

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

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

Vol. LXXVI No. 7 - 1:30 p.m., Wednesday, December 1, 2021

ISSN 0542-5492

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-Second Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ADAMS, Danielle	Thompson	NDP
ALTOMARE, Nello	Transcona	NDP
ASAGWARA, Uzoma	Union Station	NDP
BRAR, Diljeet	Burrows	NDP
BUSHIE, Ian	Keewatinook	NDP
CLARKE, Eileen	Agassiz	PC
COX, Cathy, Hon.	Kildonan-River East	PC
CULLEN, Cliff, Hon.	Spruce Woods	PC
DRIEDGER, Myrna, Hon.	Roblin	PC
EICHLER, Ralph, Hon.	Lakeside	PC
EWASKO, Wayne, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	PC
FIELDING, Scott, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
FONTAINE, Nahanni	St. Johns	NDP
FRIESEN, Cameron, Hon.	Morden-Winkler	PC
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GOERTZEN, Kelvin, Hon.	Steinbach	PC
GORDON, Audrey, Hon.	Southdale	PC
GUENTER, Josh	Borderland	PC
GUILLEMARD, Sarah, Hon.	Fort Richmond	PC
HELWER, Reg, Hon.	Brandon West	PC
ISLEIFSON, Len	Brandon East	PC
JOHNSON, Derek, Hon.	Interlake-Gimli	PC
JOHNSTON, Scott	Assiniboia	PC
KINEW, Wab	Fort Rouge	NDP
LAGASSÉ, Bob	Dawson Trail	PC
LAGIMODIERE, Alan, Hon.	Selkirk	PC
LAMONT, Dougald	St. Boniface	Lib.
LAMOUREUX, Cindy	Tyndall Park	Lib.
LATHLIN, Amanda	The Pas-Kameesak	NDP
LINDSEY, Tom	Flin Flon	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Malaya	Notre Dame	NDP
MARTIN, Shannon	McPhillips	PC
MICHALESKI, Brad	Dauphin	PC
MICKLEFIELD, Andrew	Rossmere	PC
MORLEY-LECOMTE, Janice	Seine River	PC
MOSES, Jamie	St. Vital	NDP
NAYLOR, Lisa	Wolseley	NDP
NESBITT, Greg	Riding Mountain	PC
PEDERSEN, Blaine	Midland	PC
PIWNIUK, Doyle	Turtle Mountain	PC
REYES, Jon, Hon.	Waverley	PC
SALA, Adrien	St. James	NDP
SANDHU, Mintu	The Maples	NDP
SCHULER, Ron, Hon.	Springfield-Ritchot	PC
SMITH, Andrew	Lagimodière	PC
SMITH, Bernadette	Point Douglas	NDP
SMOOK, Dennis	La Vérendrye	PC
SQUIRES, Rochelle, Hon.	Riel	PC
STEFANSON, Heather, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
TEITSMA, James	Radisson	PC
WASYLIW, Mark	Fort Garry	NDP
WHARTON, Jeff, Hon.	Red River North	PC
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
WISHART, Ian	Portage la Prairie	PC
WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC
<i>Vacant</i>	Fort Whyte	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, December 1, 2021

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.

We acknowledge we are gathered on Treaty 1 territory and that Manitoba is located on the treaty territories and ancestral lands of the Anishinaabeg, Anishinewuk, Dakota Oyate, Denesuline and Nehethowuk. We acknowledge Manitoba is located on the Homeland of the Red River Métis. We acknowledge northern Manitoba includes lands that were and are the ancestral lands of the Inuit. We respect the spirit and intent of treaties and treaty making and remain committed to working in partnership with First Nations, Inuit and Métis people in the spirit of truth, reconciliation and collaboration.

Good afternoon, everybody. Please be seated.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 209—The Farmers' Markets Week Act

Ms. Janice Morley-Lecomte (Seine River): I move, seconded by the member for La Vérendrye (Mr. Smook), that Bill 209, The Farmers' Markets Week Act, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Ms. Morley-Lecomte: I am honoured today to be able to introduce The Farmers' Markets Week Act. These small markets have a big impact on the Manitoba economy. In my constituency, I am proud to have one of Manitoba's largest farmers' markets, the St. Norbert Farmers' Market, and want to bring recognition to the enormous impact these local markets have on Manitoba food security, environment and economy. These sustainable food markets are dotted across the province and provide a direct consumer-to-farmer experience for many Manitobans.

I am proud to bring this bill forward to recognize the efforts and contributions of all Manitobans involved in making these markets a success.

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

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs First Report

Mr. Dennis Smook (Chairperson): I wish to present the first report of the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs.

Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk): Your Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs—

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs presents the following as its First Report.

Meetings

Your Committee met on November 30, 2021 at 10:00 a.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building.

Matters under Consideration

- *Annual Report of Elections Manitoba for the year ending December 31, 2020*

Committee Membership

As per the Sessional Order passed by the House on October 7, 2020, amended on November 19, 2020, December 3, 2020, and further amended on May 18, 2021, Rule 83(2) was waived for the November 30, 2021 meeting, reducing the membership to six Members (4 Government and 2 Official Opposition).

- Ms. FONTAINE
- Hon. Mr. GOERTZEN
- MLA MARCELINO
- Hon. Mr. REYES
- Mr. SMOOK
- Mr. WOWCHUK

Your Committee elected Mr. SMOOK as the Chairperson

Your Committee elected Mr. WOWCHUK as the Vice-Chairperson

Officials speaking on the record:

- Ms. Shipra Verma, Chief Electoral Officer

Reports Considered and Passed

Your Committee considered and passed the following report as presented:

Annual Report of Elections Manitoba for the year ending December 31, 2020

Mr. Smook: I move, seconded by the honourable member for Swan River (Mr. Wowchuk), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

**Standing Committee on Justice
First Report**

Mr. Len Isleifson (Chairperson): I wish to present the first report of the Standing Committee on Justice.

Clerk: Your Standing Committee on Justice presents—

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on Justice presents the following as its First Report.

Meetings

Your Committee met on November 30, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building.

Matters under Consideration

- **Bill (No. 3) – The Family Maintenance Amendment Act / Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'obligation alimentaire**

Committee Membership

As per the Sessional Order passed by the House on October 7, 2020, amended on November 19, 2020, December 3, 2020, and further amended on May 18, 2021, Rule 83(2) was waived for the November 30, 2021 meeting, reducing the membership to six Members (4 Government and 2 Official Opposition).

- MLA ASAGWARA
- Hon. Mrs. COX
- Ms. FONTAINE
- Hon. Mr. FRIESEN
- Mr. ISLEIFSON
- Mr. NESBITT

Your Committee elected Mr. ISLEIFSON as the Chairperson.

Your Committee elected Mr. NESBITT as the Vice-Chairperson.

Non-Committee Members Speaking on Record

- Hon. Mr. GERRARD

Public Presentations

Your Committee heard the following 11 presentations on **Bill (No. 3) – The Family Maintenance Amendment Act / Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'obligation alimentaire:**

Jill Stockwell, Private citizen

Robynne Kazina, Private citizen

Paul Bruch-Wiens, Private citizen

Reannah Hocken, Manitoba Bar Association

Allison Fenske, Public Interest Law Centre

Lisa McConnell and Bradley Miller (by leave), Private citizens

Lisa Davies McDonald, Private citizen

Brianna Darbel, Private citizen

Joel Lebois, Private citizen

Matt Erhard, Private citizen

Courtney Maddock, Private citizen

Bills Considered and Reported

- **Bill (No. 3) – The Family Maintenance Amendment Act / Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'obligation alimentaire**

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

Mr. Isleifson: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member of Riding Mountain, that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

Madam Speaker: Tabling of reports?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Madam Speaker: The honourable Minister of Health—and I would indicate that the required 90 minutes notice prior to routine proceedings was provided in accordance with rule 26(2).

Would the honourable minister please proceed with her statement.

World AIDS Day

Hon. Audrey Gordon (Minister of Health and Seniors Care): Today members in the House are wearing a red ribbon in support of World AIDS Day.

The ribbon honours those who have lost their lives to AIDS and recognizes the need to support Manitobans who are living with HIV/AIDS.

Over the course of the last 30 years, science has made significant progress in treating HIV and AIDS, though it still carries a stigma that needs to be addressed. In Manitoba, we are taking an evidence-based approach which includes prevention, testing, treatment and care for HIV/AIDS.

In October, our government announced that we were expanding Pharmacare coverage to include HIV pre-exposure 'prophelixic,' or PrEP. Adding PrEP to the Manitoba drug formulary increased access to this life-saving medication.

We added new public health nurse positions to support STBBI case and contact management and enhance STBBI testing and treatment for priority populations. Over the last three years, our government has increased investments in harm reduction networks and peer advisory councils by \$850,000 to better reach high-risk populations and connect them to care.

And today, Madam Speaker, public health has released its annual statistical update on HIV and AIDS.

We can make safer choices to reduce the risk of infection, encourage more people to be tested, build on increased investments in preventing the spread of AIDS and support people who are living with AIDS.

Today we acknowledge those who are living with HIV or AIDS and who have had the bravery to share their stories. They reduce the stigma of having to live with AIDS, one story at a time, and encourage us to do more to build a world without AIDS.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MLA Uzoma Asagwara (Union Station): On World AIDS Day, the Manitoba NDP recognizes those in our province living with HIV and AIDS and reiterates our support for them as they seek to live full and healthy, happy lives.

Manitobans living with HIV and AIDS continue to face medical challenges in treatment and care. Advancements in treatment have drastically improved the length and quality of life of those living with HIV and AIDS, but a supportive health-care system is needed to ensure that these treatments can be accessed.

On this front, this PC government has been conspicuous for being the last government in all of Canada to approve coverage for pre-exposure

prophylactic—prophylaxis, or PrEP, a revolutionary preventative medication that reduces the risk of contracting HIV from sex by 99 per cent. This PC government's reluctance to act is especially shocking as we see HIV rates skyrocketing in Manitoba.

* (13:40)

Now this PC government has the opportunity to improve their last-in-the-country reputation for HIV and AIDS treatment by committing to supporting and funding safe consumption sites and other service providers and resource centres across our province.

But while this government continues with its thoughts-and-prayers approach to our health-care system, organizations on the ground continue to do the work the Pallister—continue to do the work the governments under Pallister and Stefanson were not doing in providing Manitobans with the treatment and support they need—

Madam Speaker: Order. [*interjection*] Order, please.

I would just ask the table to stop the clock for a minute, please.

Just a bit of a slip there. I just remind the member that if they want to use that phrase, it has to be the Pallister-Stefanson governments.

MLA Asagwara: I apologize for that mistake, Madam Speaker.

But while this government continues with its thoughts-and-prayers approach to our health-care system, organizations on the ground continue to do the Pallister-Stefanson governments' work for them by providing Manitobans with the treatment and support they need.

In particular, I'd like to highlight the work of the Manitoba Harm Reduction Network and Nine Circles Community Health Centre, which provide culturally appropriate care, treatment, support and advocacy for those living with HIV and AIDS.

Your work is appreciated by the NDP members of this caucus and in this Chamber. We will continue to stand with you and with all Manitobans living with HIV and AIDS.

Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface): Madam Speaker, I ask for leave to speak in response to the minister's statement.

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

Mr. Lamont: Today is World AIDS Day. It is important, in the middle of this COVID-19 pandemic, to recall that HIV/AIDS remains one of the most deadly pandemics in history: 35 million people around the world died of HIV. May they rest in peace.

When I was a teenager growing up in the 1980s, I remember the fear of this epidemic, a disease that was spreading, that was incurable and that was a death sentence.

And I want to hail someone who is a friend and a personal hero to me, Jim Kane. Jim is an activist who marched in the first-ever Pride parade in Winnipeg, and he's been HIV-positive since 1986.

In 2015, he told the CBC of his diagnosis that: there was a lot of shame attached to it. I believe it was 1987, and the panic and fear gripped Winnipeg at the time. It's unbelievable I am still alive. When I was diagnosed, I was planning my life in a two-year cycle, not 20 years. When I was 30, I thought I would live forever. When I was 32, I thought I was dying. I had to learn this through adversity.

Jim is alive today because of astonishing breakthroughs in medical treatment and antivirals that turned a disease that was a death sentence into a chronic, manageable condition. We have to thank the courageous activists who challenged myths and stigma around safe sex, HIV/AIDS and treatments in order to make this possible.

The Manitoba government does need to make its HIV program easier and more accessible with less hoops to jump through for both providers and patients. In Alberta and BC, for instance, drugs that prevent and cover HIV are covered 100 per cent without a deductible.

It's also critical to talk about the shattering impact an HIV/AIDS diagnosis can have on someone's mental health: fear, anxiety, depression, stigma and isolation. We need mental health supports as well.

As a province, the University of Manitoba has done some of the most important work in the world on HIV/AIDS, and their work should be an inspiration to all of us.

The goal of world AIDS today is to eradicate HIV/AIDS, as other diseases have been, by 2030.

Thank you to everyone like Jim Kane who made this hope a real possibility.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Curling Week in Manitoba

Hon. Wayne Ewasko (Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Immigration): I am pleased to rise today to remind all members that Manitoba curling week occurs on the third week each January and, in 2022, will occur from January 16th to 22nd.

Manitoba curling week typically kicks off with the Manitoba Open, the largest curling bonspiel in the world, from January 13th to 17th.

As we emerge from the pandemic, CurlManitoba has done an admirable job in its return-to-play plans and adapting to ongoing public health protocols, and I want to thank its executive director, Craig Baker, and his staff, along with board president, Ray Baker, for their leadership.

As you know, curling is in my blood and both my family and extended family enjoy the sport immensely, ever since we were able to throw a rock down a sheet of ice.

Curling is an inclusive sport open to people of all ages and abilities, and the game is even adaptable to those with physical disabilities. It is also a fun and interactive sport for all genders, played by both adults and kids of all ages of varying levels.

Manitoba, as a winter province, allows curling to be a grassroots sport designed to get many individuals from local communities to play the game either recreationally or competitively. Manitoba has many curling clubs and rinks around the province and is often the hotbed for having the best curlers, coaches, volunteers and, I would unapologetically add, the best icemakers in the world.

Madam Speaker, I want to recognize the 18 elite curling men's and women's teams that participated in the 2021 Canadian Olympic curling trials this past weekend.

The exciting all-Manitobas final resulted in Team Jennifer Jones winning the curling trials over Team Tracy Fleury to represent Canada again at the 2022 Beijing Olympics in February.

Congratulations also to Team Brad Gushue, who will represent the men's side.

Returning back to Manitoba curling week, I encourage everyone to visit, support and promote their local curling clubs this winter, and to even consider playing the wonderful sport.

In closing, as the House will rise tomorrow, Madam Speaker, I want to take a moment to wish each and every member as well as staff of the Manitoba Legislative Assembly a very merry Christmas and a safe and wonderful holiday season.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: The honourable Minister of Advanced Education.

Mr. Ewasko: I would like to ask for leave so we could add the names of Team Jennifer Jones' teammates into Hansard. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Apparently, the member does not have to do that anymore.

Jennifer Jones, Kaitlyn Lawes, Dawn McEwen, Jocelyn Peterman, Lisa Weagle; and Viktor Kjell.

Helen Betty Osborne

Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas-Kameesak): Fifty years ago, on November 13th, 1971, Helen Betty Osborne—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Lathlin: —was abducted, brutally raped and murdered. Justice in her case was denied for far too long. We must never forget.

Betty was a young Cree woman from Norway House Cree Nation. She attended high school in The Pas to pursue her dream of becoming a teacher. Her attackers were four non-Indigenous men. Only one was ever convicted, 16 years after her death. Her family and the Indigenous community remember this miscarriage of justice. Justice delayed is justice denied.

