

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

**Official Report**  
**(Hansard)**

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**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Fortieth Legislature**

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

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, November 24, 2014

*The House met at 1:30 p.m.*

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

Good afternoon, everyone. Please be seated.

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

##### Bill 2—The Public Schools Amendment Act (Small Classes for K to 3)

**Hon. Peter Bjornson (Minister of Education and Advanced Learning):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Children and Youth Opportunities (Ms. Wight), that Bill 2, The Public Schools Amendment Act (Small Classes for K to 3); Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques (faible effectif des classes), now be read a first time.

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Bjornson:** Today we're very pleased to take this very important step to help children in Manitoba succeed by introducing smaller classes legislation for kindergarten to grade 3. By reducing class sizes we're giving teachers more time to work individually with their students and help them get off to a strong start.

This legislation makes it clear that we expect all school divisions to implement the smaller classes initiative by October of 2017. School divisions will also be expected to publicly report their progress in smaller classes through the use of their online class tracker.

Thank you very much.

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

Any further introduction of bills?

### PETITIONS

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

#### Grace Hospital Emergency Room Upgrade and Expansion

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

These are the reasons for this petition:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

And this is signed by M. Davis, S. Helwer, A. Helwer and many others.

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

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

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

And these are the reasons for this petition:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition is signed by E. Baudin, V. Cook, S. Hamilton and many, many other fine Manitobans.

#### **Election Request**

**Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

And this is the background to this petition:

(1) In 2015 the current provincial government will be in its fourth year of its mandate.

(2) There is a crisis of leadership unfolding on the government side of the House.

(3) According to media reports, the member from Minto stated that the Premier is more concerned about remaining leader than doing things in the best interests of the province.

(4) According to media reports, the member for Seine River stated that if you are in a position where you support the point of view of the Premier, your priorities and your projects move up the queue.

(5) According to media reports, the members for Southdale, Dauphin, Seine River, Minto and Fort Rouge stated that the Premier has stopped listening to our advice.

(6) According to media reports, the members for Southdale, Dauphin, Seine River, Minto and Fort Rouge stated, we can no longer work for a Premier who refuses to hear us; he refuses to hear us not just on the leadership issue but also on a wide range of issues in our portfolios.

\* (13:40)

(7) The concerns over the Premier's leadership have not been confined to just government members. The NDP provincial council member Darlene Dziewit has been reported as saying, we have a crisis here in that I don't think the people of Manitoba trust our leadership anymore.

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

To urge the Premier to immediately consider calling an election so that Manitobans can decide who is best placed to govern in the best interests of Manitoba.

And this petition has been signed by C. Cox, S. Russell, D. Klimack and many, many more fine Manitobans.

**Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Midland):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) In 2015 the current provincial government will be in the fourth year of its mandate.

(2) There is a crisis of leadership unfolding on the government side of the House.

(3) According to media reports, the member for Minto stated that the Premier is more concerned about remaining leader than doing things in the best interests of the province.

(4) According to media reports, the member for Seine River stated, if you are in a position where you support the point of view of the Premier, your priorities and your projects move up the queue.

(5) According to media reports, the members for Southdale, Dauphin, Seine River, Minto and Fort Rouge stated that the Premier has stopped listening to our advice.

(6) According to media reports, the members for Southdale, Dauphin, Seine River, Minto and Fort Rouge stated, we can no longer work for a Premier who refuses to hear us; he refuses to hear us not just on the leadership issue but also on a wide range of issues in our portfolios.

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We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

To urge the Premier to immediately calling an election—consider calling an election so that

Manitobans can decide who is best placed to govern in the best interests of Manitobans.

And this petition is signed by R. Wowchuk, C. Chute, J. Lumax and many other fine Manitobans.

**Mr. Speaker:** Committee reports? Tabling of reports? Ministerial statements?

Prior to oral questions, I would like to—order, please.

#### Introduction of Guests

**Mr. Speaker:** Prior to oral questions, I'd like to draw the attention of all honourable members to our public gallery where we have with us today from Springs Christian Academy 57 grades 9 and 11 students under the direction of Mr. Brad Dowler, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for St. Boniface (Mr. Selinger), the honourable First Minister.

And also seated in the public gallery today we have with us from Kildonan-East Collegiate 25 grade 9 students under the direction of John Thompson, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe).

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

#### ORAL QUESTIONS

##### Moody's Investors Service Manitoba Rating Concerns

**Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, an NDP government is dangerous for Manitobans and a divided NDP government is doubly dangerous for Manitobans.

NDP waste, we've been saying for a long time, threatens Manitobans' front-line services, and Moody's international, a respected bond rating agency, agrees with our observation and issued a negative outlook for the Province of Manitoba. Now, this will mean that the cost of borrowing will continue to rise, and what impact that could have could be very considerable in a province that has been driven into almost double debt by this particular administration.

So I have to ask the Premier: Is he concerned about this negative outlook issued by Moody's international?

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier):** When bond rating agencies provide reports we always take them

seriously, and we've had a couple of them. Some of us—have rated us as stable; some have put a negative outlook on it.

They do note that we've had good economic growth in Manitoba. They do note that our debt as a proportion of the GDP is—has shrunk over the last several years compared to 1999, although during the recession it started to go up again. They do note that our carrying costs for debt are 5.8 cents on the dollar when under the members opposite they were over 13 cents on the dollar.

So we take it seriously, but we are making very significant investments in infrastructure that will protect communities from floods, build up strategic infrastructure to grow the economy and provide municipal infrastructure which will make for more livable, safer communities.

#### **Provincial Sales Tax Future Increase Plans**

**Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Well, the Premier pays lip service to this rating. It's the first negative outlook rating in 28 years for this province, Mr. Speaker, a significant negative event, and ignoring it won't make the problem go away.

Now, the Throne Speech just two years ago that the government issued promised that they'd deal with the problem and Moody's commented that the government is now an execution risk, meaning they don't trust the government to do what they say they'll do. They didn't even keep the promise of reducing spending that they made two years ago.

So they have choices to make, Mr. Speaker, as all governments do: either reduce spending or raise taxes. So far they've chosen to raise taxes.

I have to ask the Premier: Does he plan in the future to again raise the PST given the opportunity?

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, I do note that the bond rating is two notches better than it was under any time the member of the opposition was in office, and, of course, we're looking at a program to continue to invest in infrastructure with the resources that we have in front of us right now.

And I do have to say that we did a very significant announcement on Friday afternoon in Morris, Manitoba, where we committed to ensure that we build up Highway No. 75 at Morris, Manitoba, so that there would be less days lost to

flooding than we have seen in the history of Manitoba.

So we want to improve that that roadway meets the same standard as the roadway in the United States, I-29. Further north at Aubigny we're going to rebuild Highway 75 to have more water flowing underneath that road so that there's better drainage in the area, and further south of Morris, Manitoba, we're going to rebuild the bridge at St. Jean Baptiste so that there is better drainage there and a better roadway.

So that's a very significant investment, up to \$200 million, something that's made possible by the decisions we've made to rebuild Manitoba and meet the No. 1 priority of Manitobans, which is infrastructure.

#### **NDP Fiscal Management Future Implications**

**Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Well, I remind the Premier that to all intents and purposes his expenses, his run-up of expenses on behalf of Manitobans is unsustainable by any measure, and the current interest rates are a third of what they were some 15 years ago. So the reality is he's tying the hands of future governments and he's tying the hands of Manitobans as well with his overspending problem.

His responses indicate he will do nothing about that spending problem and that will lead, no doubt, Mr. Speaker, to our credit rating being downgraded in future if the government doesn't take this seriously. That will mean hundreds of millions of additional dollars flowing out of our Manitobans' small businesses and working people's hands into the hands of moneylenders because of the inactions of this government.

Now, Manitoba has seen the highest tax hikes in Canada in the last three years under this administration, and in their Throne Speech they do not address getting a handle on their expenditures.

So I ask the Premier this: Was that Throne Speech written by a leadership candidate or a premier?

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier):** The Throne Speech was written after listening to Manitobans identify their priorities, and what did they tell us? They said they wanted good job opportunities in Manitoba for young people so that they can make a decent wage to put down roots to live in Manitoba.

So the first part of the Throne Speech identified ways that we can have no wrong doors in colleges and universities and high schools, that we can bring those institutions closer together to add more value to a high school experience. They can get an academic education. They can get introduction to a major trade. They can get an introduction to a new advanced form of activity in Manitoba in the economy like the cyber-security academy at Sisler High School.

They said to us that they want to make sure that we protect core services like health care, and we saw very significant announcements in there to improve QuickCare clinics and ACCESS centres and ensure that we are meeting our obligations to train more doctors and nurses and other health professionals in Manitoba.

They said they wanted us to continue to invest in key infrastructure, and I identified the project in Morris, Manitoba. I also identified CentrePort and municipal infrastructure and flood protection—

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

\*(13:50)

#### **Fiscal Management Debt Servicing Costs**

**Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler):** Mr. Speaker, the Premier (Mr. Selinger) may not be concerned, but Manitobans are concerned. They're concerned that under the NDP government this—debt in this province has soared to over \$32 billion and debt servicing costs have spiralled upward.

This is a dangerous situation for Manitobans, and I want to ask this new Finance Minister: Is he concerned about how much Manitoba now pays in rising debt servicing costs, and how much money is that?

**Hon. Greg Dewar (Minister of Finance):** First of all, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Premier for giving me this opportunity to serve Manitobans, and I also want to say to my colleague opposite, in fact, all members of this Chamber, that I'm eager to work with them to build a better province. We may have different ways to achieve that goal, but I do pledge to work with all members of this Chamber to build a better province.

Mr. Speaker, the goal of our government is to return to surplus in 2016-2017. We're going to achieve this by controlling expenditures, by finding

efficiencies, by saving money and by creating jobs, by creating wealth. In other words, our plan is to grow our economy, and we're doing that. We've got the third lowest unemployment rate in Canada, 5 per cent. We created 8,000 jobs last month. We've got the third best growing economy in the country. Our capital expenditure—capital investment's going up.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, we won't do what they're—want us to do, and that is to cut \$500 million out of the budget. Our plan is to grow the economy; theirs is to kill it.

#### **Moody's Investors Service Financial Performance Rating**

**Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler):** Well, Mr. Speaker, the Finance Minister says that he is eager, but he's not eager to reveal that it cost \$821 million just for the Province to service the Province's debt that has ballooned under this NDP government.

Mr. Speaker, 12 weeks ago Moody's Investors Service changed their outlook on Manitoba from stable to negative. Now, Moody's is a leading provider of credit rating and risk analysis and they downgraded their performance of this spenDP government; it's the first time in 28 years. This is a dangerous development even if he does not see it. Moody's is citing an execution risk surrounding the NDP's promises to balance the budget.

In the opinion of this new Finance Minister, what is the message that Moody's is sending this spenDP government by describing their failed financial performance as an execution risk?

**Hon. Greg Dewar (Minister of Finance):** We do take what Moody's told us seriously. And as I said earlier, it's two steps better; our current rate—ranking is two steps better than when the Leader of the Opposition was in Cabinet. For some reason that was fine for him then; now he's opposed to that now.

Our net burden of debt is lower than it was when they were in government, 32 per cent versus 28 per cent now. And, Mr. Speaker, equally important, when they were in government then, we were spending 13 cents on the dollar to service our debt. Now it's 5.8 per cent.

#### **Fiscal Management Debt Servicing Costs**

**Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler):** Mr. Speaker, it may be a new Finance Minister, but

they're the same old tired NDP talking points. Execution risk means we just don't trust you anymore.

Mr. Speaker, Moody's negative opinion on the NDP government's broken fiscal record will cost Manitobans more, more in health care, more in education. The former Finance minister admitted that. Does this new Finance Minister agree that more money going to service the debt means less money going to health care and education and social services?

Will this new Finance Minister please inform the House: How much money will be robbed from front-line services to pay for escalating debt servicing costs as a result of this tired NDP's financial mismanagement?

**Hon. Greg Dewar (Minister of Finance):** I'll have to repeat what I just said for the member. I'll just remind him that, No. 1, the Dominion Bond Rating agency has maintained our credit rating, No. 1. Moody's—as I said earlier, we're two degrees higher than when they were in government. Mr. Speaker, No. 2, we spent 13 cents when they were in government, 13 cents on the dollar to service our debt; now it's 5.8 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, when they were in government, the GDP-to-debt ratio was 32 per cent. It's fallen down to 29 per cent. I'll take our record over their record.

#### **Moody's Investors Service City of Winnipeg Debt**

**Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo):** Well, Mr. Speaker, the Premier (Mr. Selinger) and Minister of Finance may not be concerned, but I can tell you that Manitobans are concerned about the direction of this government.

Mr. Speaker, Moody's recent downgrade to the outlook of Manitoba's debt ratings was closely followed by a downgrade to the outlook for the City of Winnipeg's ratings, the primary reason being the close financial links and the lack of trust and faith in this NDP government. This downgrade will have a negative impact on the cost of servicing the City of Winnipeg's debt.

Can the minister indicate what the current debt is for the City of Winnipeg, and is he concerned about how much more it will cost the taxpayers of Winnipeg as a result of a downgrade?

**Hon. Greg Dewar (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, I'll remind the member again that the

Dominion Bond Rating agency maintained our credit rating. I'll remind the member that, again, that Moody's—our rating is two steps higher than it was when the Leader of the Opposition sat around the Cabinet table. I'll remind members opposite again that when they were in government we were paying 13 cents on the dollar to service the debt and now it's 5.8 per cent.

And I'll remind the member again that the net-debt-to-GDP ratio under them was 32; it's fallen to 29 per cent under this government.

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Mr. Speaker, the Moody's report stated, and I quote: The rating action reflects Moody's assessment of the macroeconomic and funding linkages between the Province of Manitoba and the City of Winnipeg. End quote.

Clearly, Moody's is concerned. So are we and so are Manitobans concerned about the negative impact of this downgrade as a result of this government's inability to control its spending.

Mr. Speaker, the question for the Minister responsible for the City of Winnipeg: Is he at all concerned about this, and can he indicate what kind of an impact a 1 per cent increase in borrowing costs would have on the City of Winnipeg?

**Hon. Kevin Chief (Minister responsible for relations with the City of Winnipeg within the Department of Municipal Government):** I want to thank the member for the question.

I just want to say for the record, Mr. Speaker, we have one of the most generous contribution agreements with the City of Winnipeg both in terms of capital as well as operations. Our government's also incredibly proud. As we know, we just came off a municipal election. We have one of the most generous contributions as relates to transit as well, protected in legislation.

I was glad to do our very first announcement with the mayor on digital technology where our government is working closely with the City. Every dollar we invest in digital tech, Mr. Speaker, we get \$20 in return in terms of investment, in terms of the economy, as well as jobs.

We're going to continue to work with Mayor Bowman and all members of the council to look at the priorities of the city of Winnipeg, and I was very proud that the mayor was able to join us last week from the Throne Speech, and we'll continue work on their priorities. Thank you.

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Mr. Speaker, that very contribution agreement that this minister is referring to is in jeopardy because of the mismanagement of this government.

Winnipeggers are very concerned about the fiscal mismanagement of this NDP government. They deserve to know what kind of an impact this downgrade will have on their own finances.

How much more will Winnipeggers have to pay as a result of this NDP government's dangerous inability to manage the finances of this province?

**Mr. Chief:** We look forward to working with the current mayor and of all members of city council. In fact, one of their key priorities is one of our key priorities, which, of course, is infrastructure. We made a record announcement of \$250 million towards infrastructure; 66 million of those dollars are brand new dollars.

As I've said, we have one of the most generous contribution agreements both in terms of capital and operating. In fact, I think all members of the House know, were able to see, we had an incredible construction season. Virtually every dollar invested in infrastructure pretty much touched almost every neighbourhood in the city.

We'll continue to work with mayor on council on their priorities. Thank you.

#### **ER Services Wait Times**

**Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood):** Mr. Speaker, NDP health failures continue to grow and to put Manitobans at risk.

The latest bad news is that Manitoba has the worst ER wait times in Canada. We've gone from hallway medicine to highway medicine to parking lot medicine to taxicab medicine, and now no medicine. That is dangerous for patients.

\*(14:00)

So I would like to ask this new Minister of Health to tell us: Is she at all concerned that Manitoba patients have the worst access to emergency care in all of Canada?

**Hon. Sharon Blady (Minister of Health):** Well, I'd like to thank the member for the question.

As a mom and as a daughter, I can tell you that ER wait times are something that matter to me and that my goal is to ensure that I can work with all

partners, including members across the Chamber, to ensure that Manitobans have the kind of health care, including emergency services—the kind that I would want for my family, I want for every Manitoban.

In terms of the ERs in Manitoba, you know what? We've taken new measures to take the pressure off of our emergency rooms. We've brought something—*[interjection]* If members opposite are interested in the answer, I'd gladly proceed, Mr. Speaker.

One of the things that we've brought in that didn't exist when they held the reins of power is we brought complete transparency to ER wait times for patients and for families, who can now access real-time waits for WRHA ERs online as well as explore—

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

**Mrs. Driedger:** Mr. Speaker, I don't think the Minister of Health really listened to the question. We have the worst ER wait times in all of Canada. We don't need rhetoric that she's putting on the record.

Of grave concern also is that the ER wait times at the Grace Hospital are the worst waits in all of Canada. They're dead last. This is not safe patient care. That makes for dangerous times.

So I'd like to ask the Minister of Health to tell Manitobans why they are forced to pay more and more for health care and yet, from this government, they are getting less and less good health outcomes.

