were not prepared to listen after 17 years of reckless NDP spending.

So there's two quotes in the *Brandon Sun* by a columnist and, again, he's not one of my board members; he's a columnist with the *Brandon Sun*.

And then the last quote I want to read on his behalf, it says: Local NDPers decried the Premier (Mr. Pallister) as a radical right-winger and declared this the end of our province. This week, it couldn't be

more obviously not only were these folks wrong, but that Manitoba is definitely moving in the right direction.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I certainly encourage anybody who wants to read the entire article. I can certainly get it for them. It was in the *Brandon Sun*. It looks like March the 17th, 2018.

So with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know we have other members that want to speak as well. This is something that I will not be, obviously, supporting the NDP's motion. I will not be supporting the Liberals' amended motions because we have one of the best budgets ever, and we'll certainly be supporting that because, again, I'm here to build a better Brandon East for today, tomorrow and the future.

Thank you very much.

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Logan): It is a pleasure to add a few words to the ongoing 2018 budget debate, but first I would like to take this opportunity to thank the people of the Logan constituency who repose their trust in me to represent them at this hallowed Chamber.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Logan is one of the most diverse constituencies not only in Manitoba, but across Canada. This constituency is a reflection of today's Manitoba and the Manitoba of the future.

Madam Speaker in the Chair

I'm very proud of this constituency, and I'm humbled to represent them at this Legislature.

Over the years, I have made strong connections to the community, and I am committed to working alongside community leaders and members to ensure that Logan is a great place to go to school, to work, to live and to raise families.

Mr. Deputy Speaker—Madam Speaker, a recent community event held in my constituency was the seventh annual job fair last March 3rd. This year for the first time West Alexander Residents Association co-hosted the event with our constituency office. There were 23 confirmed employers which participated and some 412 registered attendees. There could be more that we might have missed requesting them to sign our attendance sheet, but at—on that day there were entered 412 in the list.

* (16:00)

Several employers were interviewing and short-listing workers right on the job fair floor that day.

We are truly appreciative of the employers who've participated in our job fair ever since. Some of the long-term employers were: Manitoba Hydro; Manitoba civil service; StandardAero; the Winnipeg Transit; Winnipeg Police; RCMP; Corrections Service, Canada and several others, but this year, there were 23 confirmed employers.

Another recent activity transpired just last Saturday, a few days ago. For some 10 years now, we have offered low-income constituents help in income tax preparation. Madam Speaker, I sincerely and profoundly thank our many volunteers who prepared, manually or through the computer, the income tax of many low-income constituents.

Among the volunteers I wish to thank are Ernesto Concepcion, Jess Estillore, Carmen Laurel, Emelinda Ocenar, Elena Vasquez, Ramon Desiderio and Lourdes Samaniego. They have been offering their time and talents with our—for our—for the constituents for several years now. Their generosity of time and talents are truly appreciated.

Our many volunteers to our annual events, such as the tax preparation day, the job fair and our annual Canada Day celebrations, have made it possible for our constituency office to continue providing these valuable services to our constituents for many years now.

Madam Speaker, many residents of Logan constituency have expressed serious concerns with the 2018 budget recently announced by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen). They are worried the Pallister government is continuing to—making deep, long-term cuts to the services Manitobans count on such as health and education, even with the record revenues from this government's carbon taxes.

They're concerned funding for acute health care is effectively frozen while long-term care is being cut, while massive federal increases in federal transfers are being wasted on endless reports by high-priced consultants.

Madam Speaker, instead of a jobs plan, the Premier (Mr. Pallister) is gutting the roads budget, cutting support for training and apprenticeships, and making it more expensive to go to school.

Funding for a post-secondary education is being cut by millions, while costs for students and parents are rising. Tuition will go up to 70–7 per cent this fall, while the Premier freezes operating grants.

And speaking of students, Manitoba has shown its appreciation to the economic and social contributions of international students by offering them medical coverage, but in this budget, the government plans to revoke their medical coverage. And this could very well reduce the record number of international students choosing Manitoba as their destination of choice to pursue post-secondary and higher education.

Education is a great leveler. Regardless of one's social status, especially for those who are grossly disadvantaged, if they are able to obtain education, their chances of participating or improving their lot in life is greatly enhanced. So education should be accessible to all.

But the cuts to education is making it difficult, especially for those who are—who have less in life to be able to lift up their situation because of making it difficult for them to pursue trade or post-secondary education.

Let's find out what 2018 budget does for health. The Premier continues to make deep, long-term cuts to health-care services. Health spending will increase 0.9 per cent, which will result in cuts, because that's lower than the rate of inflation. And this was in CBC news last March 12th.