On November 13th, leadership and community members from both sides of the Saskatchewan River in The Pas, along with Betty's friends and family, gathered to commemorate 50 years since her death. On that day, The Pas Mayor Herb Jaques gave a heartfelt apology and demonstrated true reconciliation.

Everyone gathered was all too aware that five other women from the region remain missing or were found murdered with few answers about what happened to them. Kendara Ballantyne, Josie Martin, Amanda Bartlett, Irene Gamblin-Kastrukoff and Elizabeth Dorion are five of at least 1,500 missing or murdered Indigenous women and girls in Canada, though that number is likely much higher. The impact of these unsolved cases and murders is devastating to families and communities.

As a society, we must do more to bring justice to the victims, their families and Indigenous communities. We continue to fight against systemic racism, marginalization and abuse of our Indigenous women and girls. We must remember their names and stories, and keep them from becoming simply a statistic.

The most important way to honour Helen Betty Osborne's legacy is to fight against all of the factors which continue to put women and girls like her at risk of violence and murder.

Always loved, never forgotten, forever missed.

Ekosi.

ANAVETS Assiniboia 283

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance): Today I want to recognize the executive council of ANAVETS Assiniboia 283, located in Kirkfield Park.

The army, navy and air force veterans of Canada, also known as ANAVETS, is the oldest veterans' organization in the country. Established in Montreal in 1840, ANAVETS Canada is known for a non-profit organization with over 15,000 members, Madam Speaker, in 67 units across Canada.

Madam Speaker, 75 years ago this meeting was held—for unit 283 was held in Winnipeg at the current site of the Historical Museum of St. James-Assiniboia in the old Assiniboia municipal hall. The charter executive council was established, and then July 13th, 1946, ANAVETS 283 was officially opened.

* (13:50)

Also known as the Friendly Club, ANAVETS 283 provides a safe and welcoming place for veterans and community members to gather and socialize. Located at 3584 Portage Ave., they offer several sports leagues, live music and dancing, bingo, meat draws. They also have things like hall rentals, catering services and special events to be available.

With almost 500 members of ANAVETS 283, it takes a team of dedicated volunteers to manage the club and really maintain the building and the numerous social activities being offered. The work is often behind the scenes, requiring countless hours, whether either painting, planning, meeting, managing, upkeep-ing or even more.

Madam Speaker, I want to personally thank president Len Cook and special events chair Ken Cade for regular communications and dedication to the success of ANAVETS 283.

I'd also like to ensure that all the members of ANAVETS 283 executive council are included in Hansard, Madam Speaker.

Honorary president, Gord Criggarr; past president, Hayden Kent; president, Len Cook; 1st vice-president, ways and means advisor and treasurer, Bill Sadler; 2nd vice-president and sports, Rae Roberts; recording secretary and public relations, Brenda Walls; membership, Leo Barron; lotteries, Gord Watt; entertainment, Bernice Kwasnicky; social and moral service officer, Donna Hartie; special events and grants, Ken Cade; building and maintenance, John Blair; ladies auxiliary president, Elvia Furutani; over 55 plus retired president, Roger Briand; Canadian veterans MB and supporters, Sven Leppik; Sgt-At-Arms, Rae Roberts; acting pipe major, Bill McQuarrie; unit padre, Reverend Canon Dr. Murray Still.

Communities 4 Families

Ms. Lisa Naylor (Wolseley): I am pleased to rise today to congratulate Communities 4 Families on 20 years of service to families within the Wolseley constituency and downtown Winnipeg.

Communities 4 Families is one of 26 distinct Healthy Child Coalitions across the province that was facing an uncertain future after being defunded by this government. To their great surprise, funding was reinstated last week. This is too late to save all the Healthy Child Coalitions, but, thankfully for downtown Winnipeg, Communities 4 Families will continue.

Guided by four pillars—parenting support, healthy living, literacy and building community capacity—Communities 4 Families provides programming for families with children zero to six that address the specific challenges of living in a downtown urban environment.

Communities 4 Families has focused on equipping and empowering existing community services with evidence-based, specialized training and mentorship. They have provided training for over 1,000 facilitators and \$800,000 in grants to more than 100 downtown agencies that have helped increase food security for children and families, develop leaders from within and provide ongoing education to volunteers and staff.

In 2004, Communities 4 Families developed Wiggle, Giggle & Munch, an award-winning, nationally recognized parent-child program that promotes physical literacy, healthy relationships and nutrition.

Sticks & Stones was piloted in 2018, an outdoor play program designed for families who don't have easy access to nature. More recent programs include Tapping into Resiliency Through Storytelling, Reaching In, Reaching Out resiliency skills training and a workshop for dads called Gentle Heroes.

The tremendous impact of Communities 4 Families in the Wolseley constituency and beyond cannot be overstated. Every year, hundreds of families have a safe place to get to know each other, access vital supports and become a part of each other's social safety net.

Please join me in congratulating the coalition on 20 years of innovative and dedicated service.

Kyle Machan

Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River): I rise in the House today to recognize a young entrepreneur in our constituency, Kyle Machan.

Kyle is proud father of two boys, and he and his wife Ellie chose to raise their family in the Swan Valley. In Kyle's words, we are blessed to live in Manitoba.

Kyle graduated from the SVRSS. In 2003, Kyle and Ellie started Rumors Skate and Snow. Rumors created three full-time jobs and multiple part-time jobs for youth in the valley. The floor size was recently expanded and another expansion is in the horizon.

In 2006, Kyle and Ellie purchased a graphic design business, Sign Here. This business employed five full-time and one part-time position.

Kyle's connection to his community inspired him to become involved in an industry where he could motivate youth to pursue their dreams right here in Manitoba. When the opportunity to teach graphic design at the SVRSS presented itself, Kyle took on the challenge. He successfully completed the—his vocational teaching degree at Red River College, receiving his diploma this past summer.

Kyle started the Skateboard Union in 2009, an organization dedicated to seeing the creation of a concrete skateboard plaza in Swan River. After three years of fundraising and local support, they opened the 8,000-square-foot Swan River Lions skate park. The skate park sees constant use, summer and winter, for all ages.

This past year, Kyle began pursuing plans to develop a current trail system into a four-season destination incorporating the Thunderhill Ski Area to attract tourism to the area.

Kyle's No. 1 takeaway is keep pushing each other up, as this builds the backbone of Manitoba's economy. Kyle's motto is to support growth, support local and encourage Manitobans to get out and explore our great province and all the beauty it has to offer. There is no place like home.

Thank you.

Speaker's Statement

Madam Speaker: I have a statement for the House.

I am pleased to introduce to you the first annual report of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba. This report is located on the desks of members in the House today and is being delivered to members attending virtually. Our Assembly staff have undertaken many significant initiatives since 2016 and it is important that we share them with you.

This report delivers insight into the unique role our organization plays in Manitoba's parliamentary system through the services that we provide to members and to Manitobans.

This report highlights—presents highlights of the work undertaken by members of the Legislative Assembly and the efforts of the Legislative Assembly administration in supporting members' daily activities. By opening a window into the workings of the Manitoba Legislative Assembly and increasing the public understanding of our parliamentary system, this report contributes to the transparent public governance expected by Manitobans.

We have many accomplishments to share. This first annual report covers the four years from 2016 to 2020. Our next report will cover 2020 to 2022, and thereafter, each report will be released annually.

I hope you enjoy reading Our Story.

Thank you.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Manitoba's Health-Care System Cost of Private Agency Nurses

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Madam Speaker, I want to tell you how good it is to be back and to hear that land acknowledgement in person.

Just want to take a moment to say thank you to everyone who's reached out, to my colleagues, to friends across the aisle, to people in the community who offered well wishes, prayers, did contactless deliveries. It really means a lot to see that outpouring after my COVID-19 diagnosis.

I also want to say that I feel like living in an area with access to clean water, housing, economic opportunity, exercise really made a difference as well, and so it's just renewed my commitment to addressing the social determinants of health. I also recognize that I probably would've gotten much sicker had I not had two doses of the vaccine. So I encourage everyone to please get vaccinated just as soon as you can.

And, of course, we have to fix our health-care system.

On that: today we are going to show that the Province has spent more than \$22 million on agency nurses so far this year, not including Winnipeg.

Why does the PC leader want to spend so much money at private nurses instead of investing in the public health-care system?

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Premier): I just wanted to say to the member opposite that—glad he is better. I'm not sure if I am allowed to refer—the fact that he's back here, but we're glad to see his face here today, Madam Speaker, and so we certainly wish him well and—he and his family.

Madam Speaker, with respect to the member's question, of course, it's incumbent upon us—we know that there is a nursing shortage not just in Manitoba but, indeed, across the country. We recognize there's a challenge. That's why we've announced 400 new nursing seats through our post-secondary institutions. We've also recognized the internationally educated nurses and are moving some of those individuals into nursing positions as we speak.

We know that there's more work to be done. We recognize that and we're moving in that direction.

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

Mr. Kinew: Madam Speaker, the Pallister government's nursing shortage is costing Manitobans. It means fewer nurses at the bedside and it means that our health-care system has to pay more to provide the existing level of services. I'll table the documents to prove it.

We see that so far this year—not even at the year end—Southern Health has spent \$2.4 million on private staff; Northern Health has spent 7 and a half million; Interlake-Eastern has spent \$1.8 million. Prairie Mountain, though, took the cake, with the numbers we have so far, at 10 and a half million. That's \$22 million so far this year to for-profit companies, and the government won't even give us the numbers for the Winnipeg health region.

Why does the former Health minister think it's better to give \$22 million to private health companies rather than investing in our public system?

* (14:00)

Mrs. Stefanson: Certainly, first and foremost, our—what we want to do and achieve is to ensure that all Manitobans are safe in our hospital systems, and that requires from time to time—even under the previous NDP government—to reach out to private organizations to offer those services.

I hope the member opposite is not suggesting that we don't reach out to those, because that would certainly jeopardize patient safety, and I don't think anyone would want to go there. At least, I don't think so, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Kinew: Madam Speaker, the PC leader is overpaying—[*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: —to deliver the existing level of service. That's what happens when you have to turn to private nursing firms. It also leads to longer waits and fewer nurses at the bedside.

The PC leader tries to ignore the fact that she is responsible for creating the nursing shortage, along with Brian Pallister. We see that this \$22 million that they're spending on agency nurses this year is merely a symptom—[*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: —of the problems that we see in the health-care system province-wide. And again, that's \$22 million—[*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: —outside the Perimeter; they won't even release the figures for the Winnipeg health region.

Will the former Health minister stop spending millions on private health care and instead start hiring more nurses to deliver health care publicly in Manitoba?

Mrs. Stefanson: What I want to do is just say that this has obviously been—this is a national issue that all provinces are facing. It's a challenge that we have recognized, and we're taking steps in the right direction, Madam Speaker.

What I want to say is, Assiniboine Community College President Mark Frison said that our government's nursing target is welcome news and that they will do everything possible to contribute to adding 400 more nursing graduates, Madam Speaker.

He also commented that ACC is already well positioned for this, as—[*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Stefanson: —last year, there were 220 nursing graduates, Madam Speaker, and 100 per cent of those received employment in Manitoba. We think that's good. We have more work to do; we're committed to doing that work.

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

Transfer of Seniors Out of Community Constituent Case Concern

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Madam Speaker, it seems that each day, we learn more about the human toll that the Pallister-Stefanson governments' health-care cuts are taking on Manitobans.

Judy Tomlinson's mother is 94 years old. Now, Mom was recently admitted to St. Boniface Hospital with a health condition. However, Judy, her primary caregiver, was shocked to see that her mother was then arranged and transferred to Hamiota, some 300 kilometres away.

Now, Judy's mother had suffered a heart attack, she has a serious infection and also early stages of dementia. And amidst all that, she was taken away from her family and transported across the province.

This has to stop.

Will the former Health minister stop transferring patients hundreds of kilometres away from their loved ones? [*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order. Order. Order.

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Premier): COVID-19 has obviously had many challenges, and many families have been challenged as a result of COVID-19, Madam Speaker. And, of course, our thoughts go out there to all of those who have been in difficult positions within their families.

And I know that, when movements are made and patient flow within the hospitalization system, we know that those are made by clinicians, by those within the medical system itself. Those are not decisions that are made by government; we don't intervene in those decisions.

And they're made based on the safety of those individuals, and we want to ensure that those decisions continue to be made based on safety, not based on what members opposite may say.

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

Mr. Kinew: Madam Speaker, this is about what Judy Tomlinson says; this is about the impact on the care of her mom. Your mom. Think about that.

Ninety-four years old. It took nearly seven hours to transport Judy's mom to Hamiota because of bad roads. She didn't eat for nearly a day because of the transfer.

This is how we're treating seniors in Manitoba? We should all be ashamed. This is not how we should be treating seniors. This is not how we should be treating people as they try and recover from their health challenges, yet it's a direct result of the chaos and the mismanagement that we've seen from the Pallister-Stefanson governments when it comes to health care.

Will the Premier finally take a different path? Will she withdraw this policy of moving seniors hundreds of kilometres away from their loved ones?

Mrs. Stefanson: Challenges have been created as a result of COVID-19. We know that. That's why patient flow within the hospital system is incredibly important.

We need to make sure that that flow continues so that there's access to those who are suffering from severe illnesses, from heart attacks, from COVID, for other—from other things—that they have the access to the ICU—[*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Stefanson: —and the hospitalization that they need when they need it.

And so, those decisions are made based on—for those reasons, which is primarily patient safety and ensuring that we have a hospital system that's there for Manitobans when they need it. [*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order. Order.

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

Mr. Kinew: Madam Speaker, let's be clear: the PC government should not be moving seniors around the province like pieces on a chessboard. These are human beings we're talking about. We're talking about Judy Tomlinson; we're talking about her mother.

This is serious. This is not worthy of heckling. Because of the cuts, because of the chaos in health care, seniors are being transported hours away from supports, hours away from what they need to have a strong recovery.

When will this policy end, or are we simply to embrace the new normal of having seniors transported hundreds of kilometres away from their families?

Mrs. Stefanson: The member opposite continues to put false information on the record by stating that there's cuts in health care. That's simply not the case, Madam Speaker: \$6.98 billion overall funding—that's an increase of \$156 million from last year alone.

We have made significant investments in our health-care system over the course of the last little while. What the member opposite doesn't want to recognize is the fact that there is a worldwide pandemic on and it has been on for the last 18 to 20 months.

Madam Speaker, we recognize there's been challenges to our health-care system. We know that difficult decisions have to be made, and those decisions are made by professionals within the system itself. Those are difficult positions as a result of COVID-19, a worldwide pandemic.

Surgical and Diagnostic Procedure Backlog Request for Government to Address

MLA Uzoma Asagwara (Union Station): A Manitoban was living with severe mouth pain that prevented him from eating normally. He was told he needed minor dental surgery, a surgery that would typically be covered by Manitoba Health. But knowing of the huge backlog in surgeries that exist, caused by the Pallister-Stefanson governments, he knew he could be facing months, even years of pain until he got the surgery that he needs.

Because it was impacting his ability to eat normally, the individual knew he had to take matters into his own hands. He couldn't wait, so he paid for dental surgery out of his own pocket.

Why does the minister think it's okay for individuals to pay out of their own pocket, and will she set a date, finally, for when the surgical backlog will be cleared?

Hon. Audrey Gordon (Minister of Health and Seniors Care): After preparing for the fourth wave, there is no higher priority than addressing the surgery and diagnostic backlog.

Individuals who have specific cases that they would like to raise can raise that with my department. We would be more than pleased to look into individual situations.

Our government is committed to addressing the surgical and diagnostic backlog, and an announcement is forthcoming.