**Ms. Blady:** Again, thank the member for the question.

Emergency rooms and emergency wait times are a complex issue, and it's not just about our ERs. It's about a full spectrum of services to all Manitobans, and I can say that we have made strong investments and to assure Manitobans that it's about giving them a full complement of services, and that includes things like a Mental Health Crisis Response Centre which sees over 500 patients a month, relieving the burden on our other ERs. It's about providing QuickCare clinics that are fully staffed and that—since they've opened have seen over 100,000 patients. We are also, again, knowing the vital role that paramedics play, the EPIC program, the Emergency Paramedics in the Community program—

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

**Mrs. Driedger:** Mr. Speaker, the minister doesn't understand. The more they spend, the worse their results are. She needs to focus on that.

Long ER waits can mean the difference between life and death for patients, yet this NDP government has allowed ER waits to become the worst in all of Canada. That is gross mismanagement.

So I'd like to ask this Minister of Health, this new Minister of Health: Does she even care?

**Ms. Blady:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to assure Manitobans, as I've said, as a mom, as a daughter and as someone that has—that's been closely connected with the Grace Hospital, especially, for my entire life as a member of that community, that Grace ER times, other ER times, do matter, but it's a matter of a full complement of services available that take pressure off our emergency rooms. And it's like the QuickCare clinics, it's like the EPIC program, it's also about—and, again, home care and other supports for others.

So I can assure the member opposite I have enjoyed my time in the first few weeks getting to meet all the stakeholders that I can and I'm looking forward to meeting more so that we can work on this, because I know that this is an issue that matters to Manitobans. I am aware of it and I know in the case of our own Grace we're making—

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

#### **NDP Fiscal Management Impact on Municipal Government**

**Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside):** The evidence is compelling. Not only has Moody's Investors Service downgrade affected the NDP government with the cost of borrowing, but also our municipal governments; it will impact them on how much they borrow, the rate of which they will pay for interest, on and on.

So I'd like to ask the new minister of local government: Will he admit that the government's mismanagement is going to have real effects on municipal governments going forward?

**Hon. Peter Bjornson (Acting Minister of Municipal Government):** I've had the good fortune of having been a member of municipal council in the past and I had the good fortune of meeting with many members of municipal council just recently when we talked about infrastructure investments that

we are working with the federal government to bring forward in waste water management.

Mr. Speaker, 85 municipalities—pardon me, a number of waste water projects: \$1.5 million for water supply upgrades in the RM of Macdonald, for example; 2.3 for a new waste water lagoon and infrastructure, RM of Sifton and town of Oak Lake; \$1 million for upgrades and expansion of the waste water lagoon in Pinawa. These are just some examples of many projects that we've announced and many projects that we'll be working with municipalities to address their concerns around waste water management.

We have a tremendous amount of respect for our municipalities and we work with municipalities to ensure that we're delivering the best possible infrastructure that we can.

**Mr. Eichler:** Mr. Speaker, under the NDP Manitobans pay the highest taxes in Canada, and now this government is causing local governments to pay more for borrowing through no fault of their own.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the new minister once again: Does he have what his plan is to protect municipalities from this government's own financial mismanagement?

**Mr. Bjornson:** Well, Mr. Speaker, another series of projects we announced was the important municipal road infrastructure, and I was very pleased that many municipalities in my community have taken advantage of those 50-cent dollars to invest in municipal roads.

And that's something that members opposite didn't support. They've never voted for budgets that have supported our record investments in infrastructure. We're building more roads, more bridges to service the people of rural Manitoba. Perhaps members opposite would support our Throne Speech and support our budget when we bring it forward to show record investment in infrastructure, Mr. Speaker. That's important to rural municipalities.

Another great announcement today helped rural students from Manitoba with an exemption of the car against their student loans.

They should start thinking about how they support rural municipalities and rural students. I'll stand by our record any day.

### **Municipal Amalgamation Outstanding Flood Claims**

**Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside):** Mr. Speaker, Manitobans are paying more and getting less.

Since local government was forced to amalgamate—and this is now the third minister during this process—they have been forced to pay more in every area of their budget, covering not only the PST increase cost but also flood costs. The list goes on and on. Many of the forced amalgamations are still holding outstanding flood claims and trying their best to meet the deadlines set out by this government.

I would like to ask the new minister: Why has he failed to produce a plan to address the failures of this government?

**Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister responsible for Emergency Measures):** Well, Mr. Speaker, I would point out that not only have we been assisting Manitobans with floods, one of the key features of our Throne Speech was an announcement that we're going to be spending upwards of \$450 million in terms of flood protecting Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin.

And I think it's important to note that since we've been in government we've invested a billion dollars in terms of flood mitigation. It's the kind of thing that's part of what this government is all about. It's part of our Throne Speech.

Of course, we know members opposite are not only not there in terms of supporting that, they will vote against the Throne Speech. They'll vote against the budget. They don't care about flood victims. Mr. Speaker, they applaud because they don't care about flood victims.

### **MPI Rate Increase Fiscal Management Practices**

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach):** The former member—minister for MPI, the member for Minto (Mr. Swan), defended a \$50,000 consulting contract where no work was required. He defended hundreds of thousands of dollars, Mr. Speaker, for thunder sticks, for alpaca throw rugs, for executive cars and for international trips, and while he was defending these things the NDP were going and asking Manitobans to pay more for the MPI rates.

Is this new minister, the new Minister for MPI, concerned that Manitobans are being asked to pay

more for MPI when over at MPI they're giving away money for nothing and trips for free?

**Hon. James Allum (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Act):** I thank the member for his question. Obviously, his lines don't change either.

\* (14:10)

You know, the interesting thing, Mr. Speaker, is that when he talks about MPI, never once, not once has he ever mentioned that MPI has among the lowest basic auto insurance rates in the country, and when we add those auto insurance rates to home heating and to hydro rates we have the lowest bundle of utility rates in Canada as well.

Mr. Speaker, the member opposite, in fact, the entire opposition doesn't care about Manitobans' affordability advantage. On this side we do care.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Mr. Speaker, the minister is living proof that the NDP support a no-fail policy: no matter how badly he fails, they keep promoting him in Cabinet.

Mr. Speaker, we heard at the MPI committee a few months ago that costs are not being controlled. We heard that there is a hiring freeze that doesn't actually apply to anybody. We heard that the—a committee has been struck to try to control operating costs but has never actually reported anything.

Why should Manitobans continue to pay more for MPI, Mr. Speaker, when these costs are not being controlled? If this minister is truly concerned about Manitobans, will he ensure that the rate application, the increase application is withdrawn from MPI so Manitobans don't have to pay more?

**Mr. Allum:** Mr. Speaker, I don't know if the member was in hibernation last winter, but for the rest of us it was one of the toughest, cruellest, most difficult winters that there was in Manitoba's history. So it's perfectly understandable that MPI would apply to the PUB for a modest increase to cover \$113 million in collision claims last year.

But even having said that, Mr. Speaker, even with that modest increase, Manitoba still has the lowest auto insurance rates in the country. Why won't he take yes for an answer?

**Mr. Goertzen:** We know that it was a tough winter on the NDP Cabinet, Mr. Speaker, but we're talking about MPI.

Mr. Speaker, they continue to ask Manitobans to pay more for MPI. Now, there are some who suspect—I'm not a suspicious person, but there are some who suspect that the government is trying to pad the reserve fund so that they can take money from Manitobans now and give it back to them closer to an election.

Now, I know the Premier will consider this to be ridiculous, Mr. Speaker, just as ridiculous as increasing the PST when he promised he wouldn't.

Why won't this government stop padding the reserve fund, stop giving away throw rugs, stop buying thunder sticks, stop giving executive cars, stop going on international trips for MPI and withdraw the application to increase the rates of Manitobans when they shouldn't have to pay more to pad an election fund for this Premier and this government?

**Mr. Allum:** Mr. Speaker, it's a—disappoint me when the member opposite, because he's wrong in the debate, has to resort to cheesy personal insults in order to make his point.

But let me say this, Mr. Speaker: Since 2001—five times since 2001, MPI has returned a total of \$600 million in rebates to the real shareholders of MPI, the citizens of Manitoba.

And let there be crystal clear in this Chamber today that the member opposite and his leader have one goal in mind when it comes to MPI. It was the same goal they had with MTS in the 1990s. They wanted to privatize the telephone company, and if they ever get their hands on MPI they're going to privatize that as well.

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The honourable member for River Heights has the floor.

### **Science, Reading and Math Education Assessment Results**

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, on October 7th of this year, the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada released the report of the Pan-Canadian Assessment of science, reading and mathematics. Under today's NDP, the results remain dismal. Among all provinces, Manitoba was dead last in science, reading and mathematics.

Today's NDP government failure is impacting all Manitoba students and their families. It threatens

to pull our—put our students and our province backwards for many years to come.

Why has the Premier and his government chosen to let Manitoba families down in an area as essential as the education of our students?

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier):** I want to thank the member for River Heights for the question, because it's very important that we continue to invest in education.

One of the key initiatives we've put forward is to reduce class size in the K-to-3 area to get around average—around an average of about 20 students per class with an upper limit of around 23, and that was the nature of the bill. It was tabled today by the Minister of Education. That is a very significant investment which will allow young students to get off to a better start because they'll have more personal attention, more assessments done of their skills and more specific help to be able to launch them on a successful career as a student in Manitoba.

We've seen an increased graduation rate in Manitoba. We've gone from 72 to 85 per cent—85 per cent of the students were performing as required in the PCAP scores, and now we want to ensure that young people get off to a very good start with our smaller class-size initiative, and that will pay long-term dividends along with investments in early childhood development for the well-being of students and better performance in educational scores.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Mr. Speaker, 15 years in government and the worst in Canada.

In—faced with this devastating news of poor performance on the education front, this Premier has turfed his last two ministers of Education, who at least appeared to pay some attention to the plummeting educational achievements of our children. Instead, he's brought back an Education Minister who scoffed at problems in education and presided over the deterioration of Manitoba students' performance as minister from 2003 to 2009.

I ask the Premier: Has he had a discussion with his recycled minister to indicate to him the seriousness of the challenge we face as a province when it comes to our children's education?

**Mr. Selinger:** The Minister of Education is an award-winning teacher in the province of Manitoba and across the country, Mr. Speaker, and we have all discussed—we have all discussed—how we want to

continue to ensure that education meets the needs of our young students of Manitoba. That means we want better teacher training, better preparation of students for the very significant responsibility of teaching our young people. That means we want to strengthen our curriculum, and we've upgraded our curricula, including math, including in the science area, including in the reading area.

We've given new resources to parents so that they can be more aware of what curriculum—what the subjects are their students are taking—their children are taking in school and can be supportive of the students doing that, and we've provided new supports to teachers right in the classrooms, and, of course, we've reduced class size. At a time when we're graduating more students, we're reducing the class size in the early years.

Even before we go to school now we have early childhood development, and members may have missed it in the Throne Speech, but we made a commitment to universally accessible early childhood learning, otherwise known as daycare, in Manitoba so that young people can get a good foundation for the—for their obvious opportunity to go to school, a good foundation for the future.

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

**Mr. Gerrard:** Mr. Speaker, failed results come from failed policies, you know. Manitoba is not just last in science; we are 35 points lower than the Canadian average. Manitoba students are not just last in reading; we are 39 points below the Canadian average. Manitoba is not just last in math; we are 36 points below the Canadian average.

The Premier can give every excuse under the sun, but the facts speak bluntly for themselves. He's failed Manitoba children. The Premier and his government have failed Manitobans.

Will the Premier now apologize to the people and to the students of Manitoba?

**Mr. Selinger:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question.

I point out to him the following: When he was in office, he cut the resources for education in Manitoba. He cut the resources for education in First Nations.

We have increased our resources. We have 300 more teachers now working in the K-to-3 area over the last three years, 300 more teachers giving

personal attention to students, giving personal attention to students to make sure that they are properly assessed and get the help they need to succeed at school. That makes a gigantic difference.

We are investing in early childhood development so that students are off to a good start even before they enter school. We are expanding our daycare spaces in Manitoba so that working families know their kids are safe and are also being prepared for school. And we are also providing after-school resources for young children so that they have safe, secure environments after school.

\* (14:20)

And also, Mr. Speaker, we are providing more nutritional opportunities in our schools with our Nourishing Potential program, our breakfast program and our programs to help young people have a healthy breakfast and a healthy lunch so that they can give their full—

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

#### **Student Financial Aid Elimination of Provincial Interest Rate**

**Mr. Dave Gaudreau (St. Norbert):** Mr. Speaker, our government has a strong record protecting affordability for college and university students in Manitoba, unlike when the Leader of the Opposition was in power and tuitions skyrocketed 132 per cent.

When college and university is affordable in Manitoba, that means more students can take advantage of these opportunities in education. I know that when I attended college the financial strain on my family was great, and it's hard on you.

Will the Minister of Education please tell us on how—on this great announcement, tell the House what the announcement was today on how we are helping education and university and college students in Manitoba?

**Hon. Peter Bjornson (Minister of Education and Advanced Learning):** I was very pleased today to be at the University of Winnipeg with the Premier (Mr. Selinger) as well as the MLA for Wolseley joining me to celebrate with many students and faculty the fact that we are the first province in western Canada to eliminate interest on student loans, Mr. Speaker.

This is going to have a tremendous impact on the 27,000 people who currently have student loans, and

this is just another effort to continue to make our universities and colleges more affordable for Manitobans, and we know that this will have a tremendous impact when they set up their roots here in Manitoba, when they get their jobs in Manitoba and they start a family here in Manitoba.

And I wish the members opposite could have been there to hear what the students had to say, Mr. Speaker. They're absolutely delighted to have worked with our government to make this happen, and we're looking forward to more good things from our students at our universities. This is a great announcement today to be shared by everyone at the University of Winnipeg.

### **Lake St. Martin Flood Protection Opening of Emergency Outlet**

**Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris):** Mr. Speaker, as my colleague the MLA for Steinbach noted, this government is in dire straits and is busy announcing plans to plan to spend hundreds of millions of dollars on permanent flood control infrastructure when they're unable to utilize current infrastructure. Case in point, the Lake St. Martin emergency outlet has, since opening in July, failed to be fully open. Over 20 per cent of potential water flow or the equivalent of one Olympic-size swimming pool every minute has been stifled by order of the NDP.

Mr. Speaker, the minister warned of serious problems—his words, serious problems—in the weeks and months ahead if it was not used at full capacity.

Can the minister share with Manitobans the details of the consequences of his decision to not fully open the outlet for the last five months?

**Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister responsible for Emergency Measures):** Well, Mr. Speaker, I think the most serious consequence for Lake St. Martin and for Lake Manitoba would be have people like the members opposite who don't get the fact that in this Throne Speech we've announced that we're going to invest \$450 million in flood protection for those communities. And as the Leader of the Opposition outlined only a few minutes ago—didn't even wait 'til he came in the House—he is going to vote against that.

I want to point out that we built the emergency outlet, Mr. Speaker. We've invested, along with the homeowners and cottage owners around Lake Manitoba, significant resources in flood protection. We have a short-term, a mid-term and a long-term plan for Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin.

They have no plan for those lakes. They have no plan for Manitobans.

**Mr. Martin:** Mr. Speaker, the members opposite may have built it, but they're afraid to use it.

The minister said, and I quote: You cross a line when you end up trespassing and moving to impede the operation of flood protection. We cannot and we must not allow this type of action to take place. End quote.

Why has the NDP failed to use their own legislation, bill 37, The Emergency Measures Amendment Act? Is it because of his own caucus impeding the operation of this facility?

**Mr. Ashton:** Well, Mr. Speaker, it's pretty rich coming from members opposite who stood in the Portage Diversion and directly blocked the operations of the Portage Diversion.

But, Mr. Speaker, I want to stress again, we did indeed build the emergency outlet. In fact, one of the things that distinguishes this government for members opposite, particularly when the Leader of the Opposition was member of the Cabinet, I actually can't think of anything they built in the 1990s.

Unlike the members 'oppit', we've invested a billion dollars in flood protection. We got \$450 million slotted for Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin.

We're building up Highway 75. In fact, the member opposite represents that constituency. He didn't even acknowledge \$200 million is going to benefit the people that he represents directly.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. Time for oral questions has expired.

### **Introduction of Guests**

**Mr. Speaker:** And just prior to proceeding to members' statements, I'd like to draw the attention of honourable members to the loge to my left where we have with us today Mr. Sid Green, the former member for Inkster.

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

### **MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**

**Mr. Speaker:** Now it's time for members' statements.

### **Holodomor Memorial Day**

**Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Mineral Resources):** Mr. Speaker, this weekend was Holodomor Memorial Day, a day where we're all encouraged to stop and remember this dark period of Ukrainian history. Millions of people lost their lives during the forced starvation in Ukraine between 1932 and '33. Holodomor literally means death by hunger in Ukrainian.

The Holodomor famine, conceived and executed on the orders of Stalin, was done to break the Ukrainian people's opposition to the forced collectivization of their farms. Grain and other foods was taken away from the local people until they had nothing left to eat.

I'm proud to represent the constituency of Kildonan and to be a member of this Legislature where we've unanimously condemned this act. And I'm proud that many people of Canadian-Ukrainian heritage live here today. Ukrainian immigrants have played an important role in building our province. They helped shape our greater cultural diversity, and their accomplishments helped our province to grow and become the wonderful place it is today.

On Saturday I joined many descendants of Holodomor survivors in Winnipeg city for an outdoor memorial service, including members of the opposition, members of Parliament and members of City Council. We sang a few hymns, led by the Ukrainian Catholic and Ukrainian Orthodox bishops and priests. We had a Panakhyda, and flags of black muslin cloth were lowered to half-mast to remember those we lost.