Essentially this budget imposes a de facto cut on Manitoba's most important priority—health care. And speaking of health care, Canada has been the envy of many, many people from all over the world, especially our neighbours south of the border, because they don't have universal health-care coverage, as we do. And this was obtained—this social program was obtained because of the hard work, efforts and sacrifices of many, many people and—notably led by Tommy Douglas, our fearless, faithful leader of the party, first leader of our party. He didn't give up hope in pursuing this program, despite many, many hurdles. And the first opportunity came during a minority government of the then-Liberal Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson. So, instead of losing government, Prime Minister Pearson agreed to Tommy Douglas's plan to implement universal health care.

So minority governments have in the past and hopefully in the present or in the future, like there are

several minority governments right now, will redound to benefits to Canadians.

So I was just talking to a fellow legislator at the conference this weekend and we were sharing our stories on the Legislature, in our respective Legislature, and we were—we agreed that minority governments should be the norm of the day.

Further to what the—this budget does to health care, the numbers don't lie. This government is starving the system by underspending health capital budget by \$175 million, by delaying ER expansions and cancelling important projects for CancerCare and new personal-care-home beds, also laying off health-care workers, cutting nearly \$9 million to Pharmacare, cutting primary-care services like the special drug program and occupational and physiotherapy, closing down hospitals—these cuts have already hurt patients now and will cost the health-care system more in the long run.

*(16:10)

I would like to mention, also, something about private-public partnerships. This government spent a year consulting KPMG on whether the Province should consider using P3 to build new schools, and delaying what our kids needed. We know that public-private partnerships have caused costly problems in education in both Nova Scotia and Alberta. More than 15 years later, these provinces were still paying for those P3 projects.

The schools that fall under the Alberta 2007 contracts aren't allowed to accommodate changing neighbourhood demographics. And, back to Manitoba, this government lifted the cap on class sizes, which means less one-on-one time between students and teachers. I doubt if there will be parents who would agree that more students in the classroom is way better than reduced class sizes.

About post-secondary tuition and affordability, we are concerned that this government's proposed changes to Student Aid—with no details, students would need to know that support will be there but—while tuition is rising. Instead, this government cut operating grants for universities and colleges by about \$5.4 million. As Dele Ojewole from the Canadian Federation of Students said, I quote: the Manitoba Bursary and scholarships do not have any new money, which means it's not currently very accessible to all students. Further, this government does not have our best interests at heart. Close quotes.

This government is making it a lot harder for young people to get the education they need to have a good start in life. Students entering university will see tuition rise every year by 5 per cent, plus the rate of inflation. And an extra 5 per cent will make tuition \$1,000 more expensive by 2022. A thousand dollars a year is a lot of money for any student, and tuition will only get more and more expensive. And that's not counting inflation. Rising course fees will have been de-regulated, the cancellation of the advance tuition fee rebate, which is at least \$500 a—per year, and cancellation of the Manitoba tuition fee income tax rebate, up to \$25,000 after graduation, are no longer available. And those receiving bursaries and scholarships will struggle to keep up by 2022, a \$1,000 scholarship won't cover the increase in tuition, let alone inflation and rising fees, and certainly not the loss of tax credits.

Madam Speaker, the Premier (Mr. Pallister) broke his promise on the carbon tax. He is not returning all of the funds to Manitobans. With few details and barely any information, the Premier is keeping Manitobans in the dark about his plans for his new tax, and we have heard from Mr. Loren Remillard from the Chamber of Commerce, who says, quote: We have dubbed this budget carbon confusion. Closed quote.

There is a lack of transparency as to what this revenue is going to support. And Mr. Remillard added, quote: The minister has said that all the money will go to tax reductions, but when you take a look at the summary of tax measures, it is clear that there is \$95 million—that \$95-million surplus from the money they're taking in versus the tax reductions they are giving. So it leaves a lot of questions. We walked out of that room confused and concerned. End of quote.

We believe the Premier is going in the wrong direction. Our GDP and unemployment rate forecasts are bad. We are projected to have the slowest GDP growth and highest unemployment rate west of Quebec for 2018 and 2019. In the meantime, the Premier spends millions on consultants, and he's spending another \$500,000 on high-priced political staff when he is making cuts to health care and education.

The Premier offered no support to help offset his plan for higher hydro bills or keep life more affordable for Manitoba families after he froze the minimum wage for two years straight.

Madam Speaker, I voice the concern and the fears of my constituents that 2018 budget is not making life more affordable for people in my constituency. So I join the members of my caucus, the independents, in rejecting the 2018 budget of this government. Thank you.

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): It's always a pleasure to, and honour to, rise in this House to speak to a budget such as the one we just had. I listened to the member for Logan (Ms. Marcelino), and I do appreciate the member for Logan. When she was a minister in the previous government, she would come to Brandon to open up the Lieutenant Governor's Winter Festival, and I do remember one particular time there where she came out and we were apparently having some trouble with the audio-visual and the microphones, and so she set her speaking notes down and she spoke off the cuff, and it was by far the best speech I've ever heard her give, and it was fabulous to have her there to open up that winter festival. She did a great job in that and, as I said, she spoke very well without her notes, and I did appreciate her coming out to Brandon for that.

