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of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
Official Report
(Hansard)

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-First Legislature

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, March 13, 2019

The House met at 1:30 a.m.

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

Please be seated.

MATTER OF PRIVILEGE

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, I rise on a matter of privilege. I will speak to the fact that this was raised at the earliest possible time and is a prima facie case of a matter of privilege.

Yesterday, during his member's statement, the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Lamont) spoke to recognize the passing of Evelyne Anderson, a remarkable woman and a legend in Winnipeg theatre. In the middle of his remarks on Evelyne Anderson's life, the MLA for Lac du Bonnet was heckling the MLA for St. Boniface. I table a 'frash'-flash drive which includes a video of this event.

Madam Speaker, it is rude, insensitive and inappropriate for one MLA to heckle another MLA when they're commenting on the death of a person and paying a tribute to their life.

I am raising this matter at the first possible opportunity as I needed to review the video and to check Marleau and Montpetit and O'Brien and Bosc with respect to this matter. This is a matter of privilege because heckling in this fashion is not just rude, insensitive and inappropriate, it is an attempt by the MLA for Lac du Bonnet to intimidate the MLA for St. Boniface.

Marleau and Montpetit have certainly found cases where such intimidation of a member is sufficient grounds for a prima facie case of privilege, as illustrated on pages 83 to 95 of Marleau and Montpetit and on pages 108 to 118 in O'Brien and Bosc. I would also refer to the Speaker to page 97 of O'Brien and Bosc.

What the MLA for Lac du Bonnet said in heckling the MLA for St. Boniface when he was speaking about the death of a relative cannot be defended on the grounds that the MLA for Lac du Bonnet has the ability to exercise his right to freedom of speech in such occasions as this. Page 87 and the following pages in O'Brien and Bosc show that this would be a misuse of the member's right to freedom of speech. Members do not have the freedom of speech to intimidate other members and particularly to do it in such a disrespectful way.

I therefore move, seconded by the MLA for Burrows, that this matter be referred to a legislative committee to be addressed.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Before recognizing any other members to speak, I would remind the House that remarks at this time by honourable members are limited to strictly relevant comments about whether the alleged matter of privilege has been raised at the earliest opportunity and whether a prima facie case has been established.

Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Deputy Government House Leader): You know, we have no doubt that there's been a matter of privilege raised; however, I would think that between the members and yourself, Madam Speaker, that this issue could be resolved and we can move forward in a constructive manner.

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): On the case of the matter of privilege, I was listening 'intently' and—to the private member's statement by the member for St. Boniface. He mentioned how his aunt was an actress and my comment was: So that's where you get your acting skills.

And so with that, if that offends the member from St. Boniface or he feels intimidated by that, I offer up my apology today. That was not my intent, and those are my comments.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: I trust that with the apology from the member that this should conclude the matter.

Moving forward, then.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS
INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 13—The Private Vocational Institutions Act

Hon. Colleen Mayer (Minister of Crown Services): I move, seconded by the Minister for Growth, Enterprise and Trade, that Bill 13, The Private Vocational Institutions Act, now be read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mrs. Mayer: Private vocational institutions are an important part of the post-secondary education system and play a critical role in Manitoba's labour market by offering convenient, flexible and career-focused training.

The Private Vocational Institutions Act has not been updated in over 15 years. This bill will modernize the sector by focusing on transparency and outcomes, informed choices for students and reduced red tape.

This modernized approach will provide PVIs with the ability to focus on delivering results as opposed to unnecessary paperwork. This new approach will ensure that we are outcomes-oriented, reducing administrative burden while still providing consumers with the information that they need to make informed decisions.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

**Bill 19—The Residential Tenancies
Amendment Act**

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I move, seconded by the Minister for the Status of Women, that Bill 19, The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Cullen: This bill is further evidence of our government's commitment to stand up for victims of domestic and sexual violence. Currently, a tenant can only end a tenancy agreement early if they experience domestic violence or stalking. This legislation will expand those protections to victims of sexual violence.

The legislation also simplifies the process for establishing that violence or stalking has occurred by

no longer requiring a police report or no-contact order to end a tenancy agreement. Instead, victims will be able to access a range of professional services to establish that violence has occurred.

Madam Speaker, I'd like to acknowledge representatives from Willow Place, Survivor's Hope Crisis Centre, Klinik Community Health Centre and the Health Sciences Centre hospital who have joined us in the gallery today for the introduction of this important bill.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

* (13:40)

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

Committee reports?

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to table the quarterly report for the Communities Economic Development Fund.

And, as well, Madam Speaker, I wish—I am pleased to table the 2017-2018 Annual Report for the Office of the Fire Commissioner.

Madam Speaker: Ministerial statements?

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Astro Jimmies

Mr. Scott Johnston (St. James): Today I have the privilege to recognize a group of outstanding high school students representing St. James Collegiate. They are the Astro Jimmies. The students are here today, accompanied by their physics teacher, Heidi Werner, and principal, Lorelei Steffler.