Here at the Legislature, a statue named Bitter Memories of Childhood stands on our west lawn to help us honour the memory of the 7 million victims. It's an exact copy of the statue at the entrance of the Holodomor memorial museum in Kiev, Ukraine. Inside the building is also a stirring painting entitled Holodomor Genocide 2.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the constituents I represent, all Manitobans, I want to take this moment to remember the Holodomor, thank all of the members again for their participation in passing a resolution united and thank members who've gone over there and participated in elections and all members for their tremendous support for what I call, despite all the tragedy, the year of Ukraine, when Ukraine for the first time, I think, in world history is being recognized across the world for its

many accomplishments and for some of the difficult situations it's in.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### **Mieke Uhryniuk-Smith**

**Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Riding Mountain):** Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the House to join me in recognizing an amazing young singer from the Riding Mountain constituency. Minnedosa vocalist Mieke Uhryniuk-Smith won first place in the junior vocalists age 15 to 17 provincials in May.

The Associated Manitoba Arts Festivals is a Manitoba organization that represents 29 amateur community arts festivals across the province. Its purpose is to promote and encourage participation, growth and development and appreciation for the creative and performing arts in partnership with local festivals. Among the art disciplines featured at these festivals are piano, voice, singing and speech arts.

Associated Manitoba Arts Festivals provide a route for the most outstanding young musicians to progress from local to provincial to national festival levels. Mieke was recommended to compete provincially by an adjudicator at the Rolling River fine arts festival in the spring of 2014 where she went on to win first place.

Mieke has been singing for as long as she can remember and has participated at the local festival since she was five. Singing in choirs has been a part of her life since the age of six, and she began taking voice lessons at 11. Among her favourite pieces to sing are Italian arias and folk songs because they require her to be an effective storyteller and bring out her dramatic side.

Mieke's in the—is in grade 12 this year and is considering studying music at a post-secondary level and is certain that she will continue to make music for years to come. One of the—excuse me—one of the reasons she loves music is because it can be shared and enjoyed by everyone, no one—no matter who you are or where they come from. It really brings people together.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the House to join me in congratulating Mieke Uhryniuk-Smith on her musical achievements and her accomplishments in her young life and wish her success in her future endeavours.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### **Aboriginal Chamber of Commerce Gala**

**Mr. Bidhu Jha (Radisson):** Mr. Speaker, last week I had the pleasure of attending the Aboriginal Chamber of Commerce gala. It was a wonderful event thanks to the dedicated work of Gloria Spence, the chamber's president Jessica Dumas and many other volunteers and board members. I had a wonderful time and I'm sure the many other—many others who were in attendance did also enjoy the evening.

\* (14:30)

The Aboriginal Chamber of Commerce is now celebrating their 10th year, Mr. Speaker. It's the first Aboriginal Chamber in Canada. This dynamic chamber works to promote Aboriginal business and foster the success of its members. They do this through offering a working network—working, as well as providing further learning opportunities. Their advocacy works helps awareness to Aboriginal businesses.

At the gala, the host of CBC's Dragons' Den, Dianne Buckner, gave a wonderful keynote address. She's a successful businesswoman and was able to share some of her experience to those in attendance. Dianne encouraged business owners to be empowered to success. I'm pleased to report that my own speech was also accepted by many. I spoke briefly about my own experience as a new Canadian with experiences of bias and prejudice.

The Aboriginal community has tremendous opportunity to build and develop their own community through economic development and build our strong Canada and a strong, strong country. To capitalize the growing assets of rising entrepreneurship the chamber can be a big help. The gala was a huge success, Mr. Speaker, and helped promote many successful Aboriginal businesses. The gala also presented wonderful performances by Ray St. Germain, Jason Lepine and award-winning Eagle & Hawk.

Thanks to organizers of the organization and for hosting that great event and their dedication to building successful Aboriginal businesses in Manitoba.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

### **Dekalb Superspiel**

**Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris):** Mr. Speaker, this past weekend, the Morris Curling Club and the

Rosenort Arena played host to some of the best curlers in the world.

Now in its seventh year, the DeKalb Superspiel is a world-class event with teams from Japan, Switzerland, the US and across Canada coming to Morris and Rosenort to compete in this bonspiel. There are 16 men's teams competing and the amount of women's teams competing doubled from last year to reach 32. In addition, there was a \$35,000 increase in prize money, bringing the total pot to \$70,000. These changes have led to an increase in the Canadian team ranking point system available to teams as they start the path to qualify for the 2018 Winter Olympics in South Korea.

Speaking of Olympics, Jennifer Jones's 2014 Olympic gold medallist rink should be wrapping up their semifinal game right about now, as play continues in the women's events. The winner will be decided later today. Yesterday on the men's side, Matt Dunstone's Winnipeg rink prevailed over Scott Ramsay in a 5-3 thriller to take the title.

The event brought only—not only great curlers to the community of Morris and Rosenort but great fans, as well, with an estimated 2,000 spectators participating over the course of the weekend. To put that in perspective, according to census data, it is estimated that the population of the town of Morris is 1,800. Without these great fans the event simply wouldn't happen. There were approximately 125 volunteers who worked to make this a reality and I'd especially like to highlight the efforts of co-chairs Chris and Lorne Hamblin as well as Mayor van der Linde and Reeve Groening.

Events like this also require the support of sponsors and over 200 corporate sponsors supported this event, with several reaffirming their support in the years ahead.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the success or failure of any curling event can be, in many instances, dependent on the quality of ice. Thanks to the efforts of world-class icemaker Greg Ewasko, four sheets of Olympic quality ice for the teams was provided and maintained.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### **Diwali Mela**

**Mr. Mohinder Saran (The Maples):** Mr. Speaker, this year's Diwali celebration or more, also known as the Festival of Lights, took place on October 22nd. Here in Manitoba, the Hindu Society of Manitoba

hosted Diwali Mela at the RBC Convention Centre, which was open to the public. This year attendance was the highest ever with over 6,000 Manitobans coming together to celebrate.

Diwali is one of the best-known Indian festivals. It is celebrated throughout India and in Indian communities around the world. Diwali is a five-day religious and cultural festival celebrated by the Hindu diaspora, Janis and Sikhs around the world. Diwali represents a period of renewal. The traditional activities include cleaning the home, preparing special foods, buying new clothes, making personal resolutions and joining family and friends. Diwali is also—Diwali is known as the Festival of Lights because the common practice is to light small oil lamps or candles and place them around the home, symbolizing our journey from darkness to eternal light.

For families at the Diwali Mela celebration, the Manohar Performing Arts of Canada and India School of Dance, Music & Theatre were there to perform heartfelt dances for Diwali. Parents, grandparents, children barely old enough to light candles on their own, were there all working to involve the next generation in their history and culture.

Mr. Speaker, celebrations like Diwali are vital to creating vibrant communities. This allows for newcomers to enjoy their traditional celebrations while non-Indo-Canadians can learn about their neighbours' culture. It is truly a multicultural society when we can share our traditions with each other.

In closing, I would like to encourage all of us to adopt the messages of Diwali by giving thanks, seeking inner peace and being compassionate towards others.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

#### THRONE SPEECH

##### (Second Day of Debate)

**Mr. Speaker:** To resume the adjourned debate the proposed motion of the honourable member for Wolseley (Mr. Altemeyer), by leave standing in the name of the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, who has unlimited time.

**Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition):** I'm pleased to rise and to speak to the

Throne Speech, and then I, of course, will proceed with a motion thereafter.

I wanted to take this opportunity first of all to offer—as I have done personally, but to offer condolences to the Premier (Mr. Selinger) and his family on the passing of his mother, Margaret. If there's one thing the Premier and I have in common, it's that our moms were both very near and dear to our hearts. And I—on behalf of our caucus and the members of our party, I want to offer our sincere condolences to the Premier on the passage of his mom.

And, Mr. Speaker, I also want to offer condolences to the family and many friends of Corporal Nathan Cirillo, who was tragically killed at the war memorial in Ottawa some days ago, and also the family and friends of Patrice Vincent, killed in a deliberate hit and run at a Service Canada office in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu in Quebec. These are tragedies of the worst kind, and they demonstrate, if we needed it demonstrated to us yet again, how important and how thankful we should be for the importance of our military personnel and the service they provide us.

I'm also reminded of the heroic—of the heroism that lies within our military and our service personnel, our police, our fire personnel as well, and I think it's typified by the actions of the Sergeant-at-Arms, Kevin Vickers, at the Canadian Parliament when they were under attack. That was an incredible act of heroism on his part, and we all thank him and salute his putting himself at risk to protect the lives of many others.

This is an important year, Mr. Speaker. It is, of course, the 100th anniversary of the beginning of the Great War, World War I, and again an opportunity for us to thank our veterans. Each and every year, for one day, we pause and we remember our veterans, but, of course, our memory of their sacrifices and ongoing commitment to our country and its values is not just evidenced in that one day but should be evidenced every day as we pause and we remember the sacrifices that have been made and that continue to be made on our behalf so that each of us could live free of oppression, live within a healthy democracy and live within an environment where there is rule of law for all.

Perhaps the recent events in Ottawa have made us remember that sacrifice a little more clearly. Those events made clear that our law enforcement and our military protect us each and every day. We

continue to hold the rights and freedoms that our veterans have fought for close to our hearts and to our minds.

All of us in this House are individuals who were elected to ensure that the democratic rights of all Manitobans are protected. We were elected to ensure that the sacrifices our veterans made were not in vain, and we continue to live out their legacy here in this House and in this province.

I want to speak briefly about the tragedies that have affected us recently in this province in respect of violence against women. Tina Fontaine was found in the Red River following her disappearance, a victim of violent crime. Rinelle Harper, found near the Midtown Bridge, survived after being assaulted. All of us here want to offer our support to the families and to these victims who have had to deal with these tragedies.

\*(14:40)

Violence against women cannot and should never be tolerated anywhere in our society. Our mothers, our sisters, our friends should always feel comfortable and should always feel safe in this beautiful province in which they make their homes, and they should not feel that they are in danger in any way ever.

We have an obligation as a society to stand up against violence of any kind to anyone. It is not acceptable. These two young women were victims. They should not have been victims and our young people should be our beacons of light. They should not be the victims of callous acts of violence and they should never fall through the cracks of a system that isn't looking out for them. That should not be tolerated ever by any government.

As all of us are proud to represent certain areas of the province, I must speak briefly about Fort Whyte. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to represent the community and I—and its neighbourhoods: Bridgwater, Whyte Ridge, Linden Woods. It's a growing, it's a diverse and it's a healthy group of neighbourhoods committed to their city and committed to their province; and, if there's one thing that's impressed me about the people of Fort Whyte, it's their passion.

The families that reside there want nothing but the best for their children and for the future of that great area of the province and the province as a whole, and to these people education is vitally important. People have told me at the doors as I had

travelled the riding that they want an education system that provides nothing but the best for their children and they're concerned that they're not receiving that. They're not content to see an education system that continues to fall behind other provinces in this country, and it's become clear that within our riding, the only riding—by the way, I'm the only MLA who doesn't have a high school in my riding in this place, our growing concern among many of the residents there as we have a growing population that needs to be addressed.

For a long time, as well, Mr. Speaker, I and my predecessor, the former leader of our party, and others have been pushing very hard to improve the flow of traffic down Waverley and across those rail lines. Whether under or over, we've seen a variety of options, but the rush hour commute's bad enough without trains making the trip to work or home from work or from picking up family members at school or in various other ways an excessively long and tiresome journey. A major artery such as Waverley should not be ground to a halt on a daily basis simply because the government can't get its act together. We need to address this.

The hidden gem in my community, in my riding, I would say, no doubt, is FortWhyte Alive. It's truly an excellent place and for any members who have not had the chance they must go. I encourage them to go. It's truly fun for the whole family. There's nothing better than spending a beautiful Saturday or Sunday out on the trails with your family. We're blessed to not only have the trappings of great city living within our riding, but we are also able to say we have a hidden oasis of rural and outdoor activity right there waiting at FortWhyte Alive.

Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday of last week the European Space Agency's Rosetta mission placed the Philae lander, a small spacecraft, on the surface of an icy comet the size of Mount Fuji. Now, the comet is travelling at a speed of 18 kilometres a second and the Philae travelled 6.4 billion kilometres just to reach it. That's an incredible thing, just an incredible accomplishment. That human beings could land a spacecraft on a place that far away is incredible and we can't seem to get common sense to land on the NDP caucus room here, and that contrast is disturbing.

We have a divided government. It is divided and it is ineffectual. It was ineffectual when it was not divided. It was ineffectual when it was unified, at least to the outside eye unified, but it is totally

ineffectual now. It is an unhealthy organization and, Mr. Speaker, I want to speak today about that.

Organizations are simply ways that people, human beings, have developed for achieving goals that are beyond the capacity of an individual to accomplish alone. Organizations are methods for aligning groups of people so they achieve common goals, and when an organization inhibits the ability of a group of people to achieve its goals, it must be reformed.

When an organization raises up leaders who suppress, demean or nullify the productivity of others, swift action must be taken to right that situation. When organizations fail to pay attention to changes in the internal and broad external environment, when they miss critical shifts in markets, geographies, demographics or technology, they must be reformed. They must be reformed at once.

But organizations themselves are mindless; so, if people don't repair them, no one will. Organizations cannot fix themselves; only people can do that because organizations are human constructs. Good leaders must always keep an eye on whether the organizations they lead inhibit or promote progress.

Now, the NDP government is a failing organization. It is failing Manitobans. It is obstructing Manitobans. Abraham Lincoln said in June of 1858 in his famous speech that a house divided against itself cannot stand. This is a government divided against itself and it cannot stand either.

Now, who better to understand the situation that is facing our province, who better to assess the dangers than those who have sat within the Cabinet of the government itself? And these members have made their conscious decision, no doubt an extremely difficult decision, to stand opposed to the government. They have said—I quote the member for Fort Rouge (Ms. Howard) now: For some time now it has been increasingly difficult to do our job because the Premier (Mr. Selinger) has stopped listening to our advice. In recent weeks and months it has become clear to us that he is increasingly being driven by his desire to hold on to his leadership rather than by the best interests of Manitobans.

To do their jobs, ministers need to be able to speak up honestly in Cabinet and disagree with the Premier at times without fear that speaking their mind on some points will mean their voices are

ignored on the things that are important to Manitobans.

You see what I mean about suppressing the ability of individuals and holding people back in an organization, Mr. Speaker. When that kind of culture permeates any organization, that organization must be reformed. It must be changed.

I continue with the quote: Our decision to resign is not because of any single issue or single decision, it is because we can no longer work with a premier who refuses to hear us. He refused to hear us not just on the leadership issue, but also on a wide range of issues in our portfolios. There are many important issues and much work to do, but we cannot work together on the priorities of Manitobans if we cannot be honest with the Premier—the words of the member for Fort Rouge.

Now, if that is the case, I encourage the member for Fort Rouge to seriously consider the motion we will present today because her very words are in the preamble.

The member for Seine River (Ms. Oswald) said, and I quote now: But this situation before us today is something that has been growing for a long time. When you are a voice that may not sing in harmony with what the Premier wants to say, it becomes very difficult for your voice to be heard after that. I know that I am unable to effectively continue doing my job when the only way my voice will be heard is if it is in total agreement with what the leader says. And she goes on to say, it's become clear that if you are in a position where you support the point of view of the Premier, your priorities and your projects move up the queue ahead of what was once a government plan and what would be, indeed, the priorities of Manitobans and what Manitobans need. This is of grave concern to me that that kind of prioritization would start to take place.

Reprioritization, if you will. I don't know that that's a word, Mr. Speaker, but I get the meaning. I get what the member from Seine River was trying to say. She was trying to say that she's—was part of a dysfunctional organization and that it needs to be reformed.

And she goes on to say, what is happening here is the five of us have made a decision on principle not to continue on knowing that problems and decisions could evolve if people are not allowed to speak truthfully. I think that when there is a sign of

turmoil it is never helpful; I acknowledge that. Sometimes doing the right thing isn't the easy path.

That's very true, and I ask the member to consider—the member for Seine River (Ms. Oswald) to seriously give consideration to doing the right thing now, because if the organization is, as she describes it—if it is as unhealthy and unable to function as she has described it so eloquently in her press conference and subsequently, then she should join with us in standing up for Manitobans as opposed to standing up for her own previous allegiances.

The member for Fort Rouge (Ms. Howard) said, you don't make this decision because you want a bigger office; you make the decision because in your heart of hearts you know that there really is no way to go on, there is no way to continue to be in Cabinet with integrity.

What does that say about the other members who are in the Cabinet now? It suggests very strongly, very clearly, that the members who remain in that Cabinet are not there in the possession of integrity, and that member has made that assertion. She cannot make that assertion on one side of her mouth and then, when an opportunity comes up, vote for the same government that she accused of lacking integrity. That will not happen. It cannot happen if integrity is indeed the issue.

\*(14:50)

And the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Pettersen) went quite a bit further and said, I'm from the North, I represent my constituents, and I'm not going to sit back and see our opportunity gone so someone can do the comeback of the century. The Titanic's going down and I'm jumping off and swimming for a raft, and I want to win. Are you going to stay on and the Titanic's going down and you're not going to jump?

Well, I encourage that member as well to make the jump that is required. If he wants to be a man of his word, if he believes that the government lacks integrity, if he has no confidence in the government, then vote for a non-confidence motion.

Before this circus began, this was Canada's worst government. Manitobans are among the highest taxed people in Canada. Manitobans are spending more, they are getting less for it: the second highest program expenditures per capita in Canada after Newfoundland; the only province to overspend its planned budget every single year for the last decade; and the MLA for St. Boniface given the

'ignominious' credit for being the worst premier for fiscal management.

Manitoba's lost 47,810 net people to other provinces since this government came in. Out-migration is a serious concern. We have lost the combined populations of the city of—cities of Brandon and Steinbach, our second and third largest cities, under this administration, and no one over there seems to get it and no one over there seems willing to look at the problems that led to that statistic coming into reality.

Since 2009 when this Premier (Mr. Selinger) came to power, Manitoba's GDP has grown the second slowest of any Canadian province. Since 2009, average weekly wage growth was second smallest in Canada.