But I am little disappointed in her remarks on the budget. You know, this is, as we've heard, many times during debate, the best budget ever, and there is a considerable amount of increased spending. I know that they always like to talk about percentages, but if we talk about the raw dollars and compare those to previous years, there's a tremendous increase in some areas, in many areas, there that we see. But, because, of course, we see, in the NDP, the only solution to a problem is to spend more money on it; it's not to manage it better. And that is the disappointment we did see during the 17 years of NDP rule in this province.

They thought they could do away with hallway medicine, which didn't go away; they just stopped counting people in the hallway or didn't call them hallways anymore or, you know, moved people out of the hallway while they were doing the counts. So many ways that they tried to figure out a solution for a problem that they thought they could do away with a very small amount of money. That was one of their significant provinces—promises that, of course, failed. And, time and time again, we see the fear that they try to instill in Manitobans, but when we're out in the community, Madam Speaker, that's not what we hear. We hear from people outside of this jurisdiction here, outside of the House here, outside of the Legislature, that they're very happy with the direction that this government is going and they want

us to continue in that direction. I often get a lot of different advice on that and how we should proceed even further and make sure that we're efficient in our use of resources and returning tax dollars to Manitobans, of course.

* (16:20)

They know that they have to be patient with us because we have a lot of things to fix. There was a lot of damage done to the Manitoba 'economy' by the NDP. Time and time again, every week where we sit in various meetings, we find out something new that some minister signed during the NDP reign that still has repercussions for our government and it is something that continues to cause damage to the Manitoba economy. I learned something as recently as this morning, something that a previous minister of the NDP had signed, and again, we're still paying for the damage that they'd done and this is going to cost us a considerable amount of money that we won't be able to spend on the front-line services that Manitobans are depending on, that we're still making sure are provided in an efficient manner.

You know, I do have to compliment the Minister of Education. He has gone out and he's building two new schools and now he's announced five more schools, and these are in Brandon and in Brandon East, of course. In Brandon itself this is the first new school that's been built in 27 years, Madam Speaker. In June of 2016, Waverley Park School held its 25th-year celebration that I attended the celebration. Our daughter—one of our daughters was in the second class in Waverley Park, and that was built, of course, under Premier Filmon.

So now we have another new school that's going up in Brandon East and I did—I do remember the promises that were made by one minister of Education under the former government. I think he's still here, actually, I believe the MLA for Fort Garry, and I listened very closely to the promise that was made in the Legislature and then the conversation that was out with the media in the Rotunda after and the question was from the various people in the media, well, you know, when is this school going to be built? And his response was, well, we have a process for that. Okay, well, what's the cost of the school going to be? Well, we—yes, we have this process for that, for discovering the cost. Well, what's the size of the school going to be? Well, you know, we have a process for evaluating what the size of the school would be. So obviously it was a promise with nothing in it, Madam Speaker.

This is not a promise. This is reality that's moving ahead and I compliment the Minister of Education on looking at the P3s and finding savings that they can apply to the current construction of schools.

I—again, I heard the Leader of the Opposition say as recently I think as a year ago, well, we would have built one by now. Well, that would mean that again they're going back to the old days of untendered, undisclosed contact—contracts, because if he were to have built a school in Brandon a year ago, it wouldn't have gone through the department, it wouldn't have gone through the Public Schools Finance Board, it wouldn't have gone through Treasury Board, it wouldn't have gone through Cabinet. None of those things would have happened and it would not have been tendered, Madam Speaker. So, if he would have built it a year ago, it would have been a sole-source contract with none of the department involved, not the Public Schools Finance Board. It would not have been the proper way of constructing a school nor the way that schools would have been built. But, you know, if you haven't built schools you wouldn't know those things, that you do have to follow this structure and make sure that the correct size is built, the correct type of design and in the right place at the right time.

So we know that that's going to happen in Brandon, Madam Speaker, and I'm thrilled to see that that is occurring, because under the previous government, we heard many promises that either weren't fulfilled or many, many years after the fact they may have been close to being fulfilled.

So, Madam Speaker, I look at things in this budget and it talks about the money that we're spending and reinvesting in our economy and the investments that we see in the private sector, because we've seen many announcements in Brandon from firms such as Roquette and Simplot expanding in Manitoba. And that's drawn the attention of other businesses across the world, looking at these two world-scale businesses that are investing in Manitoba, saying, you know, if they're there, maybe we should look at Manitoba as well. There's something happening there.

And, indeed, not that long ago, Madam Speaker, we had a celebration of business in Brandon, and it was the Chamber of Commerce awards, and I was thrilled to attend the awards with my colleague from Brandon East. I'm very happy to have a colleague from Brandon East on the same side as the—of the

Legislature, and, of course, the minister of crowns was there as well to give a few remarks. So we did celebrate some long-term businesses in there.