* (14:10)

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

MLA Asagwara: The minister isn't getting back to citizens who reach out, which is why we're raising these questions in the House.

He had to pay \$1,200 out of pocket for a surgery that should be free, Madam Speaker. More and more, we're seeing Manitobans paying out of pocket for these procedures that they should be able to get for free here at home.

Whether it's \$1,000 or \$20,000, no Manitoban should have to pay out of pocket for something that should be covered under Manitoba Health. It shouldn't even be an option that they consider. But, sadly, that's what it's come to, because people are living in prolonged pain because of the cuts made by the Pallister-Stefanson governments. It's wrong.

Will the minister announce real dollars and real action immediately that will help address this backlog?

Ms. Gordon: Perhaps the member was absent from the Legislative Building on the day when our government made the investment of \$50 million, Madam Speaker, to address the surgical and diagnostic backlog.

Perhaps the member was also absent when we put forward four separate requests for service arrangements that are currently leading to 11,000 additional procedures being addressed—being—to address the backlog of surgeries and diagnostics, and our fifth RFSA closed on October 27th. Looking forward to sharing the results of those proposals with Manitobans.

We have made investments. We'll continue to make investments to ensure Manitobans have the care that they need right here at home.

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

MLA Asagwara: Madam Speaker, announcements do not equal action.

It is Wednesday, December 1st. It's been a month since this PC leader said she was going to announce a task force. It's been weeks since both the minister and PC leader have said stay tuned.

Manitobans are insulted. They cannot wait any longer, and they shouldn't be forced to pay out of pocket for something this government should be providing. So, enough with the thoughts and prayers, and enough with the stay tuned.

Will the minister commit to a date the surgical backlog will be cleared and provide the resources necessary to achieve that immediately? *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Gordon: I know the members opposite, their plan is always to fear monger and to cast doubt in the minds of Manitobans that we are going to address their need for surgeries—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Gordon: —and diagnostic tests.

We have provided—\$13.7 million has been spent to date for 8,300 procedures, Madam Speaker; four requests for supply arrangements in the amount of \$8.1 million; \$5.6 million in service delivery organizations. For priority procedures, such as hips, knees, cataracts: more news to come.

I'm glad the member is looking forward to my announcement. I welcome the entire NDP caucus to join us for that announcement. Looking forward to sharing with Manitobans our goals.

Northern Health Region Staffing and Funding Concerns

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): Different leader, same PC party.

One out of every four RN positions in the North sits empty. These are the vacancy rates as of November 1st of this year: Thompson, 29 per cent; Snow Lake, 50 per cent; Leaf Rapids, 53 per cent; Lynn Lake, an astonishing 80 per cent vacancy rate. The situation is worse, not better.

Will the minister take responsibility and acknowledge the staffing crisis they have created in the North, and fix it now?

Hon. Audrey Gordon (Minister of Health and Seniors Care): Madam Speaker, the issue of the nursing shortage is not unique to Manitoba. It's been seen across the country, internationally, around the world.

And we are taking steps. That is why our government has invested dollars to create 400 new nursing education seats. Madam Speaker, 1,200 internationally educated nurses have applied to the program that members on this side of the House created to address the mess that they left for us.

Madam Speaker, we will continue to assist our regional health authorities to fill those positions as quickly as possible.

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

Mr. Lindsey: Madam Speaker, cuts to northern health care have taken a toll. So far this year, they've spent \$7.5 million in the Northern Health Region for agency care. That's many times more than it used to be. The region is relying more and more on temporary supports to deal with structural problems. This isn't the care we need in the North.

Why is the minister okay with spending so many millions of dollars on private for-profit agency care when we need permanent nurses in the North today?

Ms. Gordon: Madam Speaker, \$1.18 billion in additional funding to Health. We added 60 new full-time nursing positions to ICUs in Brandon, Grace Hospital, St. Boniface and HSC. We've also committed—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Gordon: —the largest capital investment in the history of this province: \$812 million. We will be

creating a hub where individuals can access care in the North. We continue to support our transportation programs to ensure that people living in the North can get the care they need.

We are supporting the northern regions, and we'll continue to do so.

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

Mr. Lindsey: Madam Speaker, I table the funding letter for the northern region.

The former minister of Health—now the PC leader and Premier (Mrs. Stefanson)—approved this. It includes \$2.3 million in cuts such as: eliminates travel subsidies for those who need to travel within the region, like Flin Flon folks who now have to travel to The Pas to give birth; cuts to physician overtime, if they need to travel; cuts to registered nurses in personal-care homes—like people in personal-care homes don't need proper care.

Why is this minister and the PC leader committed to following Brian Pallister's legacy? Will they immediately take action to fix the problems that they continue to create?

Ms. Gordon: Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to rise in the House to congratulate the University College of the North, which has created a new nursing diploma program that will add 20 new seats in—based in Thompson. And—

An Honourable Member: Is that in the North?

Ms. Gordon: That's the North.

Our government has also doubled—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Gordon: —the NDP's funding of the northern patient transport program from \$7.9 million to \$18.1 million, Madam Speaker. With the investments we will be making with the \$812 million in capital funding, we are working with our northern partners on the creation of a northern hub—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Gordon: —which will reduce the need for individuals living in the North to travel to Winnipeg and will get care closer to home. That is the northern investments—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Access to Addiction Treatment Services Call for Inquest into Mr. Earnshaw's Death

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): In the first half of this year, 199 people died—drug-related deaths, according to the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner. And if that pace keeps up, Manitoba will quickly surpass last year's overdose deaths.

This is an epidemic, Madam Speaker, and must be treated as such, yet people like Lee Earnshaw, who was actively seeking help, are not able to get the supports that they desperately need here in Manitoba.

Will the minister call for an inquest into the death of Lee Earnshaw so that we can see where the gaps and deficiencies are in our addictions treatment and care systems today?

Hon. Audrey Gordon (Minister of Mental Health, Wellness and Recovery): Madam Speaker, the loss of life due to overdose or substance use is very tragic. That is why our government created the ministry of Mental Health, Wellness and Recovery, so that we could address these issues straight—directly.

And that is why we're currently talking to individuals with lived experience across the province, with service delivery organizations, so that we can develop the five-year action plan to address the issues for individuals struggling with overdose and mental health issues.

* (14:20)

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

Need for Harm Reduction Investments

Mrs. Smith: Advocates are begging this government to invest in safe consumption sites, more treatment beds and long-term-treatment centres.

St. Boniface Street Links Executive Director Marion Willis said that lean—Lee Earnshaw, and I quote, wanted his sober life back and he knew that it was possible because he had done it before, but he couldn't do it in Winnipeg, Manitoba, because we simply don't have the system of care to support him. End quote.

We need to figure out where our addictions treatment and care systems are lacking so that we can bolster them and ensure that they do better.

Will the minister call for an inquest into lean—Lee Earnshaw's death and commit to working on a

harm-reduction strategy that includes safe consumption sites here in Manitoba?

Ms. Gordon: Our government committed to establishing and creating 100 new supportive recovery housing beds and we fulfilled that commitment, Madam Speaker. Looking forward to having the final 40 beds come online in early January at Riverwood House.

We've also established the RAAM clinics, something that didn't exist under the NDP's guidance. We've—we expanded access to naloxone, a non-addictive drug that can block the effects of an opiate overdose, Madam Speaker.

We will continue to support Manitobans, to listen to Manitobans through our consultation of round-table discussions, to ensure that we meet their needs going forward.

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

Mrs. Smith: Whether or not they mean to, this government reveals its priorities in so many ways. They still have not appointed a mental health, wellness and 'recovery'—recovery minister, still haven't taken action on safe consumption sites and still won't call an inquest into the death of Lee Earnshaw.

Lee Earnshaw's death paints a clear picture—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Smith: —of how poverty, addictions, homelessness and trauma compound for folks, especially when they lack the necessary supports and resources to heal.

Will the minister commit today to investing in harm reduction strategies across our—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Smith: —province, including safe consumption sites, mobile support clinics and long-term treatment centres and beds here in Manitoba?

Ms. Gordon: Madam Speaker, a minister of Mental Health, Wellness and Recovery was appointed on January 5th of 2021. That appointment was made by this government, and this government continuously is evaluating and implementing cost-effective, safe, evidence-based harm reduction and addictions treatment programs and services. And we will continue to analyze outcomes and risk associated with harm reduction initiatives to help inform public policy going forward.

Canada-Manitoba Child-Care Agreement Timeline for Release of Report

Ms. Danielle Adams (Thompson): It's been almost four months and nobody has seen the Canada-Manitoba child-care agreement that was signed. And, while BC, Nova Scotia, Saskatchewan, Yukon and PEI have all posted their agreements publicly, the minister is spending her time blaming the federal government for the delay in posting Manitoba's.

Well, Madam Speaker, Minister Gould said the Province can actually post it whenever they want to.

So I ask the minister, when will she release the Canada-Manitoba child-care agreement?

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Families): I do look forward to working with my new federal counterpart in Ottawa on this historic agreement that Manitoba reached with Ottawa last August.

And I can assure the House and all Manitobans that the work in the Manitoba government has continued since we signed that agreement in August to not only raise the child-care subsidy threshold but also to extend the child-care benefit to many new operating agencies, to increase the number of spaces available and to lower the threshold for parent fees.

That work is under way right now and we will have the timeline and the full action plan released imminently.

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

Ms. Adams: Their failure to produce these agreements should be troubling for anybody who wants to see a clear, transparent government and reporting. That's what Susan Prentice, a long-time child-care activist in Manitoba, said about this government's failure to release this report, and rightfully so, Madam Speaker.

Child-care providers and families know this government's poor track record on child care. Over five years, the funding has been frozen, doubling of nursing fees and pushing for more private spaces. That is why it's so important Manitoba sees what this provincial PC government has planned for child care.

Will she post the agreement today?

Ms. Squires: I would like to remind members opposite that our government is investing \$25 million more in child care than they ever did. I would also like to remind members opposite that Budget 2021 saw

investments for 541 new spaces to be created this year alone, something that that member voted against.

I can also assure the member that we are on track to establishing all of the commitments laid out in the Manitoba-Canada agreement, including that minimum wage grid operating supplement, the certification requirements, creating new spaces for—in the child-care sector, as well as reducing those parent fees. That is work that is ongoing within the Manitoba government that will be completed on the timeline.

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

Ms. Adams: Well, it's easy to say that they're almost done completing all of the promises in there, because we haven't seen it. I've written the minister asking her to release the agreement to ensure accountability and allow child-care providers to start planning.

And what is her response, Madam Speaker? Nothing. Complete silence.

I table the letter again for the minister. And while she takes her time creating affordable child care for families, each and every day there are families struggling to find affordable spots and qualified ECEs are leaving the sector.

Will the minister finally respond to my letter and release the Canada-Manitoba child-care agreement today?

Ms. Squires: Well, I'm very pleased to hear that the member opposite is admitting that our government is focused on creating affordable, accessible child-care spaces in the province of Manitoba. That is why we enhanced the budget every year since we took office.

We have increased the budget for learning—early-learning and child-care centres. That is why, this year alone, we created investments to create 541 new spaces. That is why we're continuing to work with our child-care sector to ensure that it is robust to help us in the post-pandemic recovery that we know is going to be very vital.

So we're very pleased to continue to work with our—all of our partners in delivering early learning and child care throughout the entire province.

HIV/AIDS Medication Free Access to PrEP

Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface): Today, December 1st, is World AIDS Day, and one of the most troubling habits of this PC government is making big promises and holding out false hope, only for

Manitobans to find that they've been deceived and they don't qualify for the help they need. For example, earlier this year, when the government promised enhanced coverage for the thousands of people living with type 1 diabetes, only 50–five-zero–more people benefited.

A similar issue is true with the announcement of pre-exposure prophylaxis, or PrEP. Proven to reduce the contraction of HIV/AIDS, it still requires many Manitobans to pay hefty Pharmacare deductibles.

Why is this government still requiring anyone to pay thousands of dollars out of pocket for life-saving medications? Will this government make PrEP free to prevent HIV/AIDS today?

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Premier): We take this disease very seriously and are actively working with Public Health to improve prevention and treatment of HIV and AIDS.

And that's why, Madam Speaker, we added the coverage of PrEP to the provincial Pharmacare formulary, allocating \$2.3 million over three years to support the development and implementation of an Indigenous-led STBBI testing and contact-tracing strategy.

So those are the investments we are making. We have been moving forward. I wish the member opposite would get on board with us. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

The honourable member for St. Boniface, on a supplementary question.

Blood-Borne Disease Prevention Harm Reduction and Needle Exchanges

Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface): Today, Manitoba Health and Seniors Care released their annual surveillance report showing the HIV data for 2020 in Manitoba. There are a number of concerning statistics because cases are up and testing is down. The No. 1 risk factor for new cases is unknown, but the second-most common risk factor is using intravenous drugs, for men and women, and it's driving HIV and STI and blood-borne infections.

* (14:30)

Everyone's life is touched by someone who struggles with substance use. We should still love that person enough to ensure they don't get sick or die because of that dependence. Oftentimes, a single clean needle will make the difference.

Will this government invest more in harm reduction and needle exchanges to prevent the spread of blood-borne diseases across Manitoba?

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Premier): The member opposite will know that we've already moved in that direction. But beyond that, Madam Speaker, we've also extended coverage for HIV post-exposure treatment as well as enhanced coverage for HIV treatment for those experiencing financial or administrative barriers.

So, clearly, we recognize there's a problem. The Minister of Health has been working diligently with Public Health to ensure that we put the appropriate mechanisms in place to help those through these difficult times. That's exactly what is happening. I want to thank her for doing her job very well for Manitobans.

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

Menstrual Product Availability Request for Free Access

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): Having access to menstrual products should be a basic human right. Unfortunately, these products are not always accessible for those who need them.

We know from advocacy groups and individuals from across Manitoba that having access to these products would improve peoples' physical and psychological well-being. Madam Speaker, the City of Winnipeg has taken a tremendous step forward in starting a pilot project for free menstrual products, and it's long overdue that this provincial government take on some responsibility.

What is this new Premier going to do to ensure all Manitobans have access to menstrual products moving forward?

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Education): I thank the member for this question.

I did address this, I think, yesterday in the House. Clearly, our government takes this issue very seriously. We're currently working with a number of my colleagues on this front, and we had meetings ongoing. We're looking what other provinces are doing in this front. Some good news coming out of Ontario, where the private sector stepped in to help. That may be part of our solution here in Manitoba.

We have asked our committee that's dealing with poverty and education to review this very important

issue. And we look forward for a report back from that committee.

Manitoba's Livestock Producers Herd Management Program

Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River): This year's drought impacted Manitobans of all stripes, and few harder than Manitoba ranchers and ag producers.

Feed and water challenges forced many livestock producers to reduce their herds. These losses have placed an additional burden on these Manitobans heading into another uncertain winter.

Can the minister explain how the new AgriRecovery herd management program will assist these producers to stabilize their operations and return to pre-drought herd capacity?

Hon. Ralph Eichler (Minister of Agriculture and Resource Development): I thank the member for the question.

This program will assist producers who want to replace breeding animals culled due to drought, helping return the inventory to pre-breeding females to the drought levels. The replacement animals can be purchased or retained from producers' existing herds or flocks.

I'd like to thank the Manitoba Beef Producers, Keystone Agricultural Producers and others for working alongside us to develop a program for this third drought-resistant program.

Contrary to the opposition, our government is listening and a government that takes actions. And this is what we do on this side of the House: look after our farm families.

Chronic Wasting Disease in Deer Population Request for Government to Address

Mr. Diljeet Brar (Burrows): Last month, we learned that Manitoba had its first case of chronic wasting disease found in a single deer. This matter of course is important—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Brar: —to everyone who cares about wildlife and the environment. The disease causes great illness and death in deer populations.