Overall, we are tenth. However, New Brunswick was almost as bad. Of course, Mr. Speaker, they did replace their government recently, and I think that needs to happen here as well.

In health care, as was well-described by our critic for Health, the member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger), in 2013, Manitobans had the longest waits of all provinces, almost 18 weeks between seeing a specialist for diagnosis and then actually receiving treatment for medical conditions. Think about that, Mr. Speaker. Think about that for a second.

You know, we gloss over these statistics sometimes and they just run away from us, and we don't really consider the human impact of them.

I spoke to a couple the other day. She'd been feeling worn out and down. She went to see her physician, her family physician. He recommended that she consult a specialist. They waited a considerable time for that to happen. They then went to see the specialist, and the specialist, after some tests were done, got back to them and said that she had cancer and she needed treatment. And they waited, in this particular case, 17 weeks—less than the average—and by the time she got to treatment, she was stage 2—not stage 1. Just that—just the impact of the differences in the treatment—if anyone here has had a family member struck by cancer or they themselves have had cancer, you understand the difference between stage 2 and stage 1. Multiply that by thousands of Manitobans—thousands of people who are forced to wait longer than people in Saskatchewan, Ontario, you name it, right across the country, and you realize the human side of the debacle that this government is presiding over. These

waits are unacceptable. They create harm in families. They create uncertainty in the lives of families. They create pain for families—real physical pain but emotional pain. They create stresses in a family environment that are unheard of.

Prior to the time of our family being stricken by cancer when my dad first had cancer, I am ashamed to admit that I had not understood fully the human impact that a family goes through. I didn't have the empathy a man should have for others. Going through it personally in our family and seeing it, I will never again make that mistake.

This government makes a mistake. When it considers throwing money at a problem a solution, it makes a major mistake. This is not a government that's hesitant to throw money at problems, but it is not able to get the results that Manitobans deserve.

In education, Manitoba is tied with Alberta as the most expensive education system on a per-student basis in our country, and yet we have the lowest high school graduation rate, we are last of all provinces in the Pan-Canadian Assessment Program's testing for mathematics, for science, for reading. Again, think about that, Mr. Speaker. Think about that on a family.

When your child, when a friend of yours who has a child who is a student is moved ahead in school, obtains their grade 12, it's a joyous time. That graduation ceremony—as a former teacher I can tell you—from rural Manitoba—that's a definition of mixed emotions in our rural schools, mixed emotions because we're so proud of our children, so pleased with their work and their coming of age. But at the same time we know we'll lose 80 per cent of them from the communities that they graduate from. They will go away and most will never return. So it is with mixed emotions that we approach high school graduations, but we approach them with a sense of celebration, at least we used to.

But now, now there's a greater new uncertainty that prevails and it is this: as our young people move on to post-secondary training, will the learning that they did in our schools be enough? Will it be enough to help them find success at the next level or will their skills not be adequate for them to advance to the next level? Will they instead need additional study, additional learning, additional years of post-secondary education and training because of the lack of success in the earlier years, because of the lack of performance in the earlier years, because of the lack of standards in the earlier years?

In welfare Manitoba has the second highest rate of food bank usage in Canada and leads in the use of food banks by children. In crime and in safety we've been the murder capital of Canada now for all but three years of the last decade and a half, and in these years we were second. The violent crime severity index is higher than in any other Canadian province. In 2013 Thompson was home to the—as the city with the highest per capita violent crime rate of any city in the country of Canada. Our homicide rate is highest among the provinces and, again, these situations continue to worsen in this province as opposed to other provinces where solutions are being found.

There is a fiscal danger as well. We alluded in question period today to some of the mismanagement of this government, their unwillingness to admit they have a problem, their unwillingness to accept—even to go to the first step of dealing with their spending addiction, to admit that they have a problem. They cannot do it. They will not do it, and now international bond rating companies are saying to us you must do it. But will they do it in the midst of a leadership contest? Will they exercise restraint on their spending? Why would 21 different ridings be mentioned in the Throne Speech by name unless the priorities of this government were to gain support and this Premier (Mr. Selinger) to gain support in the leadership contest rather than to address the issues of out of control and ineffectual spending of taxpayers' resources?

Manitoba is a beautiful province, but we do poorly on rankings because we have a poor government. We're a have province with a have-not government. On the issues of inward and outward Greenfield FDI, or foreign direct investment, we rank last among the provinces on inward foreign direct investment and we are near the bottom on outward. Now, why does that matter? What are the implications of that? Well, the best definition I've ever heard of a job is three words: capital at risk.

Now, there are risks to investing capital. There is no certainty in the private sector in investing money. No certainty, but without risk and a willingness on the part of individuals and collections of individuals and groups and various structures to take risk, there are no jobs. There's not a private sector that's going to grow. When you are last in attracting capital investment, you are not creating jobs.

Now we have on top of this reality, we have a government that is divided. It creates great uncertainty. That uncertainty is an additional

impediment to investment. It discourages people. People right here in our own province who are creating jobs by putting capital at risk are asking themselves, is this worth the additional risk for us? Is this something we should be doing? They have seen the impact of higher taxes on them. They have seen the impact of poorly thought out regulatory constraints being downloaded to them. They have seen the unco-operative, almost adversarial attitude of this government to the private sector, and they ask themselves: Why would I put my family's capital and my family's future at risk and try for a profit when the government isn't my partner, when the government is my adversary, when the government stands against me?

\* (15:00)

Global integration is essential to sustaining and boosting economic performance, particularly for small, open economies like Canada's. And in this benchmarking analysis I look at two proxy measures of global integration: inward and outward, foreign direct investment indexes.

Now, outflows can produce innovation. We can invest elsewhere, we can learn, we can gain from that experience, we can gain back here as well, not just in a higher return on our capital but in terms of the ideas that we'd get. There's an old saying in business that says, if you and I each have a loonie and we exchange a loonie, what do we have? One each, same as before. But, if you have an idea and I have an idea and we exchange ideas, we each have two, and this is what we need to do in this province. We need to be open to promoting innovation, to boosting productivity—not through handout programs, the tired old mechanisms this government uses that have been thrown out by most other jurisdictions, are not the way to do that.

Improving access to foreign markets, promoting deeper integration into global value chains, making it an economy—work better by making it work more efficiently and effectively and competitively. And foreign direct inflows, bringing capital into our province can also boost productivity. FDI encourages the diffusion of technological management know-how, it improves resource allocation, it increases the efficacy of an economy.

There are dangers with this situation right now that should not—should not—be shortchanged, especially by experienced members of this House who know better. And the fact remains that there are

real dangers because of the absence of a healthy leadership and a healthy government.

It's about teamwork. My—I've had the privilege of being in political teams, business teams, sports teams. My most rewarding memory as a team member was as a result of a fastball team that I helped build and put together back in my hometown, Portage la Prairie, back in the mid-'80s. I had a chance—I had an offer to go and play in California. I turned it down. I said, no, I want to go back to my hometown.

And we—a good friend of mine and I, Larry Dewis is his name, great guy—put together a squad of teachers and civil servants and farm boys and small business people, all who loved the game that we loved, and they had not played at a high level before. Most of our players had never played outside of our hometown. And, anyway, we went together, and with predictable results—we put ourselves up against some of the toughest competition we could find because we thought what better way to get better than to play against the best. And at that time western Canada was blessed with some of the most wonderful, successful, skilled teams in that sport. Do you remember—you remember, Mr. Speaker, the Winnipeg Colonels? Remember that name? They played in the western Canada league. It was a very, very good league.

Anyway, what happened was we entered four tournaments early and I think we won one game in the four tournaments. But you know what happened, Mr. Speaker, is interesting. You learn a lot more about your team when you lose than when you win, and our team pulled together. We lost, but we were getting better. We knew we were getting better. We were losing by less. And so we prevailed on each other to stay with it. We worked on our skills together. We worked to help one another. We developed a team environment that allowed us to improve. And so it came down to the crunch time, there was a big tournament in Saskatoon and it was to see if you could qualify. The winner of the tournament, all teams from across western Canada, would go to the world championships. And, by golly, didn't we put some wins together, but then we got to the final and we lost.

Well, no one blamed each other. We didn't look around and say, you know, it was the coach's fault. We didn't do that. We just said, you know, guys, we're going to get better and, by gosh, next time we'll get in. And we went that long drive back from

Saskatoon, back to Portage la Prairie, and we didn't put our tail between our legs. We just patted each other on the back and encouraged one another, like a good team does.

Two weeks later, I get a phone call. They said one team had backed out of the world championships and as the runner-up in our zone, which was considered the toughest region, we were invited to go to the world championships. It was a proud, proud moment—really proud. I called all the guys, everybody was excited. And we went down to Illinois for the world championships, and it was a great thing, a great opportunity. There were 64 teams in the world championships. They were seated, they were ranked 1 to 64, and we were ranked 64th. And so our first game was against the No. 1 team, and the tournament—and the No. 1 team was the defending world champion team from Decatur, Illinois. And, coincidentally, the world championships that year were being played in Decatur, Illinois. And so we went in front of over 5,000 fans, and I don't think anybody but our family members who accompanied us were cheering for us.

But I'll never forget it, Mr. Speaker, for a number of reasons. Most of all, I guess, because all year this little band of players had worked together to improve, and now we had the chance to play the best team in the world, and that's, you know, almost a no-lose situation when you're playing good competition, not like the competition we in the PC Party face now, but good competition—honest, good teams who work very, very hard to get better all the time. That's who we were playing against. And we stepped out on the diamond, and I'll never forget it, we were the only Manitoba team there, one of only two from western Canada in the whole tournament, and when they played that national anthem, that was pretty special.

We got behind 1-0 early, but we came back and we got a two-run home run out of our left field or in the top of the last inning, and we held on and we beat those guys. And I'll never forget that. I'll never forget that because it was a triumph of teamwork. It was a triumph over long odds. It was an example of what happens when you put your nose down to the grindstone and work hard and when you use the fundamentals the way they are designed to be used to make yourself better. Healthy organizations will give all of us here who have been part of them good memories for the rest our lives, and unhealthy organizations will provide us with nothing but bad memories.

And the bad memories that have been created in the last few days and weeks in this place are not memories I will treasure, and I know that members opposite will not treasure them either. The member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) who served his constituents for so many years has many highlights in his career—dedicated and principled member of this place—but he will not treasure the memory of what has gone on here in the last number of days, nor will other members of this House. They realize that this is not a healthy situation.

Organizations do not fix themselves. Only people can do that. And the question is, which people? Can the NDP members be trusted to be those people? They're divided now into three groups, three-D: dissidents, docile and discredited. And a sad tendency on the part of all them to put personal interests ahead of Manitobans is on display. The Premier (Mr. Selinger) has just presided over a Throne Speech while at the same time trying to be a candidate for a leadership of a political party and, naturally, through that crucible this Throne Speech will be viewed by most Manitobans as an exercise in buying influence. You cannot wear both those hats simultaneously. But the reality is the Premier has discredited the office of Premier by trying to do so.

The Premier's office is now being viewed by many, including people in his own party, as campaign central. That is not appropriate. This Jets tickets issue is just another bit of icing on the cake of distrust that all feel. The question of where that information came from, if members opposite would ask themselves that, should be evident. We didn't have the information. I don't believe the Liberals have the research capacity to find it out. So I expect it came from the government members. I strongly suspect that the government members informed on their own leader.

Now, I should explain what Cabinet solidarity is: Cabinet solidarity is the mutual agreement—*[interjection]*—is the mutual agreement and support of policy decisions, mutual agreement and support of policy decisions shared by ministers of the Cabinet in a parliamentary system of government. If a member of the Cabinet does not support a policy decision, he or she is obliged to resign from his or her position in the Cabinet. The Cabinet will generally replace an empty position with someone who has historically leaned towards the leader's ideological and policy beliefs to re-establish Cabinet solidarity.

That's exactly what's gone on here. We now have the docile in Cabinet, as opposed to the dissidents. Is that change healthy? Is the Cabinet stronger than it was before these dissident members left or is it weaker now? Was it weaker before they left, perhaps? This is a serious question to ask because we are a government right now—we see a government in disarray, and that disarray is a concern. It should be a concern to all on that side as much as it is to us and to all Manitobans.

Now, every member, if the principle is understood as it should be, of Cabinet solidarity, every member of Cabinet is responsible for decisions made, such as the PST hike. Yet some of the dissident clan are pointing the finger at the Premier (Mr. Selinger) and trying to blame him. That's not Cabinet solidarity. That doesn't represent Cabinet solidarity. The fact of the matter is Cabinet solidarity means all are in, all are responsible, all are accountable, not some, but all members.

Now, Becky Barrett, who's a member, I understand, of the provincial council, if I'm using that phrase correctly—council, perhaps the insider group of the NDP—said, quote, there's a huge lack of trust and commitment to him, referring to the Premier, and the party, referring to the NDP, and I think that, he, referring to the Premier, has a decision to make about how he goes forward, she said.

\*(15:10)

In the year and a half, she goes on to say, since the PST increase, things have gone from bad to worse for the party and the leader. The polls have been showing consistently that, as a party, we are losing and the Premier has lost the trust and confidence of the people of Manitoba.

Okay, now, that's their best and brightest on their Executive Council, Mr. Speaker, a former Cabinet minister in a previous government and someone who should know, trying to place blame on the Premier for all that befalls the NDP in the polls. This is a sign of a losing team. This is where you get on a losing streak and start to point fingers at other people rather than looking at the responsible individuals or looking at the collective responsibilities that should be assumed by all that are part of the team.

She goes on to say, I'm concerned that in the last 18 months the issues have been largely due to the PST and that we haven't been able to get beyond the concerns raised by Manitobans about their lack of

trust in the leader, and they're feeling that they were betrayed by him when he went back on his word not to raise the tax.

There's one thing, Mr. Speaker, that I think needs to be said here, and I will say it. It wasn't the Premier's decision alone, it was a Cabinet's decision. The Cabinet members should accept responsibility for the decision. They should not be pointing their finger at their leader. That is immature and a sign of a deteriorating organization. That was a collective decision that was made, and it should be accepted as such. Pointing the finger at the leader is not a healthy thing, and, in fact, in so doing it weakens the office of premier. And it is on that level that I am very concerned about the tendency of the members, not just those who are noisily pointing the finger at the Premier but others in the caucus who are quietly pointing the finger at the Premier who remain within the tent apparently for now.

Now, the dissidents were given a poll like the rest of the members were—given a poll in their Brandon retreat apparently, and it said, quote—from long-time pollster Turnbull—Leslie Turnbull said, entering—the quote was: Entering annihilation territory.

Now, what is a characteristic of a strong organization? That little fastball team was entering annihilation territory every time they stepped on the 'diam'—every single time. A strong organization, win or lose, remains focused on the people they want to serve. A weak organization remains focused on something else entirely. This is a weak organization.

Members have taken pains to say it's not just the PST. They keep saying that. Just like in business, you learn very quickly when people tell you it's not about the money, it's about the money. It's about the PST. The PST hurts people, not just the raising of, it the broadening of it, especially middle-income and lower income Manitobans. Especially them, because when you look at what this government did, every member opposite—not some, every candidate went to the doors and said we're not going to raise taxes. That's what they all said. Within weeks—some of them in Cabinet prior to the election certainly knew they were considering very seriously raising the PST, but nonetheless they walked down the sidewalk, they walked up to the door, they pushed the bell and they said to people, hello, I'm your NDP candidate who is not going to raise taxes, and then within weeks they broadened the PST to include fundamental items,

insurance on the person's home, the very person they went up to the door and knocked on the door of was the person who felt it right away, first-hand, 7 per cent hike in your insurance on your own personal property, and two other provinces did that in this country.

And then they decided that they'd add PST to what? Workers' benefits: unionized workers, non-unionized workers—workers' benefits. Oh boy, we are desperate for revenue, they said, we need it. We need it bad. It's the global economic crisis, it's Filmon's fault, it's the floods, it's the federal government; everybody else is doing it to us, so we have to do it to you, they said. Trickle-down taxation, that's their philosophy. And so the reality is they imposed taxes on life insurance. When a person buys life insurance to protect their children and their spouse, they have to now pay, they said, within weeks of promising not to, 7 per cent more on their life insurance and on their other employee benefits. And then they jacked up the taxes on beer, which I take particularly—I'm offended by that, but other taxes as well, Mr. Speaker. They added a mandatory registration fee on every single vehicle in the province—every single vehicle.

Now, these and many other tax hikes impacted on families in a real way—in a real way. And these are not pretend taxes. People don't get to send in a letter to Revenue Canada and say I pretend I'm paying you my taxes. They have to pay the taxes, really. They have to pay them and they have to pay the amount of work they do and they get a cheque from the person they work for or from the business they started, and they—maybe they make some money, and they take that money and they use it as best they can, but they don't have as much to use now because this government decided they'd break their promise and they would raise taxes, and they did it at a record level—over \$200 million in new taxes right after the last election.

But that it wasn't enough for them. No, then they had to go further. Once they broadened the PST—skilfully broadened it—they decided let's deepen it, let's raise it by 14 per cent. Let's raise it by 14 per cent so we can get another close to \$300 million out of Manitobans, all in combined taxes and fees in just two budgets—half a billion dollars of additional taxes taken from Manitobans. Half a billion additional dollars taken from Manitobans, and especially that hurts lower and middle-income families, because these are not—these are not luxury items. These are not things that are

frivolous in nature. You have to have the insurance to protect your children. You have to have the insurance to protect your house. You have to have those things. There is no option.

Great political leadership isn't about keeping your competition in your sights and relentlessly pushing back your rivals. Great leadership's about keeping the interests of the people in your sights and doing everything you can to ensure you are committed to solving their problems. Manitobans deserve better. They are among the highest taxed people in our great country. They are tired of paying more and getting less. They deserve a better deal. They deserve a new government, Mr. Speaker.