The business person of the year—or people of the year, perhaps, if—I don't want to quote the Prime Minister—but, anyway, there were two members, two of the same family, that received this award—David and Ron Cumming—who I do know very well, Madam Speaker, received the Business Person of the Year Award for taking over the business that their father had purchased and their uncle had purchased and building on that business, and, in fact, buying new businesses like Brandon Bearing. This was Zenith Paving—was the original business. They have purchased Brandon Bearing and developed it, and Brandon Bearing was one of those businesses that started and built and expanded because of the Simplot fertilizer plant, in Brandon, when it started there in 1967.

We can look back to many businesses that are 50, 51 years of age that all started to develop when that happened in Brandon. In fact, we can look at Paul's Hauling, and I'm sure you're aware of that business. Prior to that, Paul Albrechtsen was hauling water in Virden and started up a small trucking business that became, well, very large in Western Canada and in northern Manitoba and it is—had a great impact on Manitoba as well.

There's other businesses as well that I do tend to favour. Shur-Gro Farm Services is 'celerating' their 50 year—their 50th year in business this year, Madam Speaker, and I think I might have to say a few words at that one. So many other businesses, what we can see, started when Simplot invested in the plant in Brandon and developed further.

We saw the same thing happen when Maple Leaf came to Brandon, Madam Speaker, and businesses that started up and continue to promote and grow and employ people. That's the type of investment that we need in Manitoba, and it's the type of thing we see happening now, as opposed to the fear that was present under the NDP. When you're in business in Manitoba, under an NDP rule, it was a conflict, because you want to promote your business, you want to advertise your business, you want to be recognized for what you do, but you don't want to catch the attention of a socialist government, because they will put you out of business if they can. They are there, in my mind, when I saw things happen, to make your life more difficult.

We saw, during their time, our requests for donations escalated, Madam Speaker, because they were no longer funding those programs. They cut the funding for those programs, so all of these groups would come to the businesses in Brandon and across the province, say we have no government money anymore, so we need your help. And we were able to help them. We did what we could.

You know, it's something that the number of requests escalated to the point where we had to put a policy in place that we would say: I know you're coming in; you're all good alternatives that we can donate to. Please put it in writing. Put the request in writing. We'll meet at the end of every month, and we'll determine where we can make donations. And, if you don't hear from us, thank you for the opportunity. But we can't donate to everyone.

So we actually had to put logistics around how we were dealing with that—those increased demands for legislation, Madam Speaker.

You know, there are many other people that we saw last week at their Chamber of Commerce awards, and an interesting one that went to Jeff Fawcett was the Community Service Award, because he's not only a city councillor, but he's very active in very many community events. He and a partner have been involved in D&B Sprinklers for 20 years, and he got involved in various areas, like the YMCA and also in the group that is working with all the indigenous communities in Brandon, First Nations, Métis, to make sure that we're doing the best things we can for them in Brandon.

And, of course, a Business Excellence Award for Brockie Donovan, a long-time member of the Brandon community, over 100 years, I believe, a couple of years ago—and, currently, with a couple of friends in there that are running it, Wade and Kelly Lombard. Again, a family business that has been a big part of the community and has recently donated more than \$100,000 to local charities in the community foundations over the last 10 years or so.

*(16:30)

A new one though, Madam Speaker, was The Sneath Group of Companies. And this young couple has been in Brandon for, I think, about four years now. Dr. Jason Sneath is a dermatologist. We're thrilled that he chose to locate in Brandon, and I know his trading area—we usually talk about a trading area of about 150,000 people, but I think his trading area is a little larger because he's—if you're

not in Winnipeg, he is the dermatologist that you have to go see and a great young man. And he and his wife have started to develop downtown Brandon and build lofts and build apartments, and Fraser Sneath Coffee. Their holding company is developing downtown in areas that have not been lived in for many years, that have not seen businesses for many years, and I understand that she's recently received her Ph.D. from Oxford. So, you know, we're quite thrilled to have both of them in Brandon and continuing their success.

Those are the things we celebrated at the Chamber of Commerce awards, Madam Speaker and, of course, just before that we had the Women of Distinction awards as well in Brandon, and a great group of people that we recognized there. But I probably don't have time to go into all of those individuals.

I just want to say, Madam Speaker, that I am quite happy and pleased with this budget that we have put forward. We have a lot more work to do because we keep finding things that the—little booby traps and sometimes very, very large booby traps that the previous government left for us, unfortunately, and at times it does look that they intentionally poisoned the water to make things difficult for a new government, and it's sad to say that someone might do that.

But, again, we saw the fear that they tried to sow amongst Manitobans during the last election, and we see that again now where they are trying to sow fear in Manitobans. We're making progress in wait times, we're making progress in health care and we're increasing spending pretty much everywhere, and they like to say, well, it's not that.