Can the minister tell us what is he doing to address this serious issue?

Hon. Ralph Eichler (Minister of Agriculture and Resource Development): I thank the member for

finally getting out of his seat and addressing some real important issues that we're facing each and every day in the agricultural sector.

In regards to the CWD, we've been working with the Habitat for Humanity, we've been working with the Wildlife Federation, been working with our own department and in community to make sure this disease does not spread.

It came from Saskatchewan, Madam Speaker; was announced in October. We know that this disease can spread very quickly. One that we're working on, and right now we're doing our job and making sure testing has been done within that area to make sure the spread of CWD does not go any farther.

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

Agricultural Crown Land Leasing Request to Reconsider Program

Mr. Diljeet Brar (Burrows): This is a serious issue and one we're watching very closely.

I would also like to address to the minister the concerns I have heard from beef producers over the last two years regarding Crown lands.

No one is satisfied with the system the minister has established. The problem was made worse by lease rates increasing over 300 per cent and a historic drought.

Will the minister reconsider the changes he made to the Crown land lease program?

Hon. Ralph Eichler (Minister of Agriculture and Resource Development): Three 'questmen'—three questions and finally, we get to talk about agriculture and what it really means for Manitobans and our farm families.

The member talks about Crown land and how it needs to be modernized, and we did exactly that. And we talked with farmers and producers and others, including the Keystone Ag Producers, the beef producers, to ensure that all Manitobans had a fair rate—one that was there for them to be able to bank on, one for them to be able to make sure they could move forward, grow their herds and be there for the next generation, not only to sustain what is happening with our beef producers in Manitoba, but to make us whole and be there for the next generation and the next generation and the next generation to come, Mr. Speaker.

Madam Speaker: The time for oral questions has expired.

PETITIONS

Abortion Services

MLA Uzoma Asagwara (Union Station): Madam Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

To the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, the background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Manitoba women, girls, two-spirit, genderqueer, non-binary and trans persons deserve to be safe, supported—and supported when accessing abortion services.

(2) Limited access to effective and safe abortion services contributes to detrimental outcomes and consequences for those seeking an abortion, as an estimated 25 million unsafe abortions occur worldwide each year.

(3) The provincial government's reckless health-care cuts have created inequity within the health-care system whereby access to the abortion pill, Mifegymiso, and surgical abortions are less accessible for northern and rural individuals than individuals in southern Manitoba, as they face travel barriers to access the handful of non-urban health-care professionals who are trained to provide medical abortions.

(4) For over five years, and over the administration of three failed Health ministers, the provincial government operated under the pretense that reproductive health was not the responsibility of the Ministry of Health and Seniors Care and shifted the responsibility to a secretariat with no policy, program or financial authority within the health-care system.

(5) For over four years, the provincial government has refused to support bill 200, The Safe Access to Abortion Services Act, which will ensure the safety of Manitoba women, girls, two-spirit, genderqueer, non-binary and trans persons accessing abortion services and the staff who provide such services by establishing buffer zones for anti-choice Manitobans around clinics.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to immediately ensure effective and safe access to abortion services for individuals regardless of where they reside in Manitoba and to ensure that buffer zones are immediately legislated.

This has been signed by many Manitobans.

Madam Speaker: In accordance with our rule 132(6), when petitions are read they are deemed to be received by the House.

Health-Care Coverage

Mr. Jamie Moses (St. Vital): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background for this petition is as follows:

(1) Health care is a basic human right and a fundamental part of responsible public health. Many people in Manitoba are not covered by provincial health care: migrant workers with work permits of less than one year, international students and those undocumented residents who have lost their status for a variety of reasons.

(2) Racialized people and communities are disproportionately affected by the pandemic, mainly due to the social and economic conditions which leave them vulnerable while performing essential work in a variety of industries in Manitoba.

(3) Without adequate health-care coverage, if they are ill, many of—uninsured will avoid seeking health care due to fear of being charged for the care, and some will fear possible detention or deportation if their immigration status is reported to the authorities.

(4) According to the United Nations Human Rights Committee, denying essential health care to undocumented irregular migrants is a violation of their rights.

(5) Jurisdictions across Canada and the world have adopted access-without-fear policies to prevent sharing personal health information or immigration status with immigration authorities and to give uninsured residents the confidence to access health care.

(6) The pandemic has clearly identified the need for everyone in Manitoba to have access to health care to protect health and safety of all who live in the province.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to immediately provide comprehensive and free health-care coverage to all residents of Manitoba, regardless of immigration status, including refugee claimants, migrant workers, international students, dependant children of temporary residents and undocumented residents.

(2) To urge the Minister of Health and Seniors Care to undertake a multilingual communication campaign to provide information on expanded coverage to all affected residents.

(3) To urge the Minister of Health and Seniors Care to inform all health-care institutions and providers of expanded coverage for those without health insurance and the details on how necessary policy and protocol changes will be implemented.

(4) To urge the Minister of Health and Seniors Care to create and enforce strict confidentiality policies and provide staff with training to protect the safety and—residents with precarious immigration status and ensure that they can access health care without jeopardizing their ability to remain in Canada.

This petition has been signed by many, many Manitobans.

Louise Bridge

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background of this petition is as follows:

(1) Over 25,000 vehicles per day cross the Louise Bridge, which has served as a vital link for vehicular traffic between northeast Winnipeg and the downtown for the last 110 years.

(2) The current structure will undoubtedly be declared unsafe in a few years as it has deteriorated extensively, becoming functionally obsolete, subject to more frequent unplanned repairs and cannot be widened to accommodate future traffic capacity.

(3) As far back as 2008, the City of Winnipeg has studied where the new replacement bridge should be situated.

(4) After including the bridge replacement in the City's five-year capital budget forecast in 2009, the new bridge became a short-term construction priority in the City's transportation master plan of 2011.

(5) City capital and budget plans identified replacement of the Louise Bridge on a site just east of the bridge and expropriated homes there on the south side of Nairn Avenue in anticipation of a 2015 start.

(6) In 2014, the new City administration did not make use of available federal infrastructure funds.

(7) The new Louise Bridge Committee began its campaign to demand a new bridge and its surveys confirmed residents wanted a new bridge beside the

current bridge, with the old bridge kept open for local traffic.

(8) The NDP provincial government signalled its firm commitment to partner with the City on replacing the Louise Bridge in its 2015 Throne Speech. Unfortunately, provincial infrastructure initiatives, such as the new Louise bridge, came to a halt with the election of the Progressive Conservative government in 2016.

(9) More recently, the City tethered the Louise Bridge replacement issue to its new transportation master plan and eastern corridor project. Its recommendations have now identified the location of the new Louise bridge to be placed just to the west of the current bridge, not to the east as originally proposed. The City expropriation process has begun.

(10) The new Premier has a duty to direct the provincial government to provide financial assistance to the City so that it can complete this long overdue vital link to northeast Winnipeg and Transcona. The upcoming provincial budget will provide the timely opportunity to budget and announce provincial participation in the building of the new Louise bridge.

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

(1) To urge the new Premier to financially assist the City of Winnipeg on building this three-lane bridge in each direction to maintain this vital link between northeast Winnipeg, Transcona and the downtown;

(2) To urge the provincial government to recommend that the City of Winnipeg keep the old bridge fully open to traffic while the new bridge is under construction, and

(3) To urge the provincial government to consider the feasibility of keeping it open for active transportation in the future.

And this petition has been signed by many, many Manitobans.

Provincial Road 224

Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas-Kameesak): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Provincial Road No. 224 serves Peguis First Nation, Fisher River Cree Nation and surrounding communities. The road is in need of substantial repairs.

(2) The road has been in poor condition for years and has numerous potholes, uneven driving surfaces and extremely narrow shoulders—very narrow.

(3) Due to recent population growth in the area, there has been increased vehicle and pedestrian use of Provincial Road 224.

(4) Without repair, Provincial Road 224 will continue to pose a hazard to the many Manitobans who use it on a regular basis.

(5) Concerned Manitobans are requesting that Provincial Road 224 be assessed and repaired urgently to improve safety for its users.

We must petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Minister of Infrastructure to complete an assessment of Provincial Road 224 and implement the appropriate repairs using public funds as quickly as possible.

Madam Speaker, this petition has been signed by many, many fine Manitobans.

Ekosi. Thank you.

Road Closures

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

And the background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Manitoba Infrastructure has undertaken the closure of all farm-access roads along the North Perimeter Highway, forcing rural residents to drive up to six miles out of their way to leave or return to their property.

(2) The provincial government's own consultations showed that closing the access of some of these roads, including Sturgeon Road, was an emerging concern to residents and business owners, yet the North Perimeter plan does nothing to address this issue.

(3) Residents and business owners were assured that their concerns about access closures, including safety issues cited by engineers, would be taken into account and that access at Sturgeon Road would be maintained. However, weeks later, the median was nonetheless torn up, leaving local residents and businesses scrambling.

(4) Closing all access to the Perimeter puts more people in danger, as it emboldens speeders and forces

farmers to take large equipment into heavy traffic, putting road users at risk.

(5) Local traffic, commuter traffic, school buses, emergency vehicles and commercial traffic, including 200 gravel trucks per day from the Lilyfield Quarry, will all be expected to merge and travel out of their way in order to cross the Perimeter, causing increased traffic and longer response times to emergencies.

(6) Small businesses located along the Perimeter and Sturgeon Road are expecting to lose business, as customers will give up on finding a way into their premises.

(7) Residents, business owners and those who would—who use these roads have been left behind by the provincial government's refusal to listen to their concerns that closures will only result in worsened safety and major inconveniences for users of the North Perimeter.

* (14:50)

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the Minister of Infrastructure to leave residents access to the Perimeter Highway at least every two miles along its length, especially at intersections such as Sturgeon Road, which are vital to local businesses.

(2) To urge the Minister of Infrastructure to listen to the needs and the opinions of the local residents and business owners who took the time to complete the Perimeter safety survey while working with engineers and technicians to ensure their concerns are addressed.

This petition, Madam Speaker, is signed by many Manitobans.

Madam Speaker: Are there any further petitions?

National Drug Plan

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:

Canada's public and private drug plans leave many patients with little or no coverage, resulting in one out of 10 patients not taking their prescribed medication because of affordability.

It is estimated that Pharmacare would save Canadians between \$4 billion and \$11 billion per year.

There have been repeated calls to include prescription drugs in Canada's universal health-care system, including:

(a) National Forum on Health 1997 chair, Prime Minister Jean Chrétien;

(b) Commission on the Future of Health Care in Canada 2002 chair, Roy Romanow;

(c) several national organizations, including Canadian Nurses Association, Canadian Medical Association, Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to encourage the federal government to amend the Canada Health Act by adding prescription medicines prescribed by a licensed practitioner to the definition of covered services in accordance with an established formulary.

(2) To urge the provincial government to develop, jointly with the federal government, a universal, single-payer, evidence-based, sustainable public drug plan that contains: purchasing power to secure best available pricing; a list of essential medicines addressing priority health needs; and the ability to expand to a comprehensive permanent plan that would promote the health and well-being of all Canadians.

Signed by Steven Erickson, Marlene Friesen, Janie [*phonetic*] Leduc and many, many other Manitobans.

Thank you, merci, miigwech.

Madam Speaker: Are there any other petitions?

If not, orders of the day, government business.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): I have a motion to bring forward to the House before we go back to debate on the Throne Speech.

GOVERNMENT MOTION

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): I move, seconded by the Minister of Agriculture, that the Sessional Order passed on

October 7th, 2020 and amended on November 19th—
[*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Goertzen: —and amended on November 19th, 2020, December 3rd, 2020 and May 18th, 2021, be further amended in the first paragraph by replacing December 2nd, 2021 with March 10th, 2022.

Madam Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Government House Leader, seconded by the Minister of Agriculture, that the Sessional Order passed on October 7th, 2020 and amended on November 19, 2020, December 3rd, 2020 and May 18, 2021, be further amended in the first paragraph by replacing December 2nd, 2021 with March 10th, 2022.

Mr. Goertzen: Yes, just very quickly, Madam Speaker, to speak to the motion. This obviously is to extend the ability to have virtual sittings both in committee and in the House only until March 10th. It is all of our hope that in spring we'll be able to come together fully in the Legislature as MLAs. That would be the first time in almost two years that that has happened. And so that is our goal, but we also don't know, of course, what the different twists and turns are in the pandemic. We want to ensure that inter-sessionally we have the ability to do committees virtually and then we can re-examine this in March.

I appreciate the working experience that we've had with the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Kinew), the member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine) and the Leader of the Liberal caucus, the member for River Heights. It's been difficult and trying times, in terms of trying to make sure the Legislature continues to operate and their co-operation has been imperative in that, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Is there any further comment from any of the other House leaders?

If not—oh. The honourable member for River Heights.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Just to indicate that this has been discussed by all House leaders and there's agreement, and the date of March 10th was arrived at to enable us, if necessary, to start in virtual format or hybrid format at the beginning of the session, but not to go very long before we have a firm decision, hopefully, that we can continue in full session, without having to go back to virtual session after that.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Madam Speaker: The question before the House is the government motion brought forward by the honourable Government House Leader (Mr. Goertzen).

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

I declare the motion carried.

Mr. Goertzen: I thank the members of the House for that co-operation.

Could you please resume debate on the Throne Speech?

THRONE SPEECH (Sixth Day of Debate)

Madam Speaker: It has been announced that the House will resume debate on the motion of the honourable member for Lagimodière (Mr. Smith) and the amendment and subamendment thereto, standing in the name of the honourable member for Radisson, who has 18 minutes remaining.

Mr. James Teitsma (Radisson): Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity to respond—or to continue a response, rather, from yesterday, where I began to speak to the speech for the throne.

I want to take a moment to just note that we're in the middle of the 16 days of activism against gender-based violence. And we observe that every year from November 25th, which is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women until December the 10th, which is world Human Rights Day.

It's an opportunity to come together, to call out, to speak up, to renew our commitments to end gender-based violence and also to end misogyny. I want to take a moment to directly address an issue that's been festering in this House ever since the Throne Speech was delivered. I believe it ranks of misogyny and needs to be called out, and needs to stop.

So, Wikipedia defines misogyny as a form of sexism used to keep women at a lower social status than men. Day after day after day, the Leader of the Opposition refuses to do this one simple thing: call the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) of the province the Premier.

Now, with the previous two premiers that the Leader of the Opposition served with, he had no trouble calling them Premier. But now that it's a

woman holding this highest elected office in our province, he seems to not be able to bring himself to call her the Premier.

Mr. Doyle Pivniuk, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

He's referred to her as the member for Tuxedo; he's called her the leader of the PC 'partery'; he's called her the former Health minister—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Teitsma: —but he has not called her the Premier.

Out of all the members in this House, the Leader of the Opposition, I think, should be taking special care not to continue travelling down the rotten rut of misogyny that stained his earlier years in his life. Out of all the caucuses in this House, you would think that the supposedly woke NDP would call out misogyny when they see it, but he hasn't, and they don't.

So it falls to me to call it out. I already did so—*[interjection]*

Point of Order

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable Opposition House Leader, on a point of order.

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader): On a point of order in respect of the member: what the member for Radisson is attempting to put on the floor this afternoon, which is wholly erroneous. In fact, the Leader of the Opposition did call the member for Tuxedo today the Premier.

To assert that, somehow, because the Leader of the Opposition calls the member for Tuxedo the former Health minister, which she was; the PC leader, which she is. At this point though, Deputy Speaker, I would put on the record that there is a court case before Manitoba courts right now in respect of whether or not she is indeed the leader.