But there's more than those three Ds, Mr. Speaker. There's another level of disrespect here on display. When the MLA for Seine River goes out last week as a leadership aspirant and says she is most concerned about a level playing field, that defies—defies her actions. This is a member who went out prior to the last election and rushed to break every rule in the book on an untendered contract to purchase air ambulance services from an Alberta company, didn't give Manitobans a shot at the job, an untendered contract offered in haste, the terms of which were written by the company that ended up being given the contract. The Auditor General was dismayed, wrote a whole chapter on this last spring, and you should read it, because that should never have happened; it should never happen again. And that member rushed out to do a photo op a few days before the cut-off for communications during the election, and she had a shiny, red helicopter there for her personal advancement.

But the fact remains that was \$100 million wasted, and it was disrespectful to the people of Manitoba and it was disrespectful to the companies of Manitoba that could have had a chance to bid on that service and create some jobs right here in Manitoba. And now that member goes out and says she's concerned about a level playing field. Level playing field concerns her when it's her interests at stake, but not when it's Manitoba's interests.

And that same member then goes out and parades around the birthing centre during the election period, and the elections commissioner says that's breaking the election laws but, oh, my gosh, last week, when it comes down to her leadership bid, she's concerned about a level playing field. Well, she wasn't concerned about a level playing field when it was the provincial election that was on, and she

wasn't concerned about a level playing field before the provincial election was on, so it's interesting she'd be concerned about a level playing field now, but I suppose it's about her, not about Manitobans, so it's probably of greater concern.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the MLA for Fort Rouge went out during the press conference and said she was very concerned about security of political communications staff. She said she was concerned about those political staff. She said that all this disruption shouldn't disrupt the lives of those political staff.

Well, where was that concern—where was that concern last year? Last year when we had a situation here where we had prolonged the debate on the PST and budget bill to a record length because we were standing up for Manitobans, where was the concern for Manitobans? And then when, in fact, we got to the point in time near the end of the session in the—November-December, where we were going to have the bill come to a vote, the member said civil servants should be very afraid. They should be afraid. They should all be afraid of that bill if that new, higher PST isn't passed because they'll all lose their jobs, she said.

\* (15:20)

Now, where was this concern for the security of our government employees? Where did it lie? When the purpose was selfish, when the purpose was to advance her agenda, she was fine with using intimidation tactics. Management intimidating labour was fine with her. But when it comes down to her disruption, created by her and her colleagues, her top concern wasn't civil servants at all. Her top concern was paid political staff and herself.

The MLA for Minto jumps on the MLA for Riel at the first—figuratively speaking, he jumps on her when he says she should be expelled. At the press conference, he says, and I quote, first the member for Riel (Ms. Melnick) said she didn't do something and then she said she didn't remember doing something. Wow.

Well, he forgot too. I mean, he gave a contract for \$50,000 to somebody. He gave a contract to Marilyn McLaren for \$50,000 for doing nothing. And when the media asked him about it, he said, and I quote, I was as surprised as any MPI ratepayer. Well, wow, he must've forgot that he was in Cabinet when the decision was made. Or maybe he wasn't

there, but that would be revealing confidences, I guess, which he's done too.

So this member, he cares a lot about people not forgetting until it's him. But he's forgotten and his colleagues have forgotten and the dissidents and the docile and the disrespectful have all forgotten who they're here to serve, and they're not here to serve themselves, and they're not here to serve the NDP at the expense of Manitobans, surely. They are here, as we all are, to stand up for the Manitobans who can't be here.

Let's take a look at the process that this party opposite is going to go through to select a leader. Now, the dissident members resigned so they could force out their leader. In doing that, they disrespected their own party's constitution. Why did they do that? Why? That's the question.

Certainly, it's evident they put their selfish interests above those of Manitobans. But Manitobans understand; the NDP's done that before. Three dozen NDP MLAs broke the balanced budget law and tabled a PST hike. Why did they do that? To put their selfish interests above those of Manitobans. That's why.

Then they went to court and decided that they'd stand up in court and say that the law they wrote in 2007, the balanced budget law which they amended to exclude the need to balance the budget, which eliminated the penalties for Cabinet ministers at the same time, the balanced budget law which they themselves put in front of this House, contained the referendum requirement that guaranteed Manitobans had a vote. It was the NDP's own bill, and they went to court to say their own bill broke the law. They went to court to say their bill shouldn't stand, but they themselves drafted it, crafted it and ran on it.

So who were they standing up for in the last election when they promised they'd respect the balanced budget law? Who were they representing? They promised they wouldn't raise taxes; they promised they'd respect the balanced budget law. They raised taxes; they went to court to break down the balanced budget law and to attack its legitimacy. They did all that, Mr. Speaker, not because they care about the best interests of Manitobans, but rather because they care about themselves first. They put their selfish interests above those of Manitobans. Standing up for Manitobans—not a chance.

We debated that bill at length last year, the bill which raised the PST. We debated it at length. There

wasn't a single voice in opposition on that side of the House, not one. Why now? Why now? The height of disrespect. What we see right now, Mr. Speaker, is an attempt at a makeover, nothing more—a makeover.

I hate Halloween; I always have. I was big as a kid and, you know, everybody knew who I was. It didn't matter what I put on, it didn't matter what costume I wore, they knew it was me—right?—but everybody else was pretty much the same size. I just couldn't tell who people were. It wasn't fun for me and I've never liked it ever since. I don't like the deceit of it. I don't like the holiday and I never will. I don't like trick or treat. I think it's—I don't think it's good for the integrity of the kids. I don't like Halloween, and what I'm seeing from these people is Halloween all over again. Trick-or-treat traitors, they jump up and down around Halloween time and say, let's change costumes. We can be somebody else now. We'll be the new, new NDP. We're going to be new, new, new. Different—oh, we'll be different now. We won't be the same as we were before. We're going to change our costumes and we're going to become something entirely different now, and Manitobans will fall for it, because, well, we fooled them before, we'll fool them again.

That's what this is all about—that's what this is all about. And let's not pretend it's anything different. So the question becomes will Manitobans see through the disguise, and I think they will. But the point is here with this motion that I'll present shortly, Mr. Speaker, I believe Manitobans should be given that opportunity now and not deprived of it by a divided, dysfunctional government.

It's a choice between an election where everybody gets to vote or a backroom process where very few get to vote, and I think that choice should be self-evident. The fact is the delegate selection process of the New Democratic Party means that at most one in 1,000 Manitobans gets to be part of the process—one in 1,000 Manitobans, which means 999 out of 1,000 Manitobans are shut out the door—no chance, 20 per cent. This is an anachronism. This is a prehistoric thing that should have never been introduced into the NDP constitution, but they decided to do it anyway. Twenty per cent of the outcome is allocated to the Manitoba Federation of Labour. As an ex-union rep, I find that deplorable—I find that deplorable.

Every Manitoban, regardless of union affiliation or non-affiliation, should be treated equally under a constitution. This creates a separate category, a

preferred category of king makers in the back rooms of some unions, and that is not appropriate. It is not right. Do front-line civil servants have a say in this process? No, they do not. Do non-union family and friends have a voting right under this process? No, they do not. Do working men and women who are feeling the impact of NDP high tax-and-spend policies have any say at all? No, they do not. This is real disrespect. This is a dangerous time. This is a desperate party. They're attempting a desperate and deceptive makeover. They call themselves Manitoba's natural governing party, and that arrogance has to end and this last gasp at hanging on to power that they now engage in is tremendously disrespectful to the people of our province, an undemocratic process that excludes 999 out of 1,000 Manitobans and empowers a tiny little clique, a clan, a club in a shameful, secret scam.

Boxed in by the culture of blame, they blamed everyone else. They've blamed everyone else, Mr. Speaker, and now they're finally right. They're blaming each other, and they see as the solution a makeover, a makeover, a little costume change. How pathetic.

The non-confidence motion I'll present shortly is an opportunity for all members of this House to demonstrate their respect for Manitobans. We have been doing that in our organization. We will continue to. I encourage the members opposite to do the same. We know that this is a tired and a dysfunctional government and it must be changed. The question is who gets to make the change?

Now, the dissidents whose words make up the entire preamble of our non-confidence motion, for the first time in Manitoba history the preamble of the non-confidence motion was not written by the opposing party but was written by government members. Mr. Speaker, those dissidents must decide if they will act on their so-called principles or they will not. They have publicly stated that they do not trust their own colleagues. Do they also distrust Manitobans? Having destabilized the government of Manitoba, having added to an already dangerous situation, will they now vote to perpetuate the danger to Manitobans and to prop up the very government they claim they have no confidence in? Having demonstrated their lack of trust in Manitobans previously by belittling Manitobans' right to vote, will they again deprive Manitobans of their voting rights? Will they set aside their fear of the consequences to them as individuals of an election in which all Manitobans have a say, or will they place

their faith in an exclusive process in which only a few divided insiders have a voice? This is a way up. If people can't find a way up they look for a way out, and that's exactly what's happening in that caucus right now.

The NDP caucus illustrates what happens when people feel inhibited in their abilities to do their jobs properly. That is an unhealthy organization. Manitobans also who cannot find a way up in our beautiful province are going to look for a way out.

I met with a group of Filipino mothers and grandmothers recently and they made a wonderful presentation. I asked them what their major concern was, and they said too many of our children and grandchildren are leaving our province. Even new Canadians are finding that their children are moving on and those who remain, those who've come here from all over the world, those who've come here looking for hope are looking for hope somewhere else and that should concern members, but it doesn't appear it does.

\*(15:30)

Good friends—good friends—have left this province, friends of our families have left this province and gone to Saskatchewan to live. They say that the difference in their taxes is enough to support giving their three children a post-secondary education. An average-income couple in Regina pays \$3,200 less in tax than an average-income couple in Winnipeg, and these members don't get it. They don't understand. To them it's a pittance. It's not a pittance to a Manitoba family that's struggling to make ends meet, not at all.

I recently met a widow—recently widowed woman from St. James. She said that she had hoped that she could—she never looked after the books in her life, and she was struggling to deal with the challenges of being a single woman now. And she said that her hope had been that with her husband passing, the expenses would drop to half of what they were before, but she said her hope was naive because the expenses, many of them, were just the same or higher as they were when he was alive. She was paying higher hydro bills. She was paying more for gas. The taxes, of course, made everything worse for her. The impact on real people of the decisions we make here is something that seems to have escaped the consciousness of these members, whether out of naivety, pure ignorance, out of tiredness at having been here too long, out of having escaped the realities of the constituents they claim to

represent, I am not sure. But I do know this: we are, in this party, ever-conscious of the needs of our constituents and of Manitobans, and we are aligned. And alignment is something you cannot fake, Mr. Speaker, and the government is not able to fake that.

The fact of the matter is we work together on this side. The PC Party will work together, not only with our members but with all Manitobans. We work together and we use our individual initiative in the pursuit of common goals. That's what a good team does. Healthy, intelligent and safe change—that's what this province needs. That's the kind of change that we will make occur here. We'll work in partnership with Manitobans because we believe that's why organizations are formed in the first place, to achieve goals that are beyond the scope of any individual working alone. We've been working together in outreach, in policy development, recruiting volunteers and candidates, helping with organizational strength and looking to find better ways to do things, looking for better ideas, looking, searching for ways to make this province stronger and giving Manitobans a sense of ownership which they deserve to have.

When any team or organization is aligned, you can tell that, because an organization's values are identical—identical—to the way they conduct their affairs. Like most Manitobans we're believers in merit, our political success must be earned. Unlike the NDP government, unlike the NDP party, we will not accept a million dollar vote tax subsidy, because we believe in working for our success. We believe in respect and we believe in security for front-line civil servants.

We see the government trying to frighten government employees and their children. I had a call the other day from a teacher who said that the member for Seine River (Ms. Oswald) had been by and dropped off some literature and had made some comments to her, and, she said, that she left some literature which told her and her family that she would be fired if we came to government. She said her daughter found it and she said her daughter was 10, she told me, was very frightened by it. Now, this is why we've made our civil service pledge. This is why we have made it so that front-line workers and their children don't need to live in fear in their own province. Mr. Speaker, they don't deserve that.

With this government in power there is plentiful fear without inventing more for partisan reasons. We believe in building partnerships. We are going

to continue to work. We'll work hard to build Manitoba's social and economic benefits by strengthening relationships within our province, nationally and internationally. We'll work with First Nations, for example, the federal government, to make sure that a flood outlet is constructed in three years, not in a decade. In addition, we'll enter the New West Partnership and work with our neighbours to the west. The fastest growing area, some say, in much of the world is right at our doorstep, and yet this government refuses to work in co-operation with our neighbours. That's not even Manitoban, Mr. Speaker.

We believe in inclusion. We'll continue to reach out to Manitobans. We'll reach out for suggestions. We'll learn, we'll share, we'll grow and we will continue our policy blueprint process in partnership with those whose ideas and concerns are uppermost in our minds and hearts, the people of Manitoba. We believe in fairness for working families and retirees and we will, in our first term, lower the PST, because we believe it is the right thing to do, and we believe Manitobans deserve that.

And, Mr. Speaker, just as Manitobans are smart shoppers, they deserve a government that shops smart with their money when they take it from them. We will endeavour to make changes to the purchasing and tendering practices of this government to find real savings that will be transferred to Manitobans in real ways. We will also, because we believe that Manitobans deserve a way up, we will focus on increasing the basic personal exemption, which currently has Manitobans taxed at approximately half the level of those in Saskatchewan, because we believe Manitobans deserve a way up in our province.

We believe, Mr. Speaker, that our values, whether as individuals or as part of an organization, are best reflected not in words but in deeds. Values are expressions of behaviour far more than they are just words. The current government has put a lot of words in the Throne Speech but, unfortunately, they reflect their lack of Manitoba values in the process. The current government has put its values on display for Manitobans and Canadians and the world to see. These are not the values of Manitobans. Manitobans are the most caring, sharing, giving Manitobans in the world's greatest country, and they deserve a government that lives by their values and demonstrates them in more than words but in actual deeds.

Manitobans are people who understand teamwork because teamwork's the heritage of our province, Mr. Speaker. Whether the Metis buffalo hunt or the Selkirk settlers who wouldn't have survived without the partnership they had with what are now the Peguis First Nation people, these are examples, early examples, in our history as a province of how we succeeded by working with one another co-operatively, sharing, learning. Early settlers came together in times of need. They came together. They helped each other. They raised a barn together that had burned down. They found ways to make quilts for people who didn't have enough to keep them warm.

They put on fowl suppers. This government believes fowl suppers should have food inspectors at them and people shouldn't be allowed to donate jellied salads to the fowl suppers. It's ridiculous. It attacks at the heart and soul of what made this province great and what will make it great again, and that is trusting your people. And we trust Manitobans. Just as we've attracted people from all around the world, we have, in this province, developed institutions, charitable organizations, strong communities that have helped us live together in safety and to work together in the pursuit of a better life.

Mr. Speaker, our province is the crossroads of the world. We attract people from all over this planet, coming here with hope, hope for a better life, hope for themselves, but hope also for their families and hope, I believe, for their neighbours, to find success, as well. Manitoba, to me, is the home of hope. Manitobans are hopeful people. Manitobans deserve a hopeful government.

An election can provide them with the opportunity to have one, and so I move, seconded by the MLA for River East,

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

But this House regrets:

- (a) That some government and all official opposition members agree that Manitobans are angry and believe that the provincial government has broken their trust; and
- (b) That some government members have concluded that serving this provincial government with integrity is no longer an option; and

- (c) That these same government members have said they do not regret speaking honestly, as being truthful and holding onto integrity is something that Manitobans have been raised to do; and
- (d) That some government and all official opposition members are gravely concerned that priorities may move up the queue, based on political interests and ahead of what Manitobans consider to be their priorities and needs; and
- (e) That there is a genuine concern among some government and all official opposition members that the provincial government has become more preoccupied with remaining in power than necessarily doing things that are in the best interests of Manitobans.

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.

\* (15:40)

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

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Speaker:** The amendment is in order.

Now, continue with the debate.

**Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Mineral Resources):** Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity of replying to the lecture by the Leader of the Opposition. There was a lot of talk about respect. There was a lot of talk about how great a baseball player he was.

But, you know, Mr. Speaker, there was no talk about vision. There was no talk about future. There was no talk about hope. It reminded me of a Kardashian TV show. It was all words and all phony. It was all process. It was all argumentative. There was no substance. It was an all attempt to conquer and divide. There was no respect shown for members of the Legislature. The Leader of the Opposition talked about respect and then pointed the finger and attacked personally four, five, six, seven members of this Chamber, and he talks about respect?

Mr. Speaker, when I woke up this morning and there was a sheen of ice across the roads, I thought about the people that go to the—I thought about the seniors that would be slipping and falling and

breaking their arms on a day like this. I thought about the highways, the people that would be having accidents today. That's what I thought about when I came in this morning to the building.

In the meantime, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite were talking about Moody's bond agency and the stock market. That's not what Manitobans are concerned about. They're not concerned about the leader's investment prospects. They're concerned about the day-to-day lives of everyday Manitobans. They're concerned about a Leader of the Opposition who was in Cabinet when there was three doctor strikes and one nurses' strike and 1,500 nurses were laid off and we lost more doctors than we had. We've gained more doctors since we've been in office than they've lost all together.

You know, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition, who has not once in this House, despite many occasions, apologized, talked about respect in this Chamber. He's never wrong, and if you're never wrong and you believe you're never wrong that's a sure example that you're never right.

Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech has 48 new initiatives that will help Manitobans: things like daycare, things like training programs, things like helping seniors. And members opposite will lower themselves to game playing and politics to vote against and criticize all of those measures.