But, again, it's that misinformation that goes out there, Madam Speaker, you know, I'm not sure if they taught the President of the United States' fake news or if he learned from them, but I think there's a little bit of both happening there. But they're certainly very good at the fake news.

So we're just out there listening and talking to Manitobans, Madam Speaker, and making sure that we do what they have asked us to do. One of the things that I have recently started to do is—well, not recently, actually, I've been doing it for a number of years is I am out in the various communities with churches and with other organizations, the Hindu community and the Muslim community, listening to what they have to say and attending their celebrations, attending their events and

congregations and, you know, it's been very interesting messages over the last few weekends as the comments I get are: Absolutely, you're going in the right direction, keep going this way and make sure that you have efficient and effective spending, and we are depending on you to turn Manitoba around and we know it's going to take a while.

And each and every time we sit in Treasury Board, we look at the numbers and we try to figure out, you know, how can we make this work better for Manitobans, and we know it's working, Madam Speaker. We know there's individuals and people attached to the end of every dollar there and making sure that we're an effective and responsible government. And I think exactly that's what you saw in this budget, and I am really thrilled to be a part of it.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Cathy Cox (Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage): Well, thank you, Madam Speaker, and I would like to say that it really is an honour and a privilege to be able to speak today on Budget 2018, a very historic budget.

But, before I get started on that, I would like to thank all of the members of my community, all of the individuals who put so much support and confidence in me during the last election on April 19, 2016, and, you know, so resoundingly supported me, you know, with each and every poll I was able to win. And that is an accomplishment that I don't take lightly, Madam Speaker, just to have the confidence of my community. It's such an honour and it's a privilege, and I will ensure that I work my hardest for them each and every day.

I know that when I go to community events—just on Friday, for example, I was at St. Anne Ukrainian Catholic Church, and they hosted, I think it was their fifth in a row, their fish fry and perogy dinner. You know, hundreds of people—I think they serve four to five hundred dollar—individuals every—each and every Friday, significant. And the outreach that they provide to the community is just astounding. They also support the breakfast program; I think it's at John Pritchard School. They do so much for our community, and I am really so proud and very humbled to be able to support this very generous community of River East.

Each and every time I go out and I meet individuals and I engage with them, they keep telling me, you know what? We support what your

government is doing. We are so, so proud of the change that we see in government, the way that you actually care about ensuring that our money is spent wisely instead of just, you know, spent without consideration of what they're actually going to purchase, the items that they're actually going to consider in their budget. None of that was done before, so they really, really are encouraged by what we're doing. You know, it's—they realize that as taxpayers, it's their money that we're spending, and they really want to make sure that it's spent wisely. They love the fact that we're looking for value for money, return on investment and all of the projects that we're funding. So I would just like to say that I will continue to work hard for them. We'll continue to make sure that they receive best value for money in each and every project that we move forward on.

Anyway, Budget 2018: It is a historic budget that proves what can be accomplished when MLAs, ministers and the public service work together. It was developed in consultation with Manitobans from all across the province. And we have listened to over 34,000 Manitobans, from the north, south, east and west, and developed a budget based on their priorities, Madam Speaker. We're fixing the finances, repairing the services and rebuilding the economy, important steps to ensure Manitoba is the most improved province in all of Canada.

And Budget '18 wasn't written on the back of a napkin, like the former government's hastily decided policy with regard to implementing a 1 per cent tax increase. And it wasn't decided hastily and without public consultation like the former government's implementation and the expansion of the PST. The former NDP government didn't care, to tell you the truth, who they taxed, Madam Speaker. They taxed, basically, everybody that they possibly could. They taxed municipalities, they taxed churches, they taxed personal-care homes, they taxed schools, they taxed every institution that they possibly could. They taxed seniors. They taxed vulnerable people. They taxed kids. They taxed the disadvantaged. They taxed low-income workers. They taxed cottage owners, and they even taxed the dead.

And, when that 1 per cent tax increase wasn't enough to address their government's spending problem, they decided to dig a little deeper in the pockets of hard-working Manitobans by expanding the tax. And perhaps they thought that we wouldn't notice, but we are smart shoppers here in Manitoba, Madam Speaker, and we really did notice that additional tax that they broadened of 8 per cent tax

hike, not only 1, but 8 per cent, on health premiums, home insurance premiums, disability premiums and even Autopac premiums. You know, I mean, you talk about libraries, museums, things like that. Each and every one of them had to pay an additional 8 per cent tax on all of those insurance premiums that they were required to pay.

So here we are today, Madam Speaker, speaking on one of Manitoba's most historic budgets, Budget 2018. It's like a 'bresh'-breath of fresh air, a budget that provides a bright and optimistic future for all Manitobans today and well into the future. Budget 2018 will encourage economic growth, increase employment opportunities, protect our environment, bolster investments in arts and culture and improve our education system. It builds stronger communities and, most importantly, lowers taxes for all Manitobans. And I want to repeat that: for all Manitobans.