But it is—for the member for Radisson to stand up in this House and somehow—because the Leader of the Opposition is pointing out the various titles that the Premier has, which we all have; I'm the House leader, I'm the member for St. Johns, I'm the critic for Justice, the 'spokespersos' for MMIWG2S—to try and attach that to somehow that the Leader of the Opposition is somehow misogynistic towards the Premier is wholly unacceptable.

* (15:00)

And the member for Radisson should apologize right here and now today for putting false words on the record and attempting to disabuse the Leader of

the Opposition's titles for the—the various titles that the Premier holds currently.

It's erroneous, it's wrong, it's misleading of the facts and he knows it.

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): Mr. Deputy Speaker, the reality is that all of us hold certain titles within this Legislature that are specific to our roles here in this House, and I think on a more regular basis, we all try to distinguish each other by that title. It is sort of the honourable thing to do.

I don't know what strategic reason or other reason that the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Kinew) doesn't seem to want to identify the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) as the Premier, but quite apart from whatever the rules are or the ruling that you're going to provide, I think it is respectful to refer to somebody by the position that they have earned. I try to refer to the member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine) as either the Official Opposition House Leader (Ms. Fontaine) or the member for St. Johns. That is the title that she holds within this House.

She might have a lot of other roles and titles beyond this House, but I try to respect her by referring her in that way, as I do other members. I probably don't do it perfectly, but I probably—I also don't do it purposely not to refer to them as the title as the leader of the official 'opposition'—opposition seems to be doing with the Premier.

So I would just ask, as a member to a member, to be respectful and to refer to the Premier by the title that she has rightfully earned, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On that point of order: It was a—more of a debate on the—but the thing is it's not a breach of the rules that we're conducting here, but I think the—in this House, we should respect each other here, and we should respect each other's titles and what their—their constituency names. So if we can have respect here in this Chamber, would be much—greatly appreciated, and it would make it a lot easier when we get going towards debates, here.

* * *

Mr. Deputy Speaker: So, the honourable member for Radisson (Mr. Teitsma).

Mr. Teitsma: I thank you for your wise ruling in that matter and I'll attempt to remain focused here.

I think I was—where I left off, I had mentioned that—tangentially in my brief remarks yesterday, I did

mention this issue, and yet no change, really, was seen today.

The Premier, in fact, called it out during question period. You won't find that necessarily in the Hansard, but, you know, perhaps in the heckling you might have heard it where she asked him: Just call me the Premier, already.

And—you know, I think the member for St. Johns, to be fair—I believe that the Leader of the Opposition did finally, on one occasion, call her the Premier. Perhaps it was a slip of the tongue, or perhaps it was a shift. I hope it's a shift. *[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Teitsma: In my opinion, this pattern of behaviour—the pattern of behaviour that we've seen before us for the last—how many days now, two weeks here in the session—has been consistent. It has been persistent. And I appreciate that it might be changing. I sure hope it does, because the anchor of the days that we observe at this time, the 16 days of activism against gender based violent, the anchor of those days is actually even far more tragic than the matters I'm bringing forward today.

It's the—this year will mark the 32nd anniversary of the tragic and brutal murder of 14 young women at l'École polytechnique de Montréal in 1989. That's why we call December 6th Canada's National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence against Women. This day represents an opportunity for Canadians to reflect on the reality of violence against girls and women in our society.

This day we also especially remember those who have died as a result of gender-based violence. It's a day that we resolve to do something about it. That hashtag, do something, was introduced a few years ago, and I think it's a fitting one. And I think it's important to remember that it's not about what you would do, but it's about what you should do, because when reflecting on that tragic day, now over 30 years ago, I think we would all feel—have feelings of despair, agony and helplessness.

I know that I, myself, when I watched the brief but powerful scene from the movie Polytechnique, when the killer enters the classroom of about 60 engineering students, he's armed with a rifle. He then separates the nine female students from the about 50 men that were there and orders the men to leave; and every single man leaves, one by one. They each let the door close silently after them. On—a short while later, the killer opens fire on the female students,

killing six and wounding the other three. This is a raw scene in the movie. It's profoundly powerful and horrible, and no matter how many times I watch it I—continues to impact me profoundly.

And as so many others have asked, I find myself asking, you know, what would I have done if I was in that classroom? The truth is I don't know and I don't think any of us do know. But that's why I would say that the question that you should be asking yourself in this time is not how what you would do, but what you should do.

What should I do, and may God graciously prevent it, if I find myself in such a horrible circumstance? What should I do if I'm faced with tyranny and oppression? What should I do if I see misogyny being acted out? What should I do if I see brutality and this kind of unspeakable evil? What should I do to combat violence against girls and women in our society? What should I do to combat misogyny?

Will I stand in solidarity with the targets of violence? Will I give of myself, even risk my own life, to defend the rights and freedoms of others? Will I resist oppression and tyranny with all my will and my strength, or will I just let the door close silently, doing nothing and saying nothing?

Freedoms are not free. They are bought at—with a price, so this day and these weeks should be a day of remembrance but also a day of action, and it should be a day of resolve.

Now, I have resolved many times before and I resolve again to do what I can to stop violence and misogyny against girls and women, and I encourage all colleagues on all sides of this House to do the same.

I've resolved before and I resolve now again to defend the rights and freedoms of all Canadians, and I encourage all my colleagues on all sides of this House to do the same.

I have resolved many times before and I now resolve again not to be caught off guard, but instead to stand on guard, and, again, I ask all my colleagues on all sides of this House to do the same. And it's in that spirit that I urge the Leader of the Opposition to stop his disrespectful and hurtful and misogynistic practice of refusing to refer to the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) as the Premier.

And I urge the members of the opposition that if you haven't already done so—and I respect many of you well enough to think that you may have, indeed, spoken up in your caucus—you may have, indeed,

called him to account or advised him to stop and you've been ignored like so many complainants have been over the years.

And also on that note, I want to congratulate our new Premier. She has become the first female First Minister, the first female Premier in the history of our 'provice'—province. In fact, she's currently the only provincial premier that is a woman, which is not something I thought would be happening considering how many female premiers we had just a few short years ago. Our Premier has given us so many reasons to be proud of her, and I am sure that she will continue to do so.

I also want to, again, say thank you to the member for Tyndall Park (Ms. Lamoureux). I think she understands well her role as a representative of her constituents and as a participant in this Legislature, and as a member of the opposition tasked with holding government to account, because when the member for Tyndall Park began her response to the Speech from the Throne, unlike the Leader of the Opposition and unlike so many of the members opposite, she started off by acknowledging that the member for Tuxedo, the Leader of the PC Party, is you know, the Premier. Indeed, she has taken this seat of honour in this Chamber, she has taken her oaths of office, she has moved into room 204; she is the Premier.

* (15:10)

The member for Tyndall Park was inspired by this Premier's accomplishments and she was happy to acknowledge that this woman has attained what no other woman in Manitoba has ever done. She has become the Premier.

So I hope, in the remaining time that we have before us in this brief sitting, before we rise for our Christmas break, that the front bench of the NDP caucus will also, routinely, and regularly and with purpose, acknowledge that the member for Tuxedo is, in fact, the Premier—because that's what respecting women looks like and I don't think that they intend to disrespect women.

Now, out of all the Throne Speeches I've heard in my years, this is the one that's most connected to me, personally, and I don't think that's coincidence. I'm very grateful for all the highlights that I see in the Throne Speech, and I think of how well connected they are to everyday Manitobans. I think of the dozens of nursing students that I've gotten the chance to speak to in the past months and years—my own daughter is one of those nursing students—and I look forward to

seeing better recruitment and retention policies put in place for them and more opportunities for them to help address the nursing shortage.

My mom is, you know, living on her own. My dad passed a few years ago, and here we have a renewed seniors strategy to help people like her stay safe in their own homes, close to their families and support systems for as long as they choose. Those are the kinds of highlights that we see in the Throne Speech.

I'm sorry I had to take so much of my time to address the conduct of the members opposite. That's not really what I like to talk about, but it did need to be done and I've resolved to be someone who will do that sort of thing, even if it is unpleasant and even if it is get me—getting me, you know, catcalls and heckles from the members opposite.

So with those few remarks, then, I will cede the floor and give the opportunity to remaining members opposite, and also members of my own caucus to be able to speak in response to the speech for the throne.

Thank you.

Ms. Lisa Naylor (Wolseley): I want to begin by congratulating the new Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) of Manitoba.

These very walls and all of our governance processes were built by men for men. Given the systemic sexism present in all our colonial governments, it is a significant achievement for any woman or non-binary person to be elected to the Legislature, and, certainly, a meaningful historical moment when a woman is chosen to lead our province. The honourable First Minister does have a right to be proud of this achievement.

I have high expectations of leaders, and 'ekspecially' women in leadership. Personal power for just a few women is not enough. One measure of a leader is their ability and commitment to bring a gendered lens, an anti-oppression lens, to leadership. For me, the measure of the leadership of the first premier—woman premier of Manitoba will be based on her ability to put the needs of women and non-binary people first.

My measure of the Premier will be on her ability to look at the problems our province faces through the lens of a single mother, the young, queer, homeless person, the mid-life woman juggling career, responsibility for aging parents and her own children's needs, or through the lens of someone who has suffered an

increase in intimate partner violence during the pandemic.

My measure of the Premier will be on her ability to see the Province's problems and address pandemic response—pandemic recovery through the lens of nurses, health-care aides, education assistants, early childhood educators and teachers who are still often primarily women. It will be on her ability to empathize with the needs of a 13-year-old who misses school because their family can't afford menstrual pads.

Will this Premier be a leader that can understand and deconstruct all forms of exclusion and marginalization?

Will this Premier support members of this House who openly name experiences of racism or gender oppression in this building? Will she allow for an open and honest conversation about systemic racism, instead of denying its very existence, as Brian Pallister did?

Can she recognize what the Justice Minister will not—that it is completely appropriate to name and describe racism experienced by members of the Legislature and that one can do so while still holding respect and appreciation for the efforts of civil servants to maintain safety and security for all who enter this workplace?

Systemic racism is described as systemic because it's built into the very institution in which it is present, from the ground up. And surely even this Justice Minister understands by now that racism has been part of policing and the criminal justice system since their inception. A government that wants to rebrand itself as a listening government is not off to a good start when a Cabinet minister stands in this House and argues with Black and Indigenous people about their experiences of racism.

A land acknowledgement is a very meaningful and very important first step to reconciliation, but actively working to dismantle racism inside and outside of this House must also be priorities. What kind of leader the new First Minister will be is yet to be seen. But for now, we know that the Throne Speech did nothing to offer us something new.

We're in the fourth wave of the pandemic and while there were months to prepare, we find ourselves in the same place: limited ICU capacities, patients being transported across the province to make space

in health-care facilities, massive surgical backlogs and long-term-care homes suffering deadly outbreaks.

In my constituency, multiple people are waiting for life-altering surgeries. A 12-year-old has been told it could be three years before she can see a pediatric ophthalmologist. Another child waits for brain surgery to treat his epilepsy because the government refuses to purchase the ROSA machine that was promised four years ago through a massive private donation.

Manitobans expect and deserve a government that will fix problems instead of making them worse. Manitobans deserve a government that will work to protect them from public health emergencies like COVID-19 and provide them with meaningful supports while we navigate this challenging time together.

The Pallister PCs did a lot of damage to this province, from health care to education to the rising cost of living. The Throne Speech was the First Minister's chance to show us she's different, but I'm not sure anything has changed. Over 80 per cent of the commitments in the Premier's (Mrs. Stefanson) Throne Speech appear to be repeats from the Pallister administration. Nothing has changed at the decision-making table. It's the same people around the table when Brian Pallister was in office.

The Premier's Throne Speech offers nothing new to Manitobans who are waiting for answers on how we will emerge and recover from the pandemic and repair the damage done by Brian Pallister. I expected that the Throne Speech would tell us how the First Minister is going to listen to nurses, get people surgeries, stop outbreaks in schools and long-term-care homes, address the addictions and housing crisis, stop government interference at the bargaining table and make life more affordable for all Manitobans.

Manitobans are frustrated and disappointed. Many families are in a constant state of crisis. Manitobans have been waiting for years for this government to take real action on issues that matter to them. This is why it's so important that the Premier call an independent inquiry into the PC government's pandemic response to get recommendations to help build our health-care-system capacity and make positive, lasting changes to improve the lives of Manitobans.

Whether it's the climate crisis or another contagious virus, we have to be better prepared for the next emergency. The NDP caucus is ready to get to

work. We're ready to take an honest look at Manitobans' pandemic response and commit to implementing the recommendations from that inquiry so we can build a better future for all of us.

We're in the fourth wave of the COVID-19 pandemic and the new Premier, just like Brian Pallister, is not taking any meaningful action to address the rising numbers across the province in ICUs. When this Premier was the Health Minister, she failed to show up in a meaningful way to provide answers and solutions to Manitoba. As the Health Minister, this Premier committed \$50 million to reduce the backlog in surgical and diagnostic tests. This team was bragging about it today, but to date, they have only spent about 5 per cent of that amount.

*(15:20)

Madam Speaker, this is shameful—sorry, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, this is shameful. That wait-list has gone from 110,000 to 136,000, a 24 per cent increase in five months. And the Throne Speech offered them nothing—no urgency, no immediate action to get these people the care they need.

Let's not forget that this Premier stood by and clapped very hard for Brian Pallister as he fired hundreds of nurses, cut ICU beds, closed emergency rooms and urgent care centres, all right before the pandemic. The PC government set Manitoba's health-care system up for failure, especially as the pandemic hit, and they still don't seem to have a real plan for how to fix our health-care system and ensure that all Manitobans have access to quality, reliable health care close to home where they need it.

And then, when she was minister of Health, this Premier cut funding for acute care services by \$13 million. And while ER wait times have reached a seven-year high, earlier this month the Premier said, in a media scrum, that there were pretty good results from that consolidation and she claimed to have reduced wait times. Pretty good results?

The Premier is choosing to ignore the crisis in our health-care system and gas-lighting Manitobans at the same time. Manitobans don't need a premier who claims to work behind the scenes; they need a premier who shows leadership, steps up and takes action when Manitobans need it most.

In her Throne Speech, the Premier claimed that her government puts long-term care under the microscope and acted, stabilizing the pandemic, and we know this simply is not true. Right now, seniors in

Manitoba are being sent to homes hundreds of kilometres away from their families because of the PC government. Right now, seniors in some long-term-care homes are battling COVID-19 outbreaks, while some of these homes have seen staff reductions of 30 per cent.

Under her government, the addiction crisis has continued to escalate and they have continued to refuse to support harm reduction efforts such as a safe consumption site. In 2020, Manitoba reached new levels of overdose deaths, and now, in 2021, during her time as minister of Health, the now-Premier (Mrs. Stefanson), Manitoba will meet or exceed last year's deaths of nearly 400 people. Yet, just like in her time as minister, she was silent on any commitments to address the addictions crisis our province is facing right now.

Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, the PC government has a long history of undermining public education, both primary and post-secondary. In fact, this Premier stated her term as—started her term as Premier with a strike at the University of Manitoba. This was caused by Brian Pallister's government interference but she could have stepped in to stop it. The member for Tuxedo is the leader now and the ongoing government interference, which has led to the strike impacting thousands of Manitoba's students, is completely on her.

The Stefanson government claims that they will train new nurses holds no weight when their interference in the faculty's collective bargaining process is preventing students from graduating on time. Manitobans deserve post-secondary institutions that have reliable, adequate funding, pay their faculty fair wages and provide opportunities for research and writing. We know that a fair funding formula means better opportunities for students and is an investment in Manitoba's ongoing development and growth.

This government austerity will harm our province's long-term social and economic development. The First Minister must commit to investing in post-secondary education in Manitoba and put a stop to the interference in the bargaining process and stop hiking tuition so that students can complete their education and we can retain excellent faculties and students here in our province.