Mr. Speaker, being a New Democrat means something. It means believing in helping other people. It means—in sharing wealth. It means working every single day to make sure that you equalize all the marginalized peoples in this province. It doesn't mean petty attacks.

You know, Mr. Speaker, we actually tolerate dissent on this side of the House. I know, I've had four leaders of the Conservative Party since I've been in this Chamber—four leaders, and, you know, we don't know because their conventions were closed. We don't know how that happened.

But what I do know is what we do in this Chamber every day and what we were asked to do when we were elected was to work for Manitobans, not to play political games, not to—I was so disappointed in the words of the Leader of the Opposition. There wasn't any talk about the future hopes of Manitobans. There was no discussion of the Throne Speech. What was the debate? He didn't talk about the hybrid university programs, the

apprenticeship model expansion, the trade and technology network, the new credit transfer program, the student advocate position, the doubling the online courses through eCampus, the first-year initiative to give students an opportunity to go to high school on dual credit. He didn't talk about the state-of-the-art Sisler High School cyber program. He didn't talk about the Alliance of Manitoba Sector Councils. He didn't talk about the scolaire Manitoba efforts to expand career development. He didn't talk about those initiatives. He didn't talk about a plan to expand child-care spaces. He didn't talk about any of those initiatives. All he talked about was bringing down the government.

You know, Mr. Speaker, when I was first elected, within three weeks of being elected, they called for our resignations. Can you imagine the arrogance and the gall of members opposite—within three weeks.

Now, since that time, the other day I was starting, I was deciding, well, why—you know, I listened to the member's speech, and I was thinking, why are we here? Are we here to play political games? Are we here to take political attacks on each other? That happens to a certain extent, but I was looking at their record and I was thinking, all the member talked about in terms of initiatives was decreasing revenue to government. Now, I understand that. That's classic sort of new conservative, which is really old conservative to go back to their Herbert Hoover days or the W. "Wacky"—the Bennett days, which is to put money into individuals' pockets, but that's at the expense of programming.

Like, the members opposite voted against having free cancer drugs. Would that be on the chopping block when they lower the revenues? Would the home care be on the chopping block again like when they tried to privatize it? Would the refugee health-care program that the federal government withdrew funding for and which we're funding, would that be on the chopping block? Would the Metis Economic Development Fund—the member talked about the Metis, but all he talked about was the Metis two centuries ago. He didn't talk about the future. Would they take away the legislated Aboriginal languages act? Would they take away the geothermal program that's being built on First Nations?

Would they take away the process we made on the first electric bus in North America developed here in Manitoba? Would they take away the

revenues for that? Would they take away the incentives we'd offer to open the two new mines in Manitoba? While the Ring of Fire's empty, new mines are coming to Manitoba, two in Manitoba. Name another place that has had two mines open up in the last year. You can't, Mr. Speaker, and the member talks about fleeing capital. Did he not watch the paper and see the agreement that was entered into? A mine may not go up in Lynn Lake, but there's more hope today in Lynn Lake than there was when members opposite were in government.

Is he going to take away the first hydroelectric generating station in the last 20 years? You know, Mr. Speaker, he talked about capital going everywhere. He talks about things—if we're going to be a country, we have to share our resources. If the oil pipelines are going to be built and there's talk about building them, how are they going to be powered? Are they going to be powered by coal? No. Are they going to be powered by natural gas? No. They're going to be powered by hydroelectricity. Why is that? Because our hydroelectricity happens to be the lowest cost, and it will take about 40 megawatts of hydro—40 megawatts of hydro—to put those pipelines in order. That's a lot of hydro. That's 50 per cent of a year's growth of hydro, and they're going to stop hydro?

\*(15:50)

You know, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition had nothing to say about the future. All he had to talk about—all he talked about was politics. He gave us this Horatio Alger speech that I've heard so many times in this Assembly, you know, pulling yourself by your bootstraps, doing it on your own, and then he talked about teamwork and he said that the team had to be 100 per cent aligned. I understand that, what the Leader of the Opposition—have to be 100 per cent aligned, because if you're not you're in trouble.

Well, we believe in a little bit more open democracy than that, Mr. Speaker. We believe in a little bit open democracy than that, and I don't even—I don't want to attack individual members. I will go after the Leader of the Opposition a bit because I was a bit—quite discomforted by the fact that he got so personal.

But I go on, Mr. Speaker. You know, our economy is the third best in the country. You didn't hear nothing about that. We created 8,000 jobs last month. We never heard about that. All we heard

about was the old, tired, Tory solutions, which is sort of like the new—it's the new Tea Party kind of thing that only if you reduce taxes, cut government programs, and everything will be fine.

Well, take a look around the United States where they've done that, Mr. Speaker. I don't—I think there's only one state that has a balanced budget and that's because of oil, and I think that's North Dakota. It—that hasn't worked that well there and it wouldn't work that well here.

Thank heavens we had a government that was activist and provided and produced jobs after the 2008—the greatest recession since 1929, because if we had buried our head in the sand as the Leader of the Opposition wanted us to do, we would have been far, far, farther in the hole than anyone can imagine.

Mr. Speaker, are members going to vote against reducing interest on tuition for students? Are they going to do that, or are they going to cut it when they cut \$500,000 out of the budget like they promised? How can the Leader of the Opposition have the gall to say that they're going to protect civil servants when they've promised already to cut the size of the civil servant? And we know from their example what they did to the nurses and what they did to the doctors and what they did to the lab techs when they were in office.

Mr. Speaker, are they going to cut the 1,500 projects of affordable housing in this province since 2009? Are they going to let go the 300 new police officers? Are they going to let go the 70 new police cadets? Are they going to let go the hundred new doctors in rural Manitoba that have come to work in rural Manitoba since we've been in office and since we put in place the programs and incentives?

Now, I know the Leader of the Opposition doesn't like incentives, Mr. Speaker. He doesn't like if we allow students who—to pay back their tuition. But it's very popular. In fact, our tuition rebate program has been adopted by most provinces. It started here. It started with the doctors. That's one of the reasons we have more doctors and nurses and other health-care professionals.

Mr. Speaker, we have the third lowest tuition for university and the second lowest college tuition in the country. Now, I know members opposite want to privatize. They want things like those private colleges to provide the education, but that hasn't

worked that well. We have got an apprenticeship program and training programs in place, second to none. We intend to train more individuals for work. We have provided more hope to Manitobans, and I've been door-knocking—I've been door-knocking—and I've been talking to my constituents and they care a lot more for daycare, they care a lot more for our Home Care program, they 'cay' a lot more for our revitalization of Winnipeg, they 'cay' a lot—care a lot more for what we've done in rural Manitoba than they do to the rhetoric of the politicking, politicizing and the politicking of the Leader of the Opposition.

We have more young people apprenticing in Manitoba than any other time in our history. Now, is that by accident? No, that's by deliberate efforts, by working with the private and the public sector to do that. Canadian Tire has a \$10-million cloud computing centre here in Manitoba. The Leader of the Opposition opposed that. He opposed that. It was a loan. He opposed the loan incentive that brought one of the leading centres in the world here to Manitoba. How does he—how does a Leader of the Opposition, how does he put that together with his, well, we're-going-to-be-a-great-Manitoba theory? It's just not going to work.

You know, Mr. Speaker, we heard today that the member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger) talked again about Grace. I remind the member for Charleswood that they closed the ER at Grace and they tried to close the hospital in Seven Oaks, and we had to rally—we had to rally—with people at the—at Seven Oaks and at the Legislature to make sure that that hospital stayed open, and now it's one of the busiest hospitals in the province of Manitoba with respect to ER.

You know, Mr. Speaker, when someone spends most of their time talking about the future, but instead of reflecting on the past and takes personal attacks against individual members of this Chamber and questions their credibility or their ability to act as New Democrats, it just indicates how shallow—how shallow the plans are of the members opposite.

You know, Mr. Speaker, members opposite talk about how they run elections, et cetera. All I remember is that the greatest stain in political history in Manitoba was the Monnin inquiry. It said—Judge Monnin said he had never seen so many liars as lined up at that court case, at that inquiry to talk about the deliberate ability to set up a political party in order to offset the New Democratic Party.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that is a legacy that I hope is forgotten, but, you know, from the venom and the attitude I hear from members opposite, I worry, that speech of the Leader of the Opposition reminding me of a fear-based speech. He talked about a lot of fears, but he didn't talk about the good of Manitoba: the way that we all work together no matter where we come from; the fact that home-care workers have had a 60 per cent increase in their salary and now have a pension plan. Does that not count as a Manitoba initiative? Doesn't that—isn't that important to members opposite? If it is important, why don't you vote for it? But you haven't and you won't. All you're doing is introducing a resolution attacking individual members on this side of the House.

Mr. Speaker, flood protection—flood protection is crucial to this province. That's been a huge factor on our budget increases. Would you rather not do the flood protection? Would you rather not—members opposite didn't say anything about flood protection. They would rather cut flood protection, let communities flood. Did you ever go down to see what happened in the United States to—what community was that? Bismarck? *[interjection]* Minot. They're still recovering from Minot because they didn't have flood protection. We put money into flood protection. Calgary's putting money into flood protection. We're putting money into flood protection and you criticize us.

Every day in this Chamber, members stand up and say build my road, build my bridge, build my hospital, build my school. We're doing that, and then you vote against it. Talk about credibility problems.

You know, we're building the bridge over Morris—in Morris to stop that continual flooding. Nineteen billion dollars of commerce goes down there. Members opposite are voting against it.

We're building a transmission line to provide reliable power. Now, the members opposite said they'd stop it in its tracks. You know, the members opposite were in power when the existing power lines went down. If those existing power lines went down now, it would be a catastrophe. We're building bipole for reliability. Now you—they obviously disagree on location, but to actually say, to actually promise that they're going to stop the building of bipole is—it's not saying. It's crazy making. I cannot believe that any kind of political party today would say they would not build bipole in order to provide a reliability to Manitoba Hydro, and, you know, Mr. Speaker, it's not that complicated. You need to

transmit power from one end to the other end. It requires transmission lines. It requires things like easements. It requires everyone to contribute. Maybe you have to give up an easement, maybe you have to sell a portion of your land, but it contributes to the whole.

\* (16:00)

Now, Mr. Speaker, if members opposite tried to go down the east side—and, no, we had that debate one, two, three elections now, and members are still rattling that option. I suggest it would be a much longer and a much more difficult and a much more costlier promise. That decision was made when we looked at the situation and said, wait, there's conflicting principles here. There's the principle of an intact boreal forest that we can keep intact forever, for generations. If they had had that same attitude toward Assiniboine Park, we would—had no park; there would've been high-rises and condos there. Now, it's a jewel in Winnipeg. But if members opposite had their way, they would build, build, build, they would cut through. You have to make decisions on principle.

So, Mr. Speaker, the decision was made. We've been working on it. They've already started construction and members opposite say they would stop it. That's totally—that's not even good business practice.

You know, members opposite talk about efficiencies. We merged the two Crown corporations together, Lotteries and Liquor. We saved money, Mr. Speaker, we're more efficient. What did members opposite do on that very significant issue? They voted against it. They voted against merging those corporations. They voted against all of those incentives and they're going to do it again in this budget. Now it's permissible, members on this side and members on that side might—and we will all disagree on some aspects.

I'm a lifelong New Democrat, Mr. Speaker. I chose—I chose to belong to this party. I chose to run. I don't agree 100 per cent with everything this party has done over the years. I'll admit that but I can tell you I can almost certainly agree with—I don't agree with 99 per cent of the very limited initiatives that I heard in the Leader of the Opposition's speech today. In fact, as my—a member reminds me there were no initiatives in there except I'm very proud the member went to the United States to play baseball. That's terrific. I'm very proud of that, but that still doesn't deal with the basic premise where we in the New

Democrats believe we wish to create a society where individuals give according to their abilities and receive according to their needs. We believe that human endeavours must become environmentally sound to ensure future generations may have access to an abundant and a diverse biosphere.

Our purposes of movement is to foster social change towards a more co-operative society. That's in our—that's our goals, Mr. Speaker, that's our purpose. That's what we do in government. That's why we've done the things that we've done in government that have brought Manitoba to be what was acclaimed by Maclean's magazine as, quote, the Manitoba miracle. Why would members opposite want to privatize Hydro and privatize MPI when they have the lowest rates in the country?

Let me go back a bit, Mr. Speaker, to when members opposite privatized MTS. I was here in this Chamber. That was the most disgusting display of parliamentary procedure that I've ever witnessed in this Chamber. Nonetheless, the bill passed. The purported reason for privatizing MTS was because they didn't have capital. They didn't have capital to expand. Now, as a consequence, there are many communities that members opposite are coming to us daily and saying, can you get cellphone coverage in? How come we can't have cell coverage? And it's because the MTS doesn't have—wait—capital to do that.

So let's look at the situation with Hydro. We can take the capital of Hydro, we can build an asset. I thought the member opposite understood a balance sheet. But, Mr. Speaker, when you invest you actually have an asset; you actually have an asset, you have a physical structure that provides ongoing service. So we're going to take that Hydro asset, we're going to sell to United States with some fixed contracts and we're going to use some of those revenues to help keep the cost of hydroelectricity lower in Manitoba than anywhere else in the country.

My last discussions to the—with the former energy minister of Alberta was that they wished that they had our hydro, didn't have to deal with some of the issues that they have to deal with, Mr. Speaker, and they also want to have a cross-Canada network in terms of both—of all the fuels.

Mr. Speaker, do you think members opposite would talk about the North? Do you think they'd talk about the dialysis that's been put up in northern communities on First Nation reserves, never before

done in the history of the province? Well, then, when members opposite talk about the fact that a lot of funding's come out of First Nations' contributions and the Province has been forced to do a lot more of and we're trying to do—the members opposite talk about negotiating with First Nations or dealing with First Nations and trying to bring them into the mainstream. There was no discussion of that. When there's crucial issues on the table, when issues like missing and murdered women is a significant issue, we have the Leader of the Opposition talking about his history of playing baseball.

You know, Mr. Speaker, we hear him talking about attacking members on this side of the house. Surely, there's more important initiatives to talk about the future of Manitobans than cheap shots, and by taking—by—what kind of motion did the member table? The member tabled a motion that was all about politics and not about substance. That's why I say it reminds me a Kardashian thing. I don't know the Kardashian thing except it's all about knick-knacking and it's all about show, but there's no substance. It's all about show, but it doesn't talk about real issues.

You know, Mr. Speaker, there's only one jurisdiction in the country that has no tax on small business. Now, to hear members opposite, you would of think that we were—you would of think that there were no small businesses in Manitoba. In fact, we don't have a tax on small business in Manitoba and small businesses are thriving in Manitoba, and when businesses need assistance in the short term we're able to provide it, and when we're able to provide it, members criticize us. And, when the loans are repaid, members say that's good old capitalism working just fine. We understand. We work with companies. But, to criticize Canadian Tire, to criticize E.H. Price, to criticize some of those Manitoba companies is just contradictory.

So, Mr. Speaker, I really wish members would look at the Throne Speech and that they'd look at some of the initiatives, not only the 48 new initiatives that this government has put in place to build hope for the future in Manitoba, but to talk about the fact that we've added 140,000 people to our population. What is this malarkey about the Leader of the Opposition saying there's the outflow? There's 140,000 more people that have come to Manitoba.

We have the highest population of our history. We have the highest population working in our history. We have more jobs than any time in our

history. We have more students in university and college than any other time in our history. We have more hospital beds than any other time in our history. We have more doctors and nurses than any other time in our history. We have better co-operation with First Nations and Metis than any other time in our history. We have more hydroelectricity we're building than any other time in our history, and all we hear is the Leader of the Opposition talking about politics. I know that politics is a big part of what we do, but we weren't put here to simply play politics. We're put here to work for Manitobans.

So, when I woke up this morning and I thought about the seniors that would fall and break their arms today—because when I was Health minister I remember I was worried a lot about it—and I looked and the roads were—you know what, the roads and the streets were sanded, Mr. Speaker, and I felt a lot better. I thought, you know, they're working out there. Maybe it has something to do with we have a new relationship with the City of Winnipeg. I don't want to take credit for it, but I make the point when I know that those roads outside of Winnipeg have been looked after so there weren't a bunch of cars in the ditch in rural Manitoba or northern Manitoba.

I was really—I would feel a lot better, but I don't feel a lot better hearing what the Leader of the Opposition had to say. There were no solutions in that comment. There was no future vision in that comment. All there was was lack of hope and fear, and Mr. Speaker, fear gets you only so far. Fear may keep your caucus in line for a while, but it doesn't build you any real support. It doesn't build you a lot of votes. It doesn't build you base and it doesn't build you trust.

And, Mr. Speaker, we were elected with—for a job to do, and our job is outlined in our Throne Speech, and our Throne Speech outlines the guidelines for the future and the outline's what our vision is as government, and I defy members opposite to put in place their vision for the future other than the weak and contradictory and political comments of the Leader of the Opposition.

Now, I remember debating the member for Springfield—or St. Paul—and we talked about the benefits of a Throne Speech or non-benefits. I'm surprised, Mr. Speaker, that the Leader of the Opposition doesn't know that a Throne Speech is much like a corporate statement that you make. The Leader of the Opposition talked about being online

and being targeted, but he's wishy-washy on what they're going to do. There's no substance there. There's no future. There's no hope. There's no vision, and they talked about working together. How can you work together when you don't have a vision statement?