After 17 years of tax hikes under the NDP government, Manitoba really deserves a break, Madam Speaker. Budget 2018 will deliver by providing tax relief for each and every Manitoba taxpayer. It will remove over 30,000 modest-income Manitobans from the income tax roll. And Budget 2018 has introduced historic increases to the basic personal exemption, allowing Manitobans to keep more than \$230 million of their hard-earned money in their pockets. We'll increase the basic personal exemption by \$2,020 by the year 2020—historic.

* (16:40)

We're providing Manitobans with the largest tax decrease and cut in history. The Budget 2018 will ensure that we protect our important and valuable natural resources. We've developed a Made-in-Manitoba Climate and Green Plan—one that will protect our environment so future generations, my children, our grandchildren can continue to enjoy clean drinking water, pristine lakes and our beautiful parks, forests and green space.

And I'd like to congratulate the minister, Sustainable Development for that wonderful plan that they've developed. I know how hard it was and how hard she worked on it to ensure that we actually had a plan that did protect our environment and was able to ensure that it also bolstered our economy at the same time. So congratulations to her.

Our Budget 2018 increases funding for the Department of Health, Seniors and Active Living to

nearly \$6.2 billion, Madam Speaker. I'd like to put on the record, and set the record straight today with members opposite, that funding for health is now at the highest level in Manitoba history. And congratulations to our Minister of Health for the sincere effort that he put into ensuring that Manitobans are more—are able to actually access better health care than ever before. Wait lists are down. The ability to access important surgery is—shorter wait times. And I am just so proud of what our government has done to ensure that Manitobans have access to reliable health care.

Under the NDP, Manitobans paid the highest ambulance fees in Canada. And I recall, during the election in 2016, people were always approaching me and saying, what are you going to do about those ambulance fees? They're the highest across Canada—over \$500. I can't afford it. They're saying, you know, in fact, we had to drive my husband—I had to drive my dad—had to drive our kids to the hospital, because we can't afford that fee.

So, Madam Speaker, we've kept our promise to Manitobans, and we've reduced fees consistently, year after year. And Budget 2018 has reduced ambulance fees—I'm very proud to say—to \$340.

And, Madam Speaker, for 17 years, the previous NDP government had neglected arts and the sports community. Budget 2018 will invest in priorities that support culture and sports across Manitoba. Budget 2018 will see our government invest over \$33 million into arts and cultural funding. We've invested up to \$20 million for the Royal Aviation Museum so that the rich history of aviation can be told here in Manitoba.

And I had the opportunity to actually visit the aviation museum about a month ago with my granddaughters. They were absolutely delighted to go there. You know, at first, they thought, oh, you know, this looks like it might be just a little bit boring, but once they started taking the tour and they actually got involved in all of the hands-on activities, it was delightful. It was just fantastic, especially going into that DC-9 that they have there, having the ability to go and walk and see that plane when they used to have windows that were probably the size of—I don't know—two feet by two feet. They were huge compared to what we have today.

And I am so fortunate that our government is going to support that—the Royal Aviation Museum and move it to a location where actually more and

more visitors will have the ability to visit it each and every year.

As well, I am so proud of our government's investment into the Inuit Art Centre. And—just not quite sure if you—okay. I'm not sure if you were giving me the—okay—the axe there, but anyways—so proud of that investment that we're making into the Inuit Art Centre at the WAG, Madam Speaker. That is going to be a collection of Inuit art that is like—anywhere else in the world. We are going to be leaders with regard to that, and it's going to actually put us on the map. It's going to provide us the opportunity to see individuals from all across the world come to see that very special collection.

And Budget '18 will invest in Manitoba's Heritage Trust program, Madam Speaker. Our government is committing \$5 million over three years to the Heritage Trust program so that we can encourage investments—community foundations to invest in their local museums, so that we can ensure that communities continue to have their story told throughout the entire province. We know how important that is to each and every community to be able to tell their story, to tell the history of how they started, how they originated. We are just looking forward to having that opportunity to raise money to assist museums with this wonderful, wonderful investment.

So, to quote from the Association of Manitoba Museums' Thomas McLeod, this is what he says. We applaud our province's Canada-wide leadership in creating this matching endowment fund for museums and archives. And he is absolutely thrilled to see the investment that we're putting into our museums. He just was overjoyed and he couldn't say enough about the project to say that Manitobans now have the ability to support and donate to their own community museums and actually get a tax receipt for that, Madam Speaker. So it's a win-win situation for all museums throughout Manitoba—rural museums, archives and art galleries.

And, of course, Madam Speaker, the film industry here in Manitoba is booming, and I am proud of the working group of industry experts that we have brought together to tell us as government how we can continue to bolster that very, very important industry. Each and every time that I talk to someone from the film industry, you know, they rave about another series that they're working on, another film that they were able to procure investment from maybe another country, from Amsterdam, from

overseas, from the United States. It's just such a very encouraging opportunity for the film industry and we know that they provide so much benefit to our economy. I believe it was hundred and—almost \$160 million is what's anticipated from last year from the film industry. So I would like to thank them from the bottom of my heart for what they do for us and the benefit that they provide to us and our economy.