We know the government also interfered with K-to-12 education with Bill 64, causing outrages across Manitoba earlier this year. It was a terrible piece of legislation that did nothing but cut funding and centralize power at the Cabinet table, while

making things more challenging for vulnerable students in our communities and for the teachers who educate and care for them.

The new Premier was the seconder on this bill and proudly supported this piece of terrible legislation, right up until it interfered with her run for premier. After immense public pressure from Manitobans and hard work from the NDP caucus, Bill 64 was thrown out for now.

Cutting school funding isn't a new Conservative agenda. It's clear that the Premier has not learned from the mistakes made during her time in Cabinet with the Pallister Conservatives. And now her austerity budgets have led to school divisions forecasting budget cuts amounting to millions of dollars.

Mr. Speaker, last summer, our beautiful blue prairie sky was largely hidden by the dull grey haze of forest fire smoke. Forest fires affect all Manitobans. Those near the fires live in constant fear of losing their homes and being forced to evacuate. For many this summer, that fear became a reality.

Manitobans in urban areas were also affected. Fires restrict all Manitobans' ability to be out in nature and it affects the economy of our province as well as the mental and physical health of all its citizens.

In addition to fires burning out of control in all corners of the province this summer, Manitobans experienced the worst drought in decades. As we experience more extreme swings in temperature and a dramatic reduction in precipitation, we will continue to experience drought conditions and an increase in wildfires.

We've all seen the death and destruction caused by climate change in BC but, make no mistake, climate change devastation is coming for us, too.

Climate change is happening at a faster rate than scientists originally predicted, partially because action on addressing climate change and pivoting away from fossil fuel to cleaner alternatives such as hydro power has been slow.

Manitoba's PC government has proven it is not up to the task. During the past five years, GHG emissions have continued to rise with no meaningful reduction targets or efforts made by this government.

The First Minister's Throne Speech failed to provide any substantial targets or initiatives to address climate change and to prevent devastating weather events that impact producers, the environment, our health and our economy. The Throne Speech signalled

that the Stefanson government is choosing to continue inaction in the face of a terrible climate crisis that will eventually impact all Manitobans.

As deputy premier, this Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) sat silent when environmental organizations had their funding cut and there were no new initiatives provided by her government. Not only was funding cut for not-for-profits, but the Conservation and Climate Department has 58 fewer full-time positions than they did five years ago. Parks and Resource Protection has at least 22 fewer full-time positions in that same time frame. There remain many vacancies.

Year after year, this government is cutting positions, leaving fewer and fewer people whose role it is to protect the environment. I have heard no new commitment from the Premier to change that channel. If she wants to show different leadership on climate change than her mentor, Brian Pallister, the honourable First Minister will invest in staffing and in action on climate and environmental issues.

Manitobans also deserve real action and investments on the North End wastewater treatment plant to save Lake Winnipeg and all our Manitoba lakes and rivers for future generations. An NDP government would set meaningful targets for reducing carbon and other GHG emissions and would get the deal made with the City of Winnipeg to complete the upgrades without jeopardizing jobs. We could make Manitoba a leader on slowing climate change and mitigating harms.

I am also extremely concerned that the Premier made no mention of Manitoba Hydro in her Throne Speech. Manitoba Hydro has a very large role to play in addressing climate change, creating clean jobs, advancing reconciliation and keeping life affordable for Manitobans. Yet, the Premier made no mention of a plan to use the clean advantage of hydro to fight climate change or build our economy.

Mr. Speaker, Manitobans are struggling to make ends meet, as the cost of living has kept up—kept going up during her government's time. This Speech from the Throne made no commitment to implement a living wage or paid sick days for Manitobans to help them out of poverty and keep them safer.

All across Manitoba, folks are struggling, and Wolseley is no different. Many residents in my constituency are in desperate need of housing and additional services for mental health or addictions.

Last summer, temporary shelters sprung up all along the riverbanks in the usual places, but also

newly in Vimy Ridge park and Agnes Street park, parks that are next to homes and child-care centres and elementary schools.

City and community organizations try to check on folks and ensure their well-being, but it is becoming harder and harder for our community partners to keep up with the need. Folks are living in parking lots, bus shelters, under the steps of a local church and in a corner of the Gordon Bell school grounds.

Church members clean up needles on their property. Human excrement is routinely found in our parks. These are spaces where children play and where families should be able to spend time together outdoors.

* (15:30)

Mr. Speaker, no one wants to live in a park or a bus shelter. Folks camp and use parks as toilets because they have nowhere else to sleep or meet their hygiene needs. These unhoused residents of my constituency face profound challenges with respect to their health, security and well-being.

The growing number and size of makeshift shelters in our city is a symptom of much deeper policy problems on housing, poverty, mental health and addictions. This government has cut social housing, and the wait-list for affordable housing is massive.

This government cannot continue to let tent communities and bus shelters be their long-term solution to our housing crisis. Camp conditions fall far below international human rights standards and these residents are subject to harassment, violence and discrimination. Additionally, these camps are increasingly unsafe as the weather gets colder.

In her Throne Speech, the Premier promised to introduce a homelessness strategy this winter. The Pallister government made the same promise in 2019 with no tangible actions to follow it up. This government has had many winters to introduce such a strategy but, so far, things have only gotten worse. And frankly, it's a bit late in the season to begin thinking about this issue.

Let's not forget that when the Premier was minister of Families, child poverty got worse, addictions continued to increase, and her government cut and sold off social and affordable housing units. When it comes to social housing, this Premier has two instincts: cut and privatize.

As deputy premier, she watched homelessness rise as her government cut hundreds of social housing units, 1,700 units between 2016 and 2020. Her PC government cut the maintenance budget for existing units by almost 75 per cent from where it was under the NDP. They've sold off or transferred hundreds of social housing units to private companies who want to make a profit, not help struggling Manitobans.

Manitobans want real action from this government to address the growing issues of poverty and homelessness across our province, not the same empty promises given to them by Brian Pallister. We need this government to step forward with an immediate increase in shelter beds and in long-term housing with a focus on housing first. This model allows people to have a roof over their head, so they can begin to work on their other personal goals, such as reducing substance abuse or finding employment.

We also need this government to open supervised consumption sites as needed across the province.

Mr. Speaker, for all these reasons, and because I care deeply for Manitobans, I will be voting against this Throne Speech.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable minister of Indigenous relations and northern relations.

Hon. Alan Lagimodiere (Minister of Indigenous Reconciliation and Northern Relations): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm honoured to rise before you in the House today to speak to our government's Throne Speech, a path to progressing together.

I would like to begin by taking a moment to recognize Her Honour, our Lieutenant Governor, for her years of service. I understand this may be the last Throne Speech Her Honour will be presenting to the House. Thank you for all your years of service to Manitoba, and I wish you all the best in wherever life takes you next.

I would also like to thank the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) for his term as the 23rd Premier of Manitoba. In his short time in the position, the member for Steinbach had the opportunity to make his mark on Manitoba by serving with honour and grace.

I would also be remiss in not once again thanking the member for his leadership and acknowledge, while serving as Premier, the Winnipeg Blue Bombers maintained a winning streak for his entire term. This

is a feat no other Premier has ever accomplished. Thank you.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, last Tuesday, the 23rd of November, was a historic day not only because Manitoba welcomed its first female Premier (Mrs. Stefanson), which is a monumental occasion itself, but also marks a new beginning, a new perspective and a commitment to progressing together as Manitobans for a brighter future. Under this new leadership, our government will be listening, learning and working collaboratively with all Manitobans.

I would like to take an opportunity to thank the Opaskwayak Cree Nation councillor Mike Bignell and Grand Chief Dumas for his suggestion and collaboration in another historic first in Manitoba history. This was the first time a performance of a Cree honour song and drumming preceded the presentation of the Throne Speech. It was sincerely moving to hear the walls of this House resound with their ancestral music of Manitoba. I hope this will become a tradition for years to come and serves as a reminder that the House is a place for all Manitobans to have their voices heard.

Thank you for starting us off in such a good way.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the path to progressing together highlighted a number of priorities for our government moving forward. Our government is listening to Manitobans and ensuring that the issues facing communities and families are at the forefront of our direction moving forward, focusing on reconciliation, addressing the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, bolstering our health-care system, social and economic recoveries, the creation of a seniors strategy, addressing the mental health crisis, a transparent and equitable education system, increased supports for those experiencing homelessness and substance abuse disorders, and those experiencing the tragedies of family violence.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we acknowledge that we have a lot of work to do, and I am confident that under this new leadership and with this team, our government will seize the opportunity and take on our responsibility to address these difficult challenges.

In my time as Minister of Indigenous Reconciliation and Northern Relations I have had the opportunity to listen and to learn from northern and First Nations communities across the province. I've heard their concerns first-hand and learnt about the issues most affecting these communities.

I am happy to see this Throne Speech addressing many of these concerns as top priorities for our government moving forward. I'm looking forward to continuing to work. The First Minister has already begun engaging with Indigenous leadership, organizations and communities. This past few weeks the honourable First Minister and I met with First Nations' leadership to ensure the door is open and there is a seat at the table and mutually beneficial discussions from day one.

I would also like to acknowledge the work of my ministerial colleagues to respectfully engage with Indigenous leaders. To name a few, we have recently worked with the departments of: Families; Justice; Manitoba Infrastructure; Crowns; Health; Seniors and Active Living; Central Services, Sports, Culture and Heritage; and Agriculture and Resource Development.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, to further meaningful discussions every department and every minister and every MLA is actively engaged in meaningful progress towards reconciliation. I am looking forward to our government's continued collaborative work in the days, months and years to come. I am excited to think of the future, the opportunities, the collaboration, and all the good work that can be done together between our leaders.

An important step forward on this path that has just been taken has been introducing an amendment to The Path to Reconciliation Act that enables the calls to justice of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls as a key component in our government's strategy to advancing reconciliation.

All Manitobans have the right to safety and a life free from the fear of violence. This amendment will ensure that the voices of these victims, survivors and families shape the conversation on reconciliation moving forward.

Though it may be difficult it is important to recognize the mistakes of our governments past when speaking about relationships with First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities and peoples. We need to hear the truth of the wrongs of the past and listen to those impacted on their effects today.

We, as a government, need to do better.

This Throne Speech stresses the need to recognize the deep generational impacts of government-imposed residential schools and colonialism and reaffirms our commitment, ensuring the truth is spoken

and supports the process of healing. As part of these supports, we have recently committed \$2.5 million to help support survivors and communities with the work needed to locate missing children who are the victims of the cruelties of the residential school system. We are currently in discussion with First Nation leaders, survivors, families, elders, and knowledge keepers who will determine just how and where the monies should be allocated.

* (15:40)

Our government recognizes the pain and inter-generational trauma is not going to be resolved overnight. As such, we are committed to ongoing discussions with survivors, families, knowledge keepers and grandmothers and grandfathers to hear their truth and work 'corlabatirvly' on how we can walk together on the path to reconciliation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, 2020 and 2021 have been years of unprecedented challenges across Manitoba. Manitobans have been tested with 'nuverous' COVID waves and remain resilient. However, we need to acknowledge the many challenges COVID-19 has made each and every Manitoban grapple with. Manitobans have proven their commitment to a healthy, safe province, but there's still much work to be done to ensure the safety of all and to address the lasting economic and social impacts of the pandemic.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Throne Speech recognizes that First Nations communities have been disproportionately impacted by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. I commend the collaborative work of the minister of health, seniors care and active living, past and present—and, of course, the fantastic work of the First Nations vaccine task force, the First Nations communities in reaching a vaccination rate for Indigenous people on reserve of 87 per cent. This is an achievement to be commended. However, there is more to do to ensure health equity for all Manitobans.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, a sincere thank you to all those front-line and behind-the-scenes workers that were involved in this important work. This Throne Speech outlines strategies to expand the number of nurses trained. One small commitment on this important issue is in Thompson alone, where 20 nurses will be trained with guaranteed jobs on successful graduation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is no secret that First Nations are concerned about the gaps that exist in infrastructure, health care, addictions, education,

justice, hunting rights, climate change, equitable opportunities and homelessness both on and off reserve.

Moving forward, it is essential, as outlined in the Throne Speech, that we work as partners collaboratively with all levels of government, involving the federal, provincial, municipal and First Nations governments in addressing the gaps that exist.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Throne Speech also supports strategies to improve the lives of our most vulnerable. Our government is committed to working with community partners to support our most vulnerable and those that typically fall through the cracks: single parents, homeless, Indigenous youth, 2SLGBTQIA+, those with disabilities and our seniors. All Manitobans have a right to equal opportunity.

Our government introduced a new ability support program to streamline existing programs.

The tragedies of last winter in the homeless population are unacceptable and more needs to be done. The development of a winter homeless strategy will move to ensure those experiencing homelessness have the supports and resources they need.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to speak in the House today to speak on this monumental occasion. I know I not only speak for myself but all my colleagues in saying that I'm excited at the new direction our government is taking—one of engagement, with an open door, with a commitment to addressing the issues most pressing to Manitobans from youth to seniors, rural to urban and our most vulnerable.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am honoured to be working with such a motivated and talented team. Congratulations and good luck to our new First Minister. I recognize our government has a lot of work to do, but I look forward to progressing together in the days, months and years to come towards a prosperous, vibrant, engaged and healthy Manitoba for all Manitobans.

Thank you. Miiigwech.

MLA Malaya Marcelino (Notre Dame): As the MLA for the constituency of Notre Dame, I humbly represent to the best of my ability over 22,000 people from the neighbourhoods of the West End, Brooklands, Weston and West Alexander, and on behalf of these communities, I'm honoured to make this response to the Throne Speech.

First, I would like to address some items of interest to Notre Dame community members that were briefly highlighted in the Throne Speech.

We heard that this government has entered a historic agreement on child care with the federal government. Women across the country have been waiting for a universal child care deal like this. It's been 50 years since the royal commission on the status of women, when Canadian women were first—forcefully articulated the need and economic underpinning for universal child care.

We know that, prior to this, federal multi-year commitment of more than 800 million federal child-care dollars to our province, the PCs legally paved the way for further privatization of child care, clearly outlined in the child-care bill that the PCs passed this past spring. And knowing this government's deep aversion to a public welfare state, in opposition, we need to stay vigilant that these federal dollars will be spent on quality child care and not on other PC priorities like tax cuts for the wealthy. Despite these federal dollars, we need to stay vigilant to ensure that provincial child-care dollars will continue to flow to children and child-care centres instead of PC priorities like tax cuts for the wealthy.

In Notre Dame and in many communities across the province, our child-care centres are in crisis right now, and can't wait until 2023 or whenever the federal agreement will begin. I have heard from numerous child-care providers in Notre Dame, who are sounding the alarm about the staffing shortages and the many negative effects this has had on providing quality child care in our area and across our province. Many facilities have to close whenever a staff member falls ill because there are not enough substitutes available to cover for them. The main reason for this shortage of certified early childhood educators, or ECEs, in Manitoba is that many ECEs earn little more than minimum wage. With these low-wage prospects, completing the required two-year certificate just doesn't make sense for most people.

This summer, we received the sudden news that the Weston daycare would close down by the end of August, and the parents of 59 infants and children suddenly had to find new spots within weeks in a child-care system that is already stretched thin. I recently heard from Tracy Cosser, director at Can You Imagine Inc., which runs three daycare programs in Winnipeg, that her organization is trying to open a new daycare program licensed for 50 spaces in the Weston School. The only thing standing in the way is

the lack of staffing because it has been almost impossible to find qualified early childhood educators to work in this new daycare. She has not been able to hire staff due to the staffing crisis, and this means that my community is without quality child care needed for parents to work and for young children to be nurtured and educated.