\* (16:10)

This Throne Speech is a vision statement of what we intend to do in the future, what we've done in the past. And you know what that is, Mr. Speaker? That's to listen to Manitobans. And we don't always get it right, but to listen to Manitobans and do the best we can, every day when we come in here, to make their lives a little bit better, to make their lives a little bit equal, to recognize those that perhaps don't have the same benefits and values that some of us have, to welcome with open arms those who come from abroad—people who come from abroad who make their lives here and will see their children grow up, much like my father got to see me grow up and sit in this Legislature, even though he was born in Ukraine, came here with nothing. People are coming here every day to do that, and we're trying to help them and we're trying to provide them that support and that's why we offer hope. We offer hope in programming, we offer hope in our taxation regime, we offer hope in the lowest affordability in the country with our electricity rates, our heating rates and our insurance rates which are basic to everybody, with a home-care system that's the best in the world, with a health-care system that's amongst the best in the world and is not fear-based, but it's based on hope, it's based on the future, it's based on helping one another. That's the Manitoba vision. That's what we represent. That's what we work for and that's what we'll work for everyday now until the next election. Thank you.

**Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo):** It's always entertaining speaking after the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak). We know, as animated as he is, that he has delivered that speech for each and every one of the 15 years that I've been here, and—the throne speeches I've sat through—and talk about redundancy, Mr. Speaker. And he talks about being all politics and no substance. What he accurately articulated was, in fact, what was reflected in his own Throne Speech last week, so I'm surprised. Maybe the member for Kildonan is joining the dissident group of five or six as well, but I guess time will tell.

He also talks about fear mongering. Well, the only fear mongers in this Legislature are members

opposite when they shamefully go out and tell front-line workers in Manitoba that they should fear that they're going to lose their jobs. That is absolutely ridiculous and they should be ashamed of themselves for trying to instill that kind of fear in our civil servants here in Manitoba.

So, Mr. Speaker, before I—I'm pleased to be here and speak to the confidence motion introduced by our leader, the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Pallister), but before I do, I just want to take this opportunity to welcome a few people. I want to start with welcoming yourself back and thank you for being here, what will probably purport to be one of the most interesting sessions that we'll have, so I want to thank you for—and welcome you back.

I want to also welcome back the table officers who have a significant role, and they help us do our jobs here in Manitoba. We know that we represent our own constituencies regardless of what side of the House that we're in, that our primary job and role is to represent the best interests of our constituents, and we do that here in Manitoba, and it's the table officers that help us do that. So I want to thank them as well. I also want to welcome to the Legislature our new pages. They're not all here today, but we—you—I know you were all here for the Throne Speech, and I hope that, you know—you also help us in our role of what we do here in the Manitoba Legislature in representing our constituencies, so I want to thank you for that. And I hope that you find your experience and your time here to be a rewarding and unforgettable experience, and so I welcome you to your roles, Mr. Speaker.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank my constituents. Even though I've had the opportunity to sit through—it's been 15 throne speeches now in the Manitoba Legislature. Friday was—marked the 14th anniversary of being elected by the wonderful constituents of Tuxedo, and I just want to thank each and every one of them for giving me the opportunity and believing in me enough to represent them here in the Manitoba Legislature. It is a wonderful constituency with so much to offer, and I am indeed—I feel privileged to represent them and honoured to represent them.

I also, of course, want to thank my family. I think we're all reminded often of the kind of sacrifices that our families are put through as a result of what we do in our positions as members of the Manitoba Legislature. And I know that each and every one of us in this room would agree with that,

Mr. Speaker. And so I want to thank my family for their role and their confidence in helping me be able to do my job here on behalf of my constituents in the Manitoba Legislature.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to pay my respects and offer my condolences to all fallen soldiers, all of those people who have stood up and sacrificed their own lives so that we can live in a free and democratic society that we are able to do here in Manitoba and Canada. And I want, in particular, to mention Corporal Nathan Cirillo and Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent. And I want to offer my sincere condolences to their families. When the horrific terrorist acts took place and those soldiers lost their lives, we sat down with our children and we talked to them about what this means, and I was honoured and quite moved by what both my children wanted to do. They wanted to take what had happened back to their schools, and they both sent an email to representatives in their schools and asked for special assemblies to be held, for a moment of silence to be held for those fallen officers. And I was absolutely moved by the fact that this came from them. They wrote their own speeches, they ran the assemblies and I was so moved by the fact that they felt that it was really important to do this.

And I think what that reflects is that children in our schools understand the sacrifice of our soldiers and what they sacrifice on our behalf to live in a free and democratic society. And it's so important that our young people understand that, Mr. Speaker.

And so I just want to thank them for what they did and I think, indeed, what a number of other schools and another—a number of other children who wanted to do something for these soldiers and their families, and I, in particular, was just proud of my children and what they did. So I want to thank them for that and for all children across our schools in Manitoba who do so much and remember so much those who have sacrificed so that we can live in this democratic society that we live in.

Mr. Speaker, the—just to get into talking a little bit about the Throne Speech, this is the, again, the 15th Throne Speech that I have had the opportunity to sit through. And no matter how many times I heard the word new in the contents, I can tell Manitobans that there was nothing new about the message it delivered. In fact, it was more of the same old, same old that we have seen from this government for the last 15 years. The only thing new, perhaps, is the fact that we have the opportunity

as opposition members to gain maybe several extra votes when it comes to voting on this Throne Speech because we know that the condolence motion put forward by the member for—the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Pallister) accurately reflects a number of things that the dissident members of the NDP have said. And so, if they want to stand by their words, stand by their integrity, that they will have the opportunity to do so when we throw—when we vote on the—or, sorry—on the confidence motion as well as on the Throne Speech itself.

So, Mr. Speaker, to talk about the confidence motion itself—and I want to thank the Leader of the Opposition for bringing this forward because I think it is important, moving forward, that if members opposite want to stand by their integrity, they'll have the opportunity to do so. And I think that now is the time for them to consider this.

\* (16:20)

Mr. Speaker, the amendment is focused on the fact that Manitobans no longer have the trust and the faith in this NDP government. The NDP no longer command the legitimacy needed to govern, and it's time for an immediate election so that Manitobans can decide who is best placed to govern in the best interests of Manitobans.

And I don't believe that that should just be left up to the NDP to decide who the next premier's going to be, if it's going to be the Premier (Mr. Selinger) who's going to remain apparently in his position as Premier of the province while running for the leadership of his own party, or if it's someone else who may come along and run against him. I think it's important that all Manitobans have the right to decide who the premier is of this province, not just a mere 1 or 2 per cent of the citizens of Manitoba, and we on this side believe very strongly on that. And from the comments from many of—or a few of the members opposite, we can see that they believe in that, too, when they start to talk about fairness within their own party and so on.

Mr. Speaker, the fact that the NDP no longer command the legitimacy needed to govern is something we have been saying on this side of the House with increasing frequency ever since all NDP members on that side of the House voted to raise the PST. And I just want to talk about that for a moment because we know that all—every single member opposite voted in favour of a PST increase. That is a fact, that is a matter of record within this Manitoba

Legislature, and it's something that they have to live with day in and day out. Each and every one of them stood in their place and they voted in favour of that PST increase, even though each and every one of them went door to door in the last election, they knocked on those doors and they said we will never raise the PST. We won't raise taxes—that's nonsense; it's ridiculous. We will never do that. And then their first available opportunity they expand the PST, and then their next available opportunity they increase it by 14 per cent. It is not—it is something that Manitobans didn't want, and it was something that members opposite said that they wouldn't do, and their first available opportunity they turn around and raise the PST. Manitobans deserve more respect than what they are getting from this NDP government.

But, Mr. Speaker, this sentiment is no longer confined to members on this side of the House. In fact, earlier this month the member for Fort Rouge (Ms. Howard), the former minister of Finance, said, and I quote: In recent weeks and months it has become clear to us that the Premier is increasingly being driven by his desire to hold on to his own leadership rather than by the best interests of Manitobans. End quote.

So, Mr. Speaker, this sentiment isn't confined to just the former minister of Finance. In fact, the former minister of Justice and Attorney General, the member for Minto (Mr. Swan), has said—had this to say earlier this month about the Premier's leadership, and I quote: Our concern is that the Premier has become more concerned about remaining leader than necessarily doing the things in the best interest of the province. End quote.

So, Mr. Speaker, these members also—and these are statements that are accurately reflected in the Throne Speech amendment motion that is put forward—the confidence motion that is put forward by the Leader of the Opposition. So if these members stand by what they say, what they have said on the record in the media, then they should have no problem voting with us on the confidence motion, because it's clear to me that, by their statements, they have lost confidence in their own leader.

Mr. Speaker, Manitobans are angry and believe that this government and the NDP have broken their trust. And I know that's a feeling shared by the former minister of Health, the member for Southdale (Ms. Selby), who said earlier this month, quote: Manitobans are angry. They feel the Premier broke their trust and he hasn't been able to mend that. End

quote. That is a quote from the former minister of Health, the member for Southdale.

So, on this side of the House, we have been saying this for months, Mr. Speaker. We have a Premier (Mr. Selinger) in this province that doesn't listen. Somewhat to our surprise, the former minister of Finance and leader of the—Municipal Government minister, the member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers), agrees with us. He had this to say about the Premier's listening skills. What did he say? And I quote: The Premier wasn't so much interested in my advice as he was in validation.

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

Mr. Speaker, earlier this month the former minister of Health and later Jobs and the Economy minister, the member for Seine River (Ms. Oswald), had this to say about trust and integrity, and I quote, sometimes doing the right thing isn't the easy path; being truthful and holding on to your integrity is something my parents raised me to do, and I honour them today with that.

Well, I hope that she honours them on the day that we vote in favour of this confidence motion, the Throne Speech amendment motion introduced by the Leader of the Opposition. I hope she stands by her words that sometimes it—doing the right thing isn't an easy path, that being truthful and holding on to your integrity is something her parents raised her to do, and she honoured that that day, and I hope she continues to honour that when we vote on a Throne Speech, as well as the amendment motion, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the member for Seine River's sudden respect for trust and integrity is interesting, given her support of the increase in the PST. Roughly one year ago, the member for Seine River had this to say about the PST increase, quote, as a result of the plan brought forward, we know that opportunities are going to increase as we make investments with the 1 cent on the dollar being collected. End quote.

And yet, earlier this year, Mr. Speaker, in a conversation with a reporter from the Winnipeg Free Press, the member for Seine River expressed

disagreement with the decision to raise the PST, alluding to a saying used by former Premier Gary Doer, I quote, you don't increase beer prices and you don't hike the PST. End quote.

Well, in fact, her government has done both.

So I'd like to ask the member for Seine River: Where was her respect for her personal integrity on the day that she voted in favour of the PST hike? Why was she willing to do the right thing when it came to forwarding her own leadership aspirations but not in view of protecting Manitobans from the major tax increases that we saw under this NDP government of which she was in Cabinet for and spoke out in favour of at the time, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker, the NDP no longer command the legitimacy needed to govern, and it's time for an immediate election so that Manitobans can decide who is best placed to govern in the best interests of Manitoba—Manitobans.

A selective memory about the workings of Cabinet isn't limited to the member for Seine River, however, Mr. Speaker. The member for Fort Rouge (Ms. Howard), the former minister of Finance, described Cabinet decision-making as open to various viewpoints in February of this year at a press conference where the Premier announced he was kicking the member for Riel (Ms. Melnick), the former minister of Immigration, out of caucus. Earlier this month, though, that member criticized the Premier for not allowing ministers to speak openly.

You can't have it both ways, Mr. Speaker. Manitobans deserve to know what the member for Fort Rouge really believes, and they're going to have the opportunity to see first-hand next week or whenever it is that we vote on this Throne Speech and whenever it is that we vote on the amendment to the Throne Speech, Manitobans will have the opportunity to see where the member for Fort Rouge stands and what she really believes in.

Mr. Speaker, this is a government in peril. This is a Throne Speech intended only to cover up the problems of the government and a caucus and Cabinet in absolute crisis. It's time, again, for an immediate election so that Manitobans and, again, all Manitobans can decide who is best placed to govern for the interests of all Manitobans, not just for members of the NDP party.

Mr. Speaker, in February of this year, the First Minister, the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Selinger), had this to say at a press conference he held to announce he was removing the member for Riel (Ms. Melnick) from his caucus for directing civil servants to do partisan political work. He said, and I quote, when we have a caucus discussion there are a range of views discussed and then we come to a consensus view, he said, end quote.

\* (16:30)

Manitobans deserve to know who is telling the truth. Is it the First Minister who says a range of views are considered in making decisions in the best interests of Manitobans, or is the members for Minto, Riel, Seine River, Dauphin, Southdale, who say, and I quote, we can no longer work for a Premier (Mr. Selinger) who refuses to hear us. End quote.

Mr. Speaker, the sentiments of the five former Cabinet ministers referenced earlier isn't confined to just former Cabinet ministers. The member for Flin Flon (Mr. Pettersen) has publicly called on the First Minister to resign, and rightly so. Describing the situation this way, he said, and I quote: Are you going to stay on and the Titanic's going down, or you're not going—and you're not going to jump? he said. End quote. Perhaps the Premier is taking after Captain Edward Smith from the Titanic, who was last seen near the bridge of the Titanic as it went down.

Mr. Speaker, the dissension and dysfunction isn't even limited to former Cabinet ministers or backbench government members. We are reminded of also what took place where Becky Barrett, a former member of the Chamber, of this Chamber, and Cabinet colleague of the First Minister and current member of the provincial NDP executive, had this to say, and I quote: The Premier made a big mistake by not stepping down for the sake of the party. As long as he stays on, the NDP will likely lose to the Conservatives in the next election. End quote. The Premier and all NDP members are using the Speech from the Throne to distract Manitobans from the instability plaguing the NDP party. Manitobans are angry and believe that this government has broken their trust. It's time for an immediate election so that Manitobans can decide who is best placed to represent their interests in the Manitoba Legislature.

Mr. Speaker, I'm reminded again of a quote from the member for Seine River (Ms. Oswald), quote:

Sometimes doing the right thing isn't the easy past, so I will call on all members of this House to consider very seriously the consequences of their actions.

Consider seriously, especially with those who have been requoted today in this House by the Leader of the Opposition, by myself, by others in this House as a reminder of what they have said on the record, what they have said to the media in scrums. They have lost the confidence. They have said that they've lost the confidence in their Premier, and so they have the opportunity when we vote on the speech amendment from the throne, the—sorry, the Throne Speech amendment's motion, they'll have the opportunity then to either show us that they stand by their words, that they stand by their integrity and they vote down the Throne Speech and they vote in favour of the confidence motion or they choose to simply stay back and show their lack of integrity and lack of vision for the province of Manitoba. So, Mr. Speaker, I encourage all members of this House.

There's so much to say about the speech. Again, it talks a lot about—it used the word new; I think it was 48 or so times, but just saying the word new doesn't mean that anything's new. We know that a lot of what was mentioned in the Throne Speech has been mentioned in many of the past throne speeches, in—since the NDP came to office some 15 or 16 years ago. And obviously this is a government that is tired; it's out of touch with reality. It has a Premier who wants to remain as Premier and run for the leadership of his party at the same time. They are disrespectful to Manitobans. They don't accurately reflect what Manitobans want, Mr. Speaker. It's time for a reality check. It's time for the Premier to stand up for Manitobans, not just for his own interests, and call an election.

**Mr. Dave Gaudreau (St. Norbert):** It's a great pleasure to rise to speak against their motion today and about our Throne Speech. You know, I know that they would like to think that they put something of substance up, but really there was no substance in it other than a self-righteous, pompous speech that they gave.

You know, when I rise to speak in the House, I think about how members—people in St. Norbert put their trust in me to bring their voice here to the House. And I thank my constituents for that because I think it's really important that we all have our voices here in the House, and it's a real privilege to get the work done for them.

I know that everybody on our side of the House has been working very hard to find creative solutions in these challenging times, and the solutions don't just revolve around cuts as, you know, proposed by the opposition. You know, the Leader of the Opposition seems to leave out some key facts when he was talking about his alternative vision for the province in his Throne Speech. Let's be honest here, Mr. Speaker. You know, the PCs like to say and pretend that their federal counterparts are giving Manitoba cash like we've never seen before and that it's flush with cash, but the real story isn't—doesn't support that. The real facts don't support that. If you look at the November 21st Free Press, there was a report saying that Manitoba's share of federal equalization money has shrunk dramatically over the last five years. According to the study, the equalization transfers from Ottawa that trickles down to most provinces is they'd like you to believe that most provinces don't actually receive this, but most provinces do, that they've actually shrunk from 2.063 billion in 2009 and '10 to 1.75 billion in 2014 and '15, and during all of that time our population has actually increased, which I know that they don't like to count people in this province, but 140,000 more people call this province their home. And on our side of the House we welcome all those people, whether they can vote or not, whether they're newcomers or whether they're people who are moving back to Manitoba from other provinces. We welcome them all, and there are 140,000 more of them and that's the fact. The Leader of the Opposition likes to leave that little tidbit out.

And you know what's funny about this study, Mr. Speaker? It was done by a very, you know, and I'm going to put this in quotes, left-wing organization called the frontier institute for public policy. You know, they're the ones who said that equalization payments for Manitoba have shrunk 24 per cent since the recession, and it's the biggest drop among all provinces. Gee, I wonder if that has anything to do with, you know, a New Democratic province and the federal Conservative government taking it out on us. But, you know, I mean that would just be my conspiracy theory buying into their tinfoil hats, I guess.

You know, the Deputy Finance Minister for Manitoba says that that means the transfer payments have been stagnant for at least the last five years, and we all know that while the transfer payments are stagnant, that doesn't mean that the cost of things are. Things keep going up; health care costs more. We've

included now that you get free cancer-care drugs, which they all voted against, Mr. Speaker. That's their vision for the province; they voted against that. We included that in our vision, and people get free cancer-care drugs.

So let's set the record straight. Does the Leader of the Opposition support Manitoba or not? Would he stand up right now and speak out against his federal counterparts and say, no, they are wrong and stand up for Manitoba? I thought not. He just likes to have his side with cuts and devastation, doesn't want to side with Manitoba. In his little speech he talked about how impacts—things impact people in a real way. Well, does he not think that \$300 million cut from Manitoba impact people in a real way? That does impact people in a real way.