They are a physics club that recently won an engineering award at the Manitoba Association of Physics Teachers' High Altitude Balloon Symposium. These students designed a Styrofoam droid resembling R2-D2 from Star Wars. It contained multiple HD cameras and an electronic tracking system.

The droid was launched in April 2018 in Alonso [*phonetic*], Manitoba, along with 13 other competing schools. Balloons are designed to burst at a certain altitude and would make their way back to the ground in a predictable area.

Their balloon travelled 30,000 meters above sea level and landed near Portage la Prairie two hours

after it was launched. The HD cameras and tracking device captured footage of their balloons' movement, as well as most of the clouds.

Please join me as I congratulate the St. James Collegiate Astro Jimmies, who recently won the best engineering and design award at the High Altitude Balloon Symposium. Way to go, Jimmies.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for St. James?

Mr. Johnston: Madam Speaker, I would ask that the students' names be included in Hansard.

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

St. James Collegiate Astro Jimmies: Daud Frotan, Jacob Funk-Froese, Cristy Lozano, Tyler Poolie, Aidan Santos.

Ham Sandwich Theatre Group

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): The coming fall marks the 20th anniversary of the Ham Sandwich, one of Flin Flon's foremost theatrical groups. Since its establishment decades ago, the group has produced dozens of plays, ranging from pantomimes to more serious works.

Generally, Ham Sandwich does two performances every year. The fall show is for a family audience and usually has a holiday theme in which youth actors are cast. The spring show, on the other hand, typically focuses on more sophisticated subject matter.

This past weekend, the group presented their production of 1984, based on George Orwell's dystopian novel. Director Thomas Heine, assisted by his spouse Beth, did a wonderful job of showing how relevant the material is today, given the commodification of our personal information and general lack of privacy in the digital age. The actors fully embraced their characters, making for an impressive theatre experience, and the use of multimedia effects helped to enhance the storytelling.

This group relies entirely on volunteers who organize all aspects of production, and dedicate their time to bringing the most outstanding performances to the Flin Flon community. Because of this, they have established a devoted group of community members.

Ham Sandwich is an integral part of the cultural fabric of Flin Flon, and their productions allow for

creative engagement in the community. Next time you're in Flin Flon, I encourage you to come and see one of their productions. You won't regret it.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Cassidy and Johanna's Cake Boutique

Mr. Andrew Micklefield (Rossmere): When we hear that Manitoba leads the country in private capital investment, we often think of large companies with many employees. But there are many smaller businesses starting in neighbourhoods across our province, and I encourage all of us to support them.

One such business in Rossmere is Cassidy and Johanna's Cake Boutique, recently started by Rossmere resident Cassidy Kasdorf and Johanna Dyck at the corner of Lagimodiere Boulevard and Grassie Boulevard in Rossmere.

Cassidy and Johanna are childhood friends who graduated from high school together and then went to college, where they spent evenings baking to destress.

Along with her love for creating pastry, Johanna's Asper education sharpened her keen eye for numbers. Cassidy, having studied with some of New York's most renowned bakery chefs, now creates designer cakes while marketing and managing the business as well.

Although Cassidy and Johanna are not yet 21 years old, their business is making an impact, has a vibrant social media presence and is gaining popularity from family, friends and a growing fan base in Rossmere and across Winnipeg.

Cassidy and Johanna produce, daily, fresh cakes and cookies, and samples put aside in preparation for my member's statement were eaten by my children before I had a chance to try them.

Although the demands of running their business have kept them from joining us here today—they had more cake orders—I, nonetheless, invite my colleague members of this Chamber to join me in congratulating and wishing these young female entrepreneurs every success in the future.

St. John's Tigers Basketball Champions

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): I'm so pleased to have in the gallery today the St. John's High School Tigers, who, last Friday, won the Winnipeg varsity boys two tier basketball championships. The Tigers went undefeated in the two tier division all

season, culminating in a final game against Grant Park Pirates.

St. John's Tigers got off to an amazing start, scoring the first 10 points. Grant Park's Pirates battled back, trying—tying the score 15-15 in the first quarter. St. John's scored seven straight points at end of the quarter. The third quarter saw St. John's pull away and cruise into the fourth quarter with a final score of 87-67.

The game saw two players dominate offensively: No. 10, Tommy [*phonetic*] Ali, scoring fast break points with No. 11, Prince Shema, repeatedly making three-point breaks—baskets, pardon me, Madam Speaker.

It is quite evident, watching the boys play, the whole team works together supporting one another on and off the court, and if it had not been for their teamwork and defence, the game would have been a lot closer. I want to give out a particular shout-out to No. 7, Lewin Francois, whose game did not go unnoticed by me. 'Truler'—truly, the Tigers are a joy to watch on and off the court.

I would be remiss, Madam Speaker, if I didn't acknowledge the St. John's supporters in the crowd, dressed in orange and black, with their electric and respectful chants. St. John's fans were like having a sixth player on the court. Both the crowd and players fed off one another, highlighting the positive energy of the collective St. John's family.