And, of course, Manitoba is committed to ensuring that our Manitoba curlers continue to compete as world-class athletes. We are implementing the International Curling Centre of Excellence here in Winnipeg and working together with the experts on a group that we brought together to ensure that they will have the very best facility, the very best coaches, the very best icemakers, all of those different, separate entities that will come together to ensure that we have a world-class curling facility here in Manitoba so that people from all parts of the world will come and train and learn how to also be world-class curlers. We're very proud of what we're doing there.

And, to quote a friend of mine—a very good friend of mine and someone that most of you in the House know—I believe she's been in the House for 30 years. I believe she's the longest standing MLA—female MLA in all of Canada, Bonnie Mitchelson. She's always said you are only as good as the people who surround you, Madam Speaker. And I would just like to say that I am so fortunate to be surrounded by such good people here in the Legislature: MLAs, the colleagues of mine, the ministers and, of course, our Premier (Mr. Pallister), the Premier who believes so much in teamwork.

And, of course, I would be remiss if I didn't mention my family. Without my family, I would never, never, ever be able to accomplish what I do. I am so proud of my family for encouraging me, engaging me and continuing to support me each and every day in my role here in the Legislature.

So, in closing, Madam Speaker, I want to say that this is the very best budget. Budget 2018 is historic. It's providing important tax relief to all Manitobans, and I just hope that the members opposite would support this wonderful Budget 2018.

Thank you.

Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye): It is once again an honour to be here in this Chamber to speak to an important issue: the 2018-2019 budget.

I would like to start by thanking the constituents of La Verendrye for giving me the opportunity to be here and to represent them. It is truly an honour to work in this Chamber and to be part of a team, our Progressive Conservative team, whose goal is to make Manitoba a better place.

* (16:50)

I would also like to thank all the ministers, the Treasury Board and many others for the many hours of hard work to get this budget together for the people of Manitoba. The well-beings—the well-being of Manitobans is the reason that I believe we were—we are all here.

Budget 2018 is an important part of our government's commitment to making Manitoba the most improved province in Canada, Madam Speaker. This budget will help fix the finances, repair the services and rebuild the economy.

Madam Speaker, judging from what I have heard from NDP speakers, it seems that the opposition is not happy with our budget. I don't know why. They would like to add a bunch of amendments to it. Well, the amendments show the NDP's true colours.

Madam Speaker, these members just don't get it. It is the same kind of thinking that went into creating those amendments—spend more, spend more, spend more—that got the NDP to where they are today: in opposition. Manitobans did not agree with the way they were running government.

Since our PC government was elected in 2016, I have sat in this seat and all I hear from the MB—NDP members is: spend more, spend more, spend more. Madam Speaker, I feel obligated to let them in on something that an wise old uncle of mine once told me: It is not about how much you spend, it is about how you spend it. You need to spend it wisely. Which is—the previous government did not have a clue what they were doing when it came to spending money wisely.

I wonder if the members opposite run their own households like they did the province. Do they do any smart shopping? Do they take advantage of sales, or do they just spend, spend, spend?

Manitobans are smart shoppers, and they want a government that does the same. Manitobans deserve a break. They want a government that gets value for their money, but at the same time, being able to serve the needs of Manitobans, to be compassionate to some of the Manitobans, to spend money wisely.

The way the NDP ran the province, they just kept spending. To them, results did not seem to be important. Ranked last, or second last in 22 categories among the five west—most—westernmost provinces. Manitobans deserve better than this, Madam Speaker.

The list of mismanagement and broken promises during the NDP's 16 years in government is a long list. I could talk about them for more time than I am allowed today, so I will just briefly highlight some of them. Hopefully many of—hopefully these may convince some of them that they really should vote for our budget without their amendments, and I am glad there are a fair number of opposition here listening to the speech because the more I can convince, the better it'll be for our budget.

Our health-care system. Some of the longest emergency wait times in Canada under the NDP. They had hallway medicine; then they added highway medicine to make things even worse.

Our education system, Madam Speaker. Manitoba students scored lowest in Canada in reading, math and science in standardized tests with some of the tests—with some of the highest costs for students in Canada. Those aren't good results. Manitobans deserve better.

Highest child-poverty rates in the nation. More children using food banks. We all know you can't study when you're hungry. Hungry children cannot function properly. Far too many children in care of child-welfare agencies: 11,000-plus under the NDP. This was not good.

Doubling the provincial debt to \$21 billion in just eight years. Madam Speaker, this debt is troublesome. The NDP did not care about balancing the budget. Their spending was out of control. The deficit just kept getting larger every year, so did the debt.