So, you know, he says that they're, you know, solving problems. That's what he would like to speak about that he would solve problems. How would he solve these problems of less money coming in from the federal government when costs are going up and the transfer payments are flat for the five years? He would solve it by cuts. That's not a solution; that is absolutely going to hurt people that he's saying, you know, that have real impacts—that our—all of our decisions have real impacts. Well, if our decisions have real impacts, cutting more money out of the budget after the federal government has cut to us would have even bigger impacts on people.

On November 21st, the Free Press reported, and I quote: "Poor people may see rents go up as subsidies expire," end quote. The federal PCs are cutting housing subsidies to the poor; they must be so proud of themselves. The Leader of the Opposition always stands shoulder to shoulder with them, so I guess he agrees with that policy. He agrees with the federal policy of cutting subsidies to the people who need it the most. The story goes further saying that already \$10 million in federal PC housing money has evaporated from the province and that the looming financial hit will devastate the poorest people in the province.

But, you know, what does the Leader of the Opposition care about that when he's got a seven-car heated garage and his cozy mansion tucked away along the river in an—in the constituency that isn't his own, Mr. Speaker?

You know, then on November 23rd, the Free Press articles also spoke about PC cuts to subsidization of housing in Manitoba; millions of

dollars have been downloaded on the poorest people who can least afford it to the province. So let's get the record straight again, Mr. Speaker. Does the Leader of the Opposition support cuts to housing or not? Will he stand up right now in this House and speak out against his federal counterparts, yes or no? Is he going to say, no, it's wrong? And he remains silent. I thought not. He decides with the cuts and devastation, impacts to people, real people in a real way, like he likes to pretend he would be caring about.

\* (16:40)

On November 22nd, the Free Press reported: Doors close—I'm going to open quotes—sorry, Doors close at the health network. Federal funding cut crush woman's research centre, end quote. Once again, the PCs cut to the most vulnerable. So let's get the record straight, Mr. Speaker. Does the Leader of the Opposition support cuts to women's health or not? Will he stand up right now and speak out against his federal counterparts and say, no, it's wrong? Crickets again, I thought not. Once again he sides with the cuts and the devastation of the PC party; these impact people in a real way. He was talking about impacts to people in a real way. That directly impacts real people in a real way.

The opposition likes to talk a big game about veterans, but when their party, the PC party, underspent \$1.1 billion in a time when veterans are experiencing difficulties like never before, has the Leader of the Opposition stood up and spoke against his party? Has he stood up and said Manitoban veterans deserve better?

No, he's silent. So I'm going to give him the opportunity again. Will he stand up right now and speak out against his federal counterparts? Will he say, no, it's wrong, stand up for veterans, give them that \$1.1 billion? Oh, I thought not, Mr. Speaker; he won't speak out against them. He just sides with the PC party cuts and devastation impacting real people in a real way. The feds took away refugee health care and our government gave it back to them. What did the Leader of the Opposition do? Stood up against that. He stood up against us funding refugee health care. He stood with the federal PCs, so we know where he's going to stand all the time. He's going to stand with the federal PCs all the way in their cuts and devastation.

How about on November 11th, when the Free Press reported that the PC was not sharing—not

paying their share of \$2.5 million in taxes to the City of Winnipeg? Another PC cut and another download. They failed to mention this in their throne speech, that all of the downloads to the provinces and to the municipalities have an impact and that we've been picking up the tab.

So let's set the record straight. Will the Leader of the Opposition now stand up in the House and support Winnipeg? Will he stand up that they should be paying their fare of the tax bill to Winnipeg? Nope, crickets again. His side just stands up with cuts and devastation of the PC party. He will never stand against the PC party and stand up for Manitobans.

The over \$300 million a year hit in transfer payments coupled with the downloads and the over \$100 million lost from Stats Canada because they have an error of people in this—how many people are in this province, equivalent more than 2 per cent in PST missing to provide services and infrastructure for the people of Manitoba. Will the PC Party stand up for Manitobans or are they just going to sit there and take it from their federal masters? Crickets again, they don't stand up for Manitoba. They haven't stood up for Manitobans, and they're just allowing their federal counterparts to dictate what goes to the province.

We've stood up; we've had to put extra funding in because of all these downloads. They look across the House and they're yelling that there's—that it's not federal, we're not federal here. But the federal government has a direct impact on our budgets, so how can it not be related? You know, we've done the other way. We've actually increased funding to the City of Winnipeg rather than try to download more of it. I mean, that's the trickle-down economics we hear from the other side of House. Let's trickle it down, so by their math we should actually be giving the City of Winnipeg less money. But we don't do that because that's not how we're built. We actually increase the funding to them, so we can do better things for Manitobans.

So, once again, will the Leader of the Opposition stand up and stand up for Manitobans? Crickets again, he's not going to stand up. These are impacts to people in a real way. The PC's new motto should be the slap-chop government. That's what they should be talking about. That's the company they obviously own shares in. It's all about slap-chop; they want to cut, cut, cut. They want to cut everything. It's our side of the House that's picking

up the pieces and the tab for this. We're working towards our common goal of making Manitoba a better place to live, work and raise a family.

I've met thousands of people on the doorstep and at community events, and I've listened to them on their concerns and what matters most to them. And it's health care, education, jobs and infrastructure. Not one person has said that they want cuts to programs like the Leader of the Opposition is saying he wants. So what is it? Why is he all about the cuts? They're looking for improvements to things like health care, child care, schools, roads. The interviews with the AMM members right after the Throne Speech, they said that there's billions of dollars in infrastructure across Manitoba and that more money is needed, not the cuts that the PCs speak of.

It's not unique either. Let's get this straight. It's not unique in Manitoba. It's across the country because we've seen the federal PC government starving municipalities and provinces of infrastructure dollars. I have yet to encounter anybody telling me that we need less infrastructure laid out like in the PC throne speech. In the PCs' alternative throne speech, all they talked about was cuts. The experts suggest that the federal government should be spending almost triple what they currently do on infrastructure across the country based on GDP and they don't. So how can we be expected to pick up the tab all the time? We've been doing a pretty good job of it actually, Mr. Speaker.

We currently fund most of the road work; 12 per cent of the funding for roads is from the federal government. The rest is picked up by the province. So, Mr. Speaker, when they talk about what they're going to do, their cuts would devastate us even further. What would happen under a PC throne speech that they say they cut departments 1 per cent across the board? The plan would mean less: less health care, less education, less child care, less road improvements and less jobs.

Last month we added 8,000 jobs to our economy by building initiatives, private sector jobs because these companies bid on them and then they hire private sector people and we've added 8,000 jobs, while under their vision all of that money wouldn't exist and those jobs wouldn't exist either. We have a plan to see more: more doctors, more teachers, more education, more road improvements, more skills, more Manitobans more highly trained for jobs than ever before.

I know first-hand from my experience with the training opportunities in the '90s. While the Leader of the Opposition sat comfortably in Cabinet and in his mansion, I was myself trying to find funding to take training, and it wasn't there, Mr. Speaker. I fought hard to find a program and ended up going back to school for a trade, and it was not as easy as it is now. The supports were not in place like there are now. There's actually fewer supports because there were fewer teachers. People were being laid off. Wages were frozen. Labour strife was the rule of the day. Strikes everywhere. I look back on those tough times of the '90s, and it makes me so proud to be in government now helping people get the skills and training that they deserve and that they so need.

Those years of apprenticing and training presented me with the biggest opportunity of my life, and that's why you see a big skills agenda set before you because we realize the value of skilled trades and skilled people. I ended up getting a great career and a job which led to a rewarding life, and now I want other people to be able to experience the same thing. And our government is making it easier than ever to do so. We should be very proud of what we have to offer here in Manitoba. All we hear from the other side of the House is the doom and gloom. Everything is bad here, but we have a health care system and a home care system that other provinces envy. We have low unemployment rates, third lowest in the country. Good jobs, affordable housing, the most affordable province to live in. We have clean, affordable, publicly owned hydro, things that we all often take for granted, Mr. Speaker.

The PCs are down on Manitoba. They're always trying to say the sky is falling. Well, in an article by MSN Money, Winnipeg is rated in the top 10 of Canada's richest cities. In the Free Press on November 18th, there was a great article about the MTS Centre that the PCs voted against and didn't support. It says that the arena has hosted nearly 1,400 games, concerts and other various kinds of events and welcomed 9.8 million patrons. Donnelly from there says, from a concerts' perspective Winnipeg was often a fly-over and drive-by market a decade ago when the Winnipeg Arena was so antiquated compared to other facilities. That was right after we came into power that we decided that we were going to build a new arena, which, of course, they voted against, Mr. Speaker. Each year, in the old barn, they were able to bring in between six and 12 shows that typically sold between three and 10,000 tickets. Now we have multiple concerts

that sell in the five figures and that's the norm. Some of the biggest names in music have graced the stage here at our MTS Centre which our government supported and they voted against.

Even though been through the building for many of the good times, Donnelly said there was no question about his most memorable event, and that was May 31st of 2011 where the True North announced that they were bringing back the Winnipeg Jets, not possible without the investments and the support of this government to help build a new arena, which they all voted against.

Now while the MTS Centre is universally applauded today, it wasn't always the case because the PCs opposed building a new centre; and, if they were in power, we would still be a fly-by and drive-by city because most of these acts and concerts wouldn't have come here and we certainly wouldn't have the Jets back.

The article stated that MTS Centre has a lot of things going for it, but one of the most biggest things is optimism. We tracked optimism in the business community, and it hovered near 85 per cent for the last 10 years—10 years of the New Democratic government being in. It was a lot lower underneath the PC government.

\*(16:50)

The titans of industry over there are chirping that they were the ones who should have—that had all the optimism, but really, their investments in the MTS Centre, they didn't have any. They allowed the older barn to crumble and the Jets left underneath them. Now the Jets are back and we have a strong downtown economy. The MTS Centre has allowed the real estate market to strengthen downtown. It's like a domino effect, they say. You see more investment coming. The MTS Centre has made us totally rethink that we should be building our downtown and driving the population density that is so important.

Of all the things—all of these things would've never have happened underneath the PCs, and the city of Winnipeg would've floundered like it did for the decade underneath them. It's not called the no-growth '90s for nothing, Mr. Speaker.

Oh, but, you know, don't believe that article? There's another one on November 19th saying, "By any metric you dream up, the MTS Centre is the

most successful sports-and-entertainment venue ever erected in Winnipeg."

"The downtown arena is one of the busiest concert venues on the continent." It's sold out for every Jets game and instrumental in ensuring the NHL returned to Winnipeg. It generates enough revenue and tax breaks to ensure the long-term viability of the Jets, and it also has gaming revenue that flows from the adjacent Shark Club, which is all part of the initiatives from this government, not the Conservative government across the way.

No one should underestimate the importance of the 15,000-seat arena to the psyche of Winnipeg's economy. They said that there—that the \$133.5-million project was unprecedented and that downtown retailers and the inner city is now rejuvenating after a decade of decay. And the decade of decay was underneath the opposition, Mr. Speaker. The PCs were in power of that decade. The result has been a modest rise in downtown population, up to about 15,000 from 12,000 and yet has been large enough to encourage largely 'unherited' creation of more storefront, small-scale businesses that serve the lifeblood and economy of a modern North American downtown. And all those small businesses pay zero per cent business tax underneath us, because we eliminated it.

The MTS Centre has helped the successful downtown bars and restaurants thrive off of the business in the area.

Red River College's Exchange campus and expanded university campus have injected humanity into separate sections of downtown, and that's a quote from the article. Those campuses were a direct result of the NDP government's investment and the PC government—or PC opposition voted against them all the way.

When the PCs were in power, there was a very different vision, Mr. Speaker. What we saw under the PC vision: The roofs leaked at the U of M, Red River was underutilized and allowed to decay. There was no investments in it.

The PC vision to stop hydro: Years of consultations and environmental studies would be thrown out. The environment wouldn't be considered. The PC vision of hydro development would surely see it die.

Something that we all—we've—that we've seen from the PCs is very clear they want to take away:

They want to take away MPI. One of their candidates ran in the last election on privatizing MPI. And the Leader of the Opposition wants to halt sales to Hydro and export markets that would—and see that all of our rates would change to market rate, which would double every Manitoban's hydroelectric bill, Mr. Speaker. Under our government, Manitobans' bundle of hydro, home heating and MPI is on average \$2,100 less than the rest of Canada. That's \$2,100 less than the rest of Canada. You want to talk about real impact, real affordability? That's it. We've been keeping Manitoba affordable for people to live.

I believe that we should give credit where credit's due, Mr. Speaker, so I will point out the Leader of the Opposition should get credit for the creation of hallway medicine. I listened to the petition across the floor today on the Grace Hospital, which is extremely hypocritical, because when they were in power, they closed the Grace ER in the evenings, and they were actually about to close the whole hospital until, thankfully, we came into power and expanded it and have been investing in it ever since.

It is our government that is hiring new doctors and nurses, opening a new ACCESS centre at the Grace Hospital. It's our government that is creating QuickCare clinics in St. Vital and Seven Oaks, new clinics in Swan River and that NDP stronghold of Steinbach, a redevelopment of the ER and the MRI in Dauphin, new CancerCare hubs in the North, a new mobile clinic in southern Manitoba, enhancements to home care, which was founded right here in Manitoba. We've been funding sprinkler and safety upgrades in health care facilities, all of which would be cut underneath them, because they have said so in their throne speech. They would cut; they wouldn't invest.

The question, I guess, I have for the Leader of the Opposition is, with the 1 per cent cuts he's proposing, what would suffer? Which one of those projects wouldn't be done? Which one would be cut?

What makes me so proud to be part of this government is that we have never cut doctors or nurses. This government understands that health care is a top priority for Manitobans. I know it certainly is for my family and for everybody in my constituency. We deserve a high level of health care, and it's not just about the rich as the Leader of the Opposition suggested on CJOB where we have a two-tier health care system.

During these uncertain economic times, investing in education is a priority to ensure a bright economic future. An article last month in the Free Press talked about how the world's economic crisis is not over. Now, I know the PCs don't actually believe it ever happened, but the facts are it did and it is not over by any means. The article went on to say that cutting is not the way forward, that right now, with the low interest rate environment, investing on infrastructure is the solid plan forward.

That is our plan, Mr. Speaker, laid out in the Throne Speech—hundreds of millions of dollars in flood protection and roads across this province. Investing in more schools, hiring more teachers, improving communication with parents and increasing focusing on teaching students the skills they need to take advantage of the many opportunities that Manitoba has to offer.

The Leader of the Opposition still believes in the failed policies of the Filmon government. Every time we mention that he said one of the finest governments Manitoba's ever been blessed with in 2011—that was a direct quote from the Leader of the Opposition, they clap. The Leader of the Opposition's running ads and talks about—and let me say talk is cheap—improving schools and universities. Is that like the last time he had his hand at the helm when he had the chance to do so, when the PCs continued their old approach of cutting funding to education? The Leader of the Opposition and the PCs cut and froze Manitoba's education budget virtually every year he was an MLA. In '93-94, a cut of 2 per cent; '94-95, a cut of 2.6 per cent; '95-96, frozen at zero; '96-97, a cut of 2 per cent; 1997-98, frozen at zero.

Let me lay it out for them because they seem to think that they did education a favour. That's a negative 6.6 per cent amount of funding over five years. Is this how you would improve education, by freezing them out, by closing schools, larger class sizes, allowing schools to crumble? It's a failed plan. It failed the last time and it failed Manitobans and it's going to fail them again if they are allowed to take the helm in Manitoba.

What is this PC improvement that he speaks of—700 fewer teachers, crowded classrooms, fewer opportunities for children to learn like it was last time he was at the helm? How about the 10 per cent unemployment rate that it hit underneath their government? Right now we enjoy the third lowest in the country.

Let's not even look that far back. The Leader of the Opposition demanded a half a billion dollars in cuts to families, services that people count on, and Manitoba is growing and, as I outlined earlier, our transfers have been cut. So Manitoba should expect more from a former teacher like the Leader of the Opposition, but, sadly, that's not the case, and he seems to have that same failed PC understanding of how this is going to work.

The Leader of the Opposition, will he now stand up in the House and say that he supports no-interest loans? Is he going to support the Throne Speech? Is he going to support that? Crickets again, Mr. Speaker. Our plan is transform downtown and the campuses with 80 major capital projects at over \$1.1 billion in investment. This has led to college enrollment up 52 per cent and 42 per cent up in university and apprenticeship tripling. More teachers in classrooms, more schools built, more students finishing high school, higher rate of graduation—85 per cent, which is up 14 per cent from 71 in 2002. Investments of nearly \$1 billion to replace 30 schools and renovate classrooms, gyms, and science labs, all of which we would have never seen underneath the Conservative government. The alternative throne speech lays out that that would all be cut.

I've heard from over and over from people who want more roads, better roads, and they want jobs. Our investing in roads and bridges, creating good

jobs for the economy—that's keeping Manitobans—giving Manitobans the opportunity to stay here and work and raise a family.

When we talk to municipalities about the next round of federal infrastructure funding they made it clear they want more support from us and from the federal government. Municipalities asked for 1 point on the PST to be dedicated to their infrastructure projects. We're delivering on that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, today municipalities receive a greater amount than 1 point of the PST for critical local infrastructure through the Building Manitoba Fund. Since 2005 annual provincial funding for municipalities almost doubled from \$215 million in 2005 to \$426 million in 2014. That's an increase of \$211 million over this period, the same period where less came in from the federal government. Increased revenue dedicated to infrastructure allows us to continue to build the critical infrastructure we need and it allows us to have flood protection and sewer and water and \$12 million worth in the municipal infrastructure fund.

They cannot have it both ways, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Gaudreau) will have four minutes remaining.

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

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, November 24, 2014

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