The PC Throne Speech did not prioritize increasing the wages for early childhood educators, even though this is the only way to retain and attract qualified workers to the child-care sector. Our communities in Notre Dame and families across the province did not hear any urgency in the Throne Speech on the child-care file. It's nowhere near time to celebrate yet on this child-care file. Many child-care centres and families are still operating in crisis and emergency mode when it comes to sufficient high-quality child care in this province.

Note about infrastructure: The Throne Speech also highlighted the government's focus on infrastructure development to keep employment levels up. My main comment here is to highlight for the government the necessity of taking public leadership when it comes to ensuring the inclusion of women, young people, apprentices and other Manitobans who have been disproportionately hit by the COVID economic impacts. The government needs to implement an inclusive strategy to make these coming infrastructure jobs accessible to Manitobans who, historically, are not able to be part of the skilled trades and construction sectors.

Other jurisdictions, like Newfoundland, have successfully included women in the skilled trades by funding the Office to Advance Women Apprentices and through strong partnerships with labour. Madam Speaker, 3.4 per cent of building trades workers in Manitoba are women, as opposed to Newfoundland that has nearly 14 per cent of certified building trades workers as women workers. Under Pallister's leadership, apprenticeship programs and social enterprise involvement was viewed as red tape when, in fact, apprenticeship programs, social enterprises and inclusive government procurement practices are proven practices in building a strong, inclusive generation of skilled workers.

* (15:50)

I'm calling on the Stefanson government to change course and do the right thing and ensure that the economic recovery will include those that were hardest hit financially by COVID, namely women, young people and the BIPOC community in

Manitoba. This government needs to act to ensure that those on the margins can find work through retraining programs and wage subsidies. Between 2018 and 2024, Manitoba will need over 20,000 trades workers. This demand will be much easier to fill if more women, newcomers, youth and BIPOC community members enter the trades.

And my comments on immigration: the Throne Speech also mentioned a focus on immigration and a brief mention of internationally educated nurses to help alleviate the nursing crisis. This government has largely been silent when it comes to newcomer—when it comes to immigration all throughout the PC years. PC budgets, when it came to newcomer settlement programs, have been frozen for years, acting as de facto cuts to programming for vulnerable communities.

Costs have been offloaded to economic and student immigrants. PCs keep talking about the glory years of the 1990s and the genius of the Provincial Nominee Program, but it's high time that we focus on the here and now. As a result of the lack of provincial leadership on immigration—the silence, the budget-cutting, the cost-offloading during the Pallister and Stefanson governments' years, we are seeing terrible, warning-level-type immigration numbers, and no amount of hearkening to Bonnie Mitchelson will fix this.

Concrete action, focus, must fix this because our economy will not grow without immigration. Many sectors absolutely rely on newcomer and migrant workers, and Manitoba is losing residents to other provinces and it needs to become more competitive in order to keep residents here.

According to the Manitoba Chambers, our current, alarming out-migration numbers are partly due to our province's lower wages and higher taxes on the middle class. According to Statistics Canada, numbers show that Manitoba was hit hard by net outward migration in 2018-2019, with an in-figure of 10,351 but an out-figure of 19,597 for a net loss of 9,246, and we are seeing now the largest out-migration numbers in decades.

For the last three years in a row, Manitoba has ranked eighth among 10 provinces for our poor ability to attract and retain immigrants. For the past two years, we've had negative growth rates due to out-migration.

In my day-to-day involvement with newcomer constituents, I am hearing that folks are leaving our

province because of all the barriers to credential recognition that are peculiarly specific to the province of Manitoba. It's much easier and faster and cheaper to get your licence as a health-care professional or as an accountant in other provinces compared to Manitoba.

Recent data from the Office of the Manitoba Fairness Commissioner shows that in a four-year span, only 16 per cent of internationally educated professionals get full accreditation and work in their field of study and experience. Under the data report section of the Fairness Commissioner's web page, members of the public can read about the qualification recognition process. There is also a yearly data—there's also yearly data on specific professions and on the percentages of how many internationally educated applicants get their professional designations.

So the latest statistics show that only 5 per cent of internationally educated nurses become fully registered and only 3 per cent of them were able to do it one year. Again, that's internationally educated nurses that applied to the College of Registered Nurses in Manitoba; only 5 per cent of them were able to get their accreditation.

Now, for the College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Manitoba, all the internationally educated nurses that applied, only 4 per cent of those applicants become fully registered. All internationally educated applicants who fully registered took more than one year and, on average, took two and a half years to get their accreditation.

What about psychiatric nurses? Of all those internationally educated applicants attempted to get their accreditation, none got fully registered—that's zero. For occupational therapists, of all internationally educated applicants that attempted to get their accreditation, zero made it through. For CPAs—chartered professional accountants or internationally educated applicants—only 2 per cent were able to get fully registered—2 per cent.

So no wonder many newcomers have left and they will continue to leave and migrate to other provinces where it is easier, faster, cheaper to get your qualifications recognized.

Literally, it's only Manitoba and Quebec that non-Francophonie newcomers are avoiding; Manitoba, because of our poor success rates in accreditation and Quebec, due to the French requirements.

The credential recognition processes in the province, particularly for internationally educated nurses,

have been unfair for a long time. The grants that the government recently announced to assist IENs will address the financial hardship component, but there are many more obstacles left. The government needs to follow the recommendations of the Fairness Commissioner and waive multiple English retesting components and ensure that the tests that internationally educated nurses must pass, domestic graduates would pass as well.

Internationally educated nurses have not asked to make this process easier; they have only ever asked to make this process fair. And this government, in addition, can and ought to provide public health care to international students and migrant workers who provide essential work that many Manitobans have refused to do because of the low pay, because it's precarious work and due to the harsh and dangerous work conditions.

Health care is a basic human right, and a fundamental part of responsible public health. Many people in Manitoba are not covered by provincial health care. That includes migrant workers with work permits of less than one year, international students and those undocumented residents who have lost their status. The pandemic has clearly identified the need for everyone in Manitoba to have access to public health care, to protect the health and safety of all who live in this province. So I urge this government to consider reinstating public health coverage for international students, and for extending public health coverage to those who migrate to Manitoba to work in this province.

A few notes on reconciliation. This Throne Speech alluded to reconciliation and the Stefanson government as signalling it is ready to break from the past and begin on this true path. My NDP colleagues, like the MLA for Keewatinook, the MLA for The Pas-Kameesak, the MLA for Point Douglas, the MLA for St. Johns and the MLA for Fort Rouge, they all have lived experience and a clear vision for how reconciliation must translate to concrete policy on the provincial level.

There also needs to be a whole-of-government approach to reconciliation, and a reset of carrying on as usual, and how things have been always done. Our caucus met with leadership at MKO to discuss the importance of repatriation of birthing services to the North, and to rural and remote communities. Women in northern communities routinely give birth outside their home communities. This is very, very difficult

for women and their families and leads to additional stressors and negative consequences.

In addition to repatriation of birthing services, northern, rural and remote communities are calling on this government to provide culturally appropriate domestic violence counselling services and addiction services like managed alcohol programs.

Now, on behalf of the communities of Notre Dame, I'm specifically calling on this government that—because it wasn't addressed in the Throne Speech, to invest in addictions prevention programming, on funding a public health awareness campaign, on mitigating the effects of lead contamination and providing more supports for adult education, adult literacy and numeracy in our communities.

Our communities in Notre Dame are urging this provincial government to take action—sorry—our communities were not included in this Throne Speech. We have been specifically asking for this government to address the effects of historical sources of lead contamination and environmental racism. Our communities are urging the provincial government to take action to reduce people's exposure to 'leadent'—Winnipeg and to implement the recommendations proposed by the provincial government's independent review, including the creation of an action plan for the Weston neighbourhood, developing a lead awareness communications and outreach program and requisitioning a more in-depth study and create a tracking program for those tested for blood lead levels so that medical professionals can follow up with this.

Our communities are not backing down on this. Recently, I joined an advisory committee named Healthy Environment, Healthy Neighbourhood, and our task is to bring forward policy proposals to adequately address lead contamination in Winnipeg communities, including Centennial, Daniel McIntyre, Glenelm, Chalmers, North Point Douglas, River-Osborne, Sargent Park, St. Boniface, West End, Weston and Wolseley-Minto.

* (16:00)

And a few notes on adult education: Last fall, I tried to send letters home to parents about lead contamination in my constituency, but the vice-principal at the school told me that they don't send letters home, as many parents can't read. High school graduation rates remain low in the communities that I represent. High school dropout rates are double that of the city average. The provincial government did not speak about this in the Throne Speech, and should commit

to expanding adult education, funding for which has declined for years. In 2019-2020, the expenditure on adult education was a mere two-thirds of 1 per cent of the Province's total education budget, yet, there is strong evidence that adult education is a low-cost and effective anti-poverty strategy. Adult education helps folks enter the paid labour force or to qualify for better-paid jobs.

And another short note on prevention and treatment: I get prosecutors calling my constituency. Do you guys—do the rest of the MLAs in this House get this? Prosecutors asking me to provide a court statement to discuss what's happening, to discuss how terribly this—the meth crisis has been in our community. I would just like to say that prevention is part of this. It's a huge part of it and I think that we are currently underspending in what we should be on prevention dollars.

And, in addition to that, I've continued to ask the multiple Health ministers over the last few years if they could please fund Sunshine House on Logan Avenue in our constituency, an—a managed alcohol program, for \$140,000 per year. I've continually been asking for this and we still wait to hear from this. We would love to see more about prevention and mitigation efforts in the Throne Speech.

And, because of all these components that were significantly missing in the Throne Speech, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will not be voting in favour of it.

Thank you.

Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas-Kameesak): It's always an honour to stand here before you, to put a few words on record and provide my rebuttal for the Speech from the Throne 2021.

I have been the MLA for The Pas-Kameesak for six years. My challenge has grown and 2019, when I went from 10 communities to 17 communities, which was a challenge I welcomed with open arms; so got to meet a lot more people, made more friends and great communities that I represent. So, let me start my speech here.

First of all, I just wanted to say that I come all the way from Treaty 5 territory, The Pas-Opaskwayak, and it's an honour to be here within Treaty 1 Territory and it's—as an Indigenous Cree woman, it's—today was the first time I heard the land acknowledgement in here. And I've been bumming around this building since I was 15 years old and I'm now 45, and this is the first time I have ever seen this face welcome and

respect of culture that should have been here a long, long time ago, but—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Ms. Lathlin: Thank you.

I also want to acknowledge Councillor Mike Bignell from Opaskwayak Cree Nation. He was the young man who sang and played his drum when the Lieutenant Governor entered the Chamber. I was watching virtually and it was a pleasant, pleasant surprise to see that young man—somebody from my community—representing. And when I was watching from The Pas, I did—it moved me, it truly moved me. I really wish I was here in person, but there's going to be many, many opportunities where we will hear our drum and our song within this building.

So, I just wanted to go on that to my speech.

One, the Pallister Conservatives did a lot of damage to our province. This was Premier Stefanson's chance to prove she's different. But it's clear nothing—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I just want to remind the member that—to address by the—either their title or their constituency.

Ms. Lathlin: This was the Premier's (Mrs. Stefanson) chance to prove that she's different, but it's clear nothing has changed. Premier—the Premier's Throne Speech is just a bunch of Pallister's repeats.

Throughout the Throne Speech, I keep on hearing words from the members opposite: fresh start, a new style of governing. I don't believe that at all because they stood side by side while these terrible decisions were being made on behalf of Manitoba. We had the deputy premier who is now the Premier stand quietly, and did not intervene when these terrible, terrible decisions were made on behalf of Manitobans. And as an Indigenous woman, it was absolutely insulting and one hundred steps backwards when Pallister was—made those disgusting remarks about Indigenous people; and, with all due respect, good riddance right there.

So, with that, I just wanted to talk about the language the people opposite are using: fresh start—fresh start—new style of governing; I don't think so.

One thing I want everyone to hear there. When my late father was alive, he always told me this very wise advice: be careful of who you run with because you catch the fleas from the dogs you run with; and that's exactly what's going on here, and fleas are hard

to get rid of. So be careful who you become friends with.

Madam Speaker in the Chair

So with that all together, this pack, they enabled Pallister with his agenda. We are now in the Pallister-Stefanson governments.

Now, we owe it to the people of Manitoba to fix the damage caused by the members opposite. The NDP are ready to solve problems—are ready to solve 'promblems' and not make them worse. So I'm happy to stand here with my team, where we are here to help families thrive by paying workers a living, decent wage; calling an independent inquiry into the pandemic so we can learn from our mistakes and build a more resilient health-care system, economy and province for all of us.

So, with respect to health-care workers and their—oh, and respect our health-care workers and follow their advice. And we also stand on this side of the House where we care—we want to improve care for seniors by increasing direct hours of care and creating a seniors advocate for oversight.

In regards to the northern Manitoba, the PC's Throne Speech didn't address the real challenges that are facing northern families such as mine. Families are struggling to make ends meet as the cost of everything like food, gas and home heating goes up. You should see my hydro bill in The Pas.

There is so much boarded-up social housing in northern Manitoba; it's quite confusing. We have so many poor families, especially families who need to be within a home in order to be reunited with their children, but there's no social housing; they're all boarded up. And I did ask the Minister of Families (Ms. Squires), maybe two years ago, if I could have a direct number of how many social housing that we have in our region, how many that should be fixed up so we can have families living within these homes and perhaps reunite with children, like some families that I know right now.

And to tell you the truth, the family—the Minister of Families did help me with this one case work when it did have to do with Manitoba Housing. But, you know what? That has to happen more often and across Manitoba. We need to get these houses up and fixed so families can actually live in there and actually have a decent life.

And also, too, I wanted to talk about CFS within this Throne Speech. I know it's just a directive, but

CFS—especially when we have one of the highest numbers of children in care within the Prairie provinces, I think something should be done in regards to—in policy change. What I want to see from this government—and I want to work with this government in regards to policy change—I think there should be a direct environment for our children's voices to be heard; such as, we need to hear their voices and concerns. When I brought up the question in regards to raising the age from 18—yes, we have resources from 18 to 21 years old, but it should be from 18 to 25.

I have few children that are under my wing that are afraid—they're CFS lifers, and they're afraid to turn 18. They think they're going to be on the street. They think they're going to graduate into the jail system. And they deserve a fighting chance, these children.

*(16:10)

They deserved to be mentioned in the Throne Speech. They deserve to be mentioned in the budget. We need to have a safe environment for these children's voices to be heard. We need to hear from them how bad this system is. They should be the ones telling us the policy and the legislation changes that should be done, and I want to provide that environment for those children.

And I started off with my daughter. When she had the opportunity to talk as a junior chief and council member for OCN, she talked on behalf of the children and how it is to be within that system. She described it as a residential school system. Right? Think about it: How many children graduated while they were in the residential school system and went on to post-secondary? How many children graduated while they were in the CFS system and went on to post-secondary? Not too many.

So with that, I just wanted to go on about just a couple of more issues that have come up in my constituency that need concern. 'Rual' health, ambulance services: that needs to be improved. I think that should be within the Throne Speech and within the Health budget. The health services in northern Manitoba and rural Manitoba are absolutely horrible.

The ambulance service in Fisher and Peguis First Nation, they share the same building as the radio station. There's a hole in the ceiling where there—a vent fell through into their ceiling. They're in dire need of a brand-new ambulance building, and the workers at that same ambulance service, they feel they

don't get attention from the province because of the clients that they serve.

They serve Indigenous communities. Why are their dollars so lower compared to the community in Arborg? So that's something that should be addressed, and I will follow up as an MLA for those constituents that are living there.