Finally, congratulations to the coaching team under the leadership of Head Coach Russ Patterson.

I look forward to next year's season and, finally, congratulations, Tigers.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: Prior to the next member's statement, I would like to introduce to you some students that are in the gallery, and I understand they're going to be leaving the gallery in a couple of minutes so I'd like to get that introduction done now.

We have seated in the public gallery, from Maples Collegiate, 20 grade 10 students under the direction of Saul Henteleff. This group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Burrows (Ms. Lamoureux).

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

Dr. Alan Rich

Mr. Kelly Bindle (Thompson): Madam Speaker, this past January, northerners gathered in Thompson to celebrate the life of Dr. Alan Rich, who had recently passed away January 21st, 2019, in Swan River, Manitoba. We shared hundreds of stories of the profoundly personal and positive impact the legendary Dr. Rich had on the lives of many of us in the North.

Alan Douglas Rich was born February 28th, 1945, in Brighton, England. His father was a Canadian soldier and his mother a war bride. Alan was an infant when they came to Canada after the Second World War and he grew up on a farm in rural Saskatchewan.

Although Alan came from a very poor family, he had a very strong work ethic and very strong values. As a university student he worked in the food services industry to make ends meet, and after earning degrees in liberal arts and sciences, Alan graduated from the University of Saskatchewan, College of Medicine, in 1971.

While completing his residency at Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Montreal, on summer breaks Dr. Rich would travel by motorcycle to Thompson to work at the mine to earn as much money as he could to fund his education.

After completing his internship in 1972, Dr. Rich returned to Thompson, where he would practise medicine for more than four decades, making him the longest-serving and most beloved doctor in the history of Thompson.

* (13:50)

Over the course of his career, Dr. Rich worked as a general practitioner; he worked in CancerCare, was an anesthetist, oversaw dialysis, worked as a medical examiner, served as team physician for the Thompson Hawks hockey team and was a judo instructor.

Dr. Rich moved to Swan River to practise medicine in 2011, while continuing to travel to Thompson to see patients monthly. In 2013, he was presented with the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal, and in 2014, in recognition of his commitment to northerners, Dr. Alan Rich was bestowed—key to the city of Thompson.

To many, Dr. Rich was the most unorthodox doctor they had ever met and the most loyal to his patients. If they missed an appointment, he would

show up at their door later the same evening, roaring up the driveway on his motorcycle, clad in leather boots, leather jacket, jeans, coming to check on them.

His motto was to do more good than harm.

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave to allow the member to complete his statement? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Bindle: Dr. Rich was a plain-spoken, humble and caring big man with big hands and a big heart.

He knew that wounds would heal faster and better without anesthetic, and if he said to you, what's your pain threshold, and you said pretty good; then you, too, were guaranteed to never forget Dr. Rich.

He was truly remarkable and he will be missed.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Children in Care Safety Risk Government Response

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Madam Speaker, the life and death of Tina Fontaine has galvanized attention across our country and in our province to the issue of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, as well as the need to address many of the systems overseen by government to ensure that no more kids fall through the cracks.

There was, however, a pretty alarming sentence in yesterday's report that we did touch on yesterday, but I think is important to revisit today, and that is a warning that there are kids continuing to fall through the cracks today. In particular, the Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth said that there are currently 17 young people—17 children—that they are advocating for who are at imminent risk of death or harm.

So I'd like to return to that question today, and ask the Premier: What sort of actions is he taking? What sort of specific steps is the Premier taking to respond to ensure the safety of these 17 kids and to make sure that they don't fall through the cracks?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): It's with tremendous sadness in my heart, and I know in the hearts of colleagues who know this news, to let our friends around the House understand that we've lost Stu Briese, who was a fine member of the

Legislative Assembly for close to a decade who served the people of Manitoba in various roles for many, many years at the municipal level.

A tremendous leader, a community man, great sense of humour and a wonderful human being who advocated strongly for Jordan's Principle and the support for children in need, who did so many other things—and I know it's not the place to give condolences today, but I thought members of the House would want to know of that.

I'll—I know the member will wish for an answer to his question; I will give him that in my second response with the time available to give so.

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

Mr. Kinew: I do offer my condolences to the Premier as well as to all those affected by the loss.

Again, the line in the children's advocate report is quite stark. It's quite clear. There are 17 kids in Manitoba right now who are at imminent risk of death or harm, and I think it would bear in mind—that we ought to bear in mind that these are merely the 17 youth that the children's advocate is working for right now.

There are likely others out there in the streets, perhaps in homes around the province, who are also at risk, and we should not forget them. But being as the Manitoba advocate has so clearly highlighted these 17 children, I think we would all be remiss in this Chamber if we did not personally inquire as to the well-being and the safety of these kids.

So with that in mind, I would like to ask the Premier: What specific steps, which actions are being taken by this government to ensure that these 17 youth who are at risk of imminent harm or death are being cared for and will be kept safe?

Mr. Pallister: I'm very concerned about the advocate's reference specifically to 17 kids. I'm