In servicing—if servicing the debt was a department, it would be our fourth largest one, more than Infrastructure, more than Justice. This year, it will top a billion dollars. Just imagine what Manitoba could do with an extra billion dollars. How many more schools, how much more health care, how many more miles of roads could get repaired after the NDP left our roads in such poor condition?

Madam Speaker, a billion dollars is a lot of money, and this is when interest rates are low. Manitoba cannot pay this off overnight. This will take several years to put even a dint into that debt.

What will happen to Manitobans should interest rates rise? Will debt servicing costs go up maybe to one and a half billion dollars per year or even more? Manitobans can't afford such a debt.

Madam Speaker, what was the NDP government thinking leaving such a mess for our future generations? They talk about how important future generations are—our leaders of tomorrow, but yet they did nothing for them. They kept piling debt on, so all of our youth in Manitoba would have—would owe so much money that they'd be lost before they even started. One would think they would learn that just throwing money at problems will not solve them. They are still the same old NDP. Spend, spend, spend. I guess that is why they are who they are: a fractured opposition.

Madam Speaker, enough about the NDP mismanagement. It is time to talk about the great budget that was delivered by our Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen) last Monday.

Madam Speaker, Budget 2018 puts Manitoba's economy on the road to recovery. It is an important part of our plan to fix the finances, repair the services and rebuild the economy.

I have been in this Chamber for the last seven budgets, and this by far is the best budget I have heard. This budget gives Manitobans hope for the future. It has things in it that Manitobans deserve.

Budget 2018 will continue to regain investor confidence. We're showing the world that Manitoba is open for business. In the last year alone, we have seen almost \$1 billion invested in Manitoba's agrifood sector. Roquette, a French-based company, is investing \$400 million in a new pea-processing

plant. Simplot is spending \$460 million, expanding its potato processing plant in Portage la Prairie. This will double its production, creating close to 100 new full-time jobs. Can you imagine the spinoff this will create not only during construction but when production has reached its potential? How many more acres of potatoes will be needed to be grown in Manitoba? How many more dollars will these facilities put into Manitoba's economy in years to come? How many more businesses will see that Manitoba is open for business and are investing money into Manitoba? How many more dollars will this bring to Manitoba? This budget has more good news in it than any previous NDP budget I ever saw.

I spoke earlier about how important our youth is to Manitoba. They are our future. Education is key to their success. Madam Speaker, five new schools in this budget alone—and I will mention the one from Brandon East because it's been many years since they've had one there and my colleague from Brandon East wanted to make sure that I got Brandon East into the—into my speech.

I know that NDP will try to take credit for some of these schools. They were great at making promises, but they were even better at breaking them. They announced many projects multiple times, and that's what they did—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

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

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, March 20, 2018

CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS		Oral Questions	
Introduction of Bills		Nova Scotia Legal Challenge	
Bill 20—The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act (2)		Kinew	761
Pedersen	753	Pallister	761
Bill 24—The Social Services Appeal Board Amendment Act		Rail Line in Churchill	
Fielding	753	Kinew	762
Bill 25—The Non-Smokers Health Protection and Vapour Products Amendment Act (Prohibiting Cannabis Consumption in Outdoor Public Places)		Pallister	762
Goertzen	753	Manitoba's Carbon Plan	
Bill 26—The Impaired Driving Offences Act (Various Acts Amended)		Kinew	762
Stefanson	754	Pallister	762
Bill 27—The Fiscal Responsibility and Taxpayer Protection Amendment Act		Workplace Safety and Health	
Friesen	754	Lathlin	763
		Pedersen	764
Ministerial Statements		Legal Aid Manitoba	
Journée internationale de la Francophonie		Fontaine	764
Squires	755	Stefanson	764
Kinew	755	Health-Care Services	
Gerrard	756	Swan	765
Agriculture Awareness Day		Goertzen	765
Eichler	757	Customary Care Legislation	
Allum	757	Klassen	766
Gerrard	758	Fielding	767
Members' Statements		Budget 2018	
Gladstone Curling Club		Helwer	767
Clarke	758	Wharton	768
Kildonan-East Collegiate Hockey Team		Labour Negotiations at University of Manitoba	
Wiebe	759	Wiebe	768
St. James 55+ Centre		Pallister	768
Fielding	759	Friesen	768
Family Enhancement Program Community Visit		Crown Services Revenue	
Klassen	760	Lindsey	769
Julia Todd		Cullen	769
Micklefield	760	Pallister	769
		Petitions	
		Medical Laboratory Services	
		Gerrard	770
		University of Manitoba Students' Union Act— Amendments	
		Guillemard	770

ORDERS OF THE DAY
GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Budget Debate
(Fifth Day of Debate)

B. Smith	771
Johnston	774
T. Marcelino	777
Isleifson	779
F. Marcelino	781
Helwer	784
Cox	787
Smook	789

The Legislative Assembly of Manitoba Debates and Proceedings
are also available on the Internet at the following address:

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/legislature/hansard/hansard.html>