Also, too, Provincial Road 224: roads need to be focused on within our Indigenous communities, not just outlying non-Indigenous communities. And I'm saying that as an Indigenous person that we are overlooked. You know, we're also Manitobans, too, and we should also be in that budget, as well.

And mental health for youth—mental health resources for youth should also be mentioned, as well. We all know here. We all know my struggles that I went through with my two teenagers. I don't know how many times we were medevac'd—maybe five in total. Winnipeg, Brandon—medevac'd, when, if there was proper psychiatric services and assessments in The Pas, families like mine wouldn't have to leave the communities, okay?

So I'm ending my throne speech by bringing up these top issues that are within my constituency. I'm sure we on this side of the House understand I'm not being dramatic. These are real life issues. Like, somebody mentioned here we were being dramatic. No. We know what real life is about.

So on this side of the House, I will not support this Throne Speech. I will stand with my team members here and make sure that we provide a better life for Manitobans, including northern Manitoba.

Ekosi.

Mr. Andrew Micklefield (Rossmere): It's an honour to address the Throne Speech, which truly is historic. It's historic to have not only Manitoba's first female Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) but also Manitoba's, I believe, first female Lieutenant Governor presiding during when that was given, of course, yourself, Madam Speaker, the first female Speaker, and I would be remiss if I did not note that we have a female head clerk as well.

Madam Speaker, these are unusual times. They are historic times, and they are times where one should pause and note and look around and recall. We have come a long way. It's also notable that we have embraced a land acknowledgement, which has been

well received by Indigenous, Métis, Inuit communities, and I want to acknowledge those—members of those communities who are friends of mine.

My heart was touched when I heard the Indigenous drummer at the beginning of Throne Speech. That was a special moment and something I don't think I will ever forget.

Madam Speaker, I believe that our Premier is the right woman in the right job at the right time. With those words on the record, I am very happy to cede the floor in just a moment and welcome Manitoba's first female premier.

It's an honour to be in this place. I think for all of us it's an honour. It's an honour to be part of a government that has a direction, that is committed to listening, to engaging. And, Madam Speaker, if you look at the Premier's (Mrs. Stefanson) social media, you will see that is exactly what she is doing.

So, Madam Speaker, there is much to celebrate. There is much to acknowledge, and I do both of those things. So, without any reservation, I'm happy to continue to speak about this marvellous Throne Speech.

Madam Speaker, there have been some faith communities who have behaved in ways which are regrettable, but I want to acknowledge there are many more faith communities who have been doing the right thing, who have been respecting the rules, who have been limiting their capacities and respecting the health orders. And I do want to just give a—I do want to acknowledge them and thank them for their co-operation, for the good spirit that they are operating with and in.

Madam Speaker, I was thrilled—and I do want to draw attention to 400 additional nursing seats that are going to be opened up in our province. These are definitely challenging times, and we need real solutions that are going to come into play, and that's one of them, as is, by the way, I would add, allowing third- and fourth-year nursing students into the hospital wards to help out in practical ways. This is common sense stuff. These students will make a real difference, and it's an example of the common sense solutions I think we're going to see in this province in the next couple of years and for many more going forward.

And without any further ado, I want to cede the floor to the person who will lead this province for the next couple of years, Manitoba's first Premier. Madam Speaker, I would invite you and everybody in this House to join me in welcoming Manitoba's first Premier to the floor to speak to the Throne Speech.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Premier): I want to thank my colleague for those kind words just prior to me. And it's, indeed, Madam Speaker, a great pleasure to rise today and speak to the 2021 Speech from the Throne.

But, Madam Speaker, before I do, I want to begin by thanking our current Lieutenant Governor for delivering the Throne Speech the other day. It was a special day. In her opening remarks she mentioned that this will likely be the last time that she will deliver a Speech from the Throne, one of the most important duties, as we all know, of a Lieutenant Governor. She performed it, as she has so many times in the past, with excellence.

In my time as deputy premier, I attended many events with Her Honour, an incredibly difficult act to follow, as we all know, and I was always honoured to be with her. I witnessed her first—I witnessed first-hand the genuine interest and care that she held for every individual Manitoban with whom she interacted. Over the last six and a half years, she brought to the office of the Lieutenant Governor a calibre of sincerity that has inspired Manitobans from every corner of our province.

This role as Lieutenant Governor is one that she has performed with grace, class and compassion throughout her tenure, but this is nothing new for Her Honour Janice Filmon. Just some of the many contributions she has made to our community include the chair of the board of CancerCare Manitoba Foundation; founding chair, Nellie McClung Foundation; founding chair, Leadership in Winnipeg; board member, Winnipeg Airports Authority; chair of Foundations for Health campaign; inaugural chair of Winnipeg festival of trees and chair of the festival's 1999 Pan American Games. Just a few examples of a lifetime of service to people of the province of Manitoba, the legacy of an incredible woman who I consider a mentor and role model.

* (16:20)

I want to take this opportunity to say thank you. Thank you, Your Honour, for the dedication and commitment to your duties as Lieutenant Governor but also thank you for your passion for the people of this great province, which you have shared over a lifetime of community and public service.

Madam Speaker, Her Honour has been an example of compassion, sincerity and understanding during her tenure in office, an example to all

Manitobans. She is certainly an example we plan to learn from as we start forward on a new path as outlined in the Speech from the Throne.

The speech set out clear, definitive new direction on which our government is embarking: one of truth, reconciliation, collaboration, inclusivity and understanding but also one of humility, of hard work and delivery of results for Manitobans. Progressing together, we will build a better Manitoba with a bright future for all who choose to call it home.

The speech featured six key themes on which we will focus: reconciliation, health care, families, homelessness, child care, education, economic recovery and climate.

On reconciliation, Madam Speaker, our government has already taken critical steps to rebuilding broken relationships. Monday was a historic day in this place, as a formal land acknowledgement was read for the first time. This is just one step in our path of reconciliation and respect for Indigenous people in our province.

We know we have much work to do. The tragic legacy and damage of residential schools and colonization is deep. It is the responsibility of all Manitobans to work towards true equality together. This we must do so we can build a better future for all.

Manitobans have faced many challenges over the last few years. The unprecedented impact of COVID-19 has been felt across our province and indeed, Madam Speaker, as you know, around the world. We know we are not out of this pandemic yet. More must be done to ensure the health and safety of all Manitobans, and our government is taking action.

The Throne Speech highlights our commitment to health care: a task force to address the surgical and diagnostic backlog, an additional 400 nursing seats with every graduate being offered a job right here in Manitoba, expansion of the presumptive work-related cancers list for our firefighters to a world-leading standard and a firm commitment to building a more responsive and reliable system of mental health and addiction services in the province. Our health-care professionals have been exemplary throughout this process, increasing capacity, improving processes while still providing the level of care Manitobans expect and deserve.

A sincere thank you to all of our health-care workers for their continued commitment to the health and well-being of our fellow citizens.

Care of our most vulnerable is a top priority for our government, particularly our homeless and housing-insecure populations. The Throne Speech committed to a winter homelessness strategy and I am pleased to note for the House that the first step of the strategy has already been undertaken. Our government has partnered with End Homelessness Winnipeg to build up to 150 new warming spaces at 190 Disraeli. These will be operated in collaboration with Indigenous partners and help to ensure that all Manitobans have a warm place to go this winter. And I want to thank the Minister of Families (Ms. Squires) for her involvement in moving this forward.

The Throne Speech recognizes that Manitobans have been clear: our education system must better prepare students for future success. I am proud to lead a government that will build on the important work of the K-to-12 review, to build a fair, transparent and equitable public education system in our province, and I want to thank our Minister of Education (Mr. Cullen) for his work on this very important initiative in Manitoba.

We further commit to supporting closer collaboration of our advanced education institutions and employers in Manitoba, to ensure that post-secondary institutions are setting students up for success. And I want to thank our minister of advanced education for everything that he has done to move this file forward.

There is a critical labour shortage facing not just this province but all of Canada, making it increasingly difficult to attract and retain talent. We must strengthen the alignment between institutions and the labour market so Manitobans have the right skills to succeed here at home.

Our Provincial Nominee Program has been an incredible benefit to the provincial economy and the province as a whole, building on a renewed—and then the province as a whole. Building on a renewed relationship with the federal government, we will enhance the program to ensure that Canadians, new Manitobans, are given full opportunity to thrive and succeed right here in Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, this Throne Speech defines a clear principle: climate change must be addressed. Its impacts cross all jurisdictions and borders, and that is why it is so important to work with our federal government on a mutually agreed-to plan that recognizes the significant work already undertaken by Manitobans to combat it and its impacts here at home.

In short, Madam Speaker, the Speech from the Throne provided the vision for going forward: a more helpful, collaborative and engaging vision for the future of our province. We are here to work with all Manitobans so that we can emerge from this pandemic into a brighter future.

There are challenges ahead; there's no question. But we are ready, Madam Speaker.

I want to thank all of our Cabinet colleagues—all of my Cabinet colleagues, all of our caucus—for the continued dedication and support they have had on all of these initiatives moving forward. They have been absolutely incredible in all of this, Madam Speaker, and I want to thank them from the bottom of my heart for all of their efforts over the course of the last number of years to getting to where we are today. And I thank them for that.

We have the team, we have the vision and we have the commitment and determination to build a better province that works for all Manitobans, and that is exactly what we are doing with this Throne Speech.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, for allowing me to say a few words today.

Madam Speaker: The hour being—*[interjection]* No?

Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Madam Speaker: The question before the House—let me get this clear, is the proposed subamendment?

The question before the House is the proposed subamendment of the leader of the Liberal—or the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Lamont), that is the subamendment to the motion for an address in reply to the Speech from the Throne.

Do members wish to have the subamendment read?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Madam Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the subamendment?

An Honourable Member: Aye.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Madam Speaker: I declare the subamendment defeated.

* (16:30)

Apparently, there was a Yea and I did not hear it and I apologize.

Voice Vote

Madam Speaker: All those in favour of the motion, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Madam Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Madam Speaker: In my opinion, the Nays have it. I declare the motion lost.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): On division.

Madam Speaker: On division.

* * *

Madam Speaker: The question now before the House is the proposed amendment, moved by the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Kinew), to the motion for an address in reply to the Speech from the Throne.

Do members wish to have the amendment read?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Madam Speaker: I hear a yes.

The proposed motion of the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition and amendment is as follows:

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

But this House regrets that the provincial government has:

(a) failed to provide any plan to make life more affordable for Manitobans by not mentioning affordability and the rising cost of living due to higher hydro bills, grocery bills and more as Manitobans head into the holiday season; and

(b) failed to call an independent public inquiry into Manitoba's pandemic response to learn from its mistakes and bring forward changes to improve the lives of Manitoba families and strengthen the health-care system; and

(c) failed to provide any immediate supports to address the health-care crisis across the province from the north to the south; and

(d) failed seniors and elders in part by forcing them to move across Manitoba to make room in hospitals because of its failure to build new personal-care-home beds and address the health-care crisis in the province; and

(e) failed to commit to any real investments or changes to address the growing surgical and diagnostic backlog in the province; and

(f) tried to change the channel from former premier Brian Pallister but failed by repeating 16 of his previous commitments; and

(g) continued to put the long-term success of Manitoba students at risk by pushing ahead with an out-of-date review of the education system commissioned by former premier Brian Pallister; and

(h) continued the interference initiated by former premier Brian Pallister in post-secondary institutions, leading to an ongoing strike at the University of Manitoba which is impacting the ability of students to learn; and

(i) offered no commitment to implement a living wage, paid sick days, or health and safety supports for working Manitobans to help them out of poverty and keep them safe and healthy at work; and

(j) failed to mention Manitoba Hydro and offer a plan to use the clean advantage of Hydro to address climate change, create jobs, advance reconciliation and keep rates low and keep life affordable; and

(k) continued to fight with the City of Winnipeg by pushing a failed attempt at privatization that will cost Manitobans jobs, delaying upgrades to the North and wastewater treatment plant, which would help protect the lakes and rivers of the province; and

(l) failed to provide any substantial targets or initiatives to address climate change to prevent devastating weather events that impact producers, the length and quality of winter roads, the environment, the economy and all Manitobans; and

(m) neglected to provide any real commitments to advancing reconciliation or apologize for the failures and racially insensitive comments of former premier Brian Pallister; and

(n) failed to present clear measures to support women and gender-diverse Manitobans by committing to support the provision of menstrual products for women, girls and gender-diverse people in schools or committing to ensure reproductive health care falls under the purview of the Minister of Health and Seniors Care; and

(o) failed to commit to supports for other major communities such as Brandon and Dauphin and ending the funding freeze to municipalities; and

(p) failed to produce a meaningful strategy to revive Manitoba's creative industries or present a real strategy for Manitoba jobs in different sectors; and

(q) refused to address the addictions and housing crisis by failing to provide long-term investments into harm-reduction initiatives and affordable social housing.

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

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

Madam Speaker: All those in favour of the amendment, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Madam Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Madam Speaker: In my opinion, the Nays have it.

Recorded Vote

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader): A recorded vote, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: A recorded vote having been called, call in the members.

The question before the House is the amendment by the Official Opposition Leader on the Throne Speech.

Division

A RECORDED VOTE was taken, the result being as follows:

Yeas

Adams, Altomare, Asagwara, Brar, Bushie, Fontaine, Gerrard, Kinew, Lamont, Lamoureux, Lathlin, Lindsey, Maloway, Marcelino, Moses, Naylor, Sala, Sandhu, Smith (Point Douglas), Wasyliw, Wiebe.

Nays

Clarke, Cox, Cullen, Eichler, Ewasko, Fielding, Friesen, Goertzen, Gordon, Guenter, Guillemard, Helwer, Isleifson, Johnson, Johnston, Lagassé, Lagimodiere, Martin, Micklefield, Morley-Lecomte, Nesbitt, Pedersen, Piwniuk, Reyes, Schuler, Smith (Lagimodière), Smook, Squires, Stefanson, Teitsma, Wharton, Wishart, Wowchuk.

Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk): Yeas 21, Nays 33.

* (16:40)

Madam Speaker: Motion is accordingly defeated.

* * *

Madam Speaker: The question now before the House is the motion of the honourable member for Lagimodière (Mr. Smith), that is, the motion for an address in reply to the Speech from the Throne.

Do members wish to have the motion read?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Madam Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Madam Speaker: I hear noes.

Voice Vote

Madam Speaker: All those in favour of the motion, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Madam Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Madam Speaker: In my opinion, the Yeas have it.

The honourable Official Opposition House Leader (Ms. Fontaine)?

Recorded Vote

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): A recorded vote, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: A recorded vote having been called, call in the members.

The question before the House is the motion of the honourable member for Lagimodière.

Division

A RECORDED VOTE was taken, the result being as follows:

Yeas

Clarke, Cox, Cullen, Eichler, Ewasko, Fielding, Friesen, Goertzen, Gordon, Guenter, Guillemard, Helwer, Isleifson, Johnson, Johnston, Lagassé, Lagimodiere, Martin, Micklefield, Morley-Lecomte, Nesbitt, Pedersen, Piwniuk, Reyes, Schuler, Smith (Lagimodière), Smook, Squires, Stefanson, Teitsma, Wharton, Wishart, Wowchuk.

Nays

Adams, Altomare, Asagwara, Brar, Bushie, Fontaine, Gerrard, Kinew, Lamont, Lamoureux, Lathlin, Lindsey, Maloway, Marcelino, Moses, Naylor, Sala, Sandhu, Smith (Point Douglas), Wasyliw, Wiebe.

Clerk: Yeas 33, Nays 21.

Madam Speaker: The motion is accordingly passed.

* * *

Mr. Goertzen: Is there will of members to call it 5 p.m.?

Madam Speaker: Is there will of the House to call it 5 p.m.? *[Agreed]*

So agreed the hour being 5 p.m. this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, December 1, 2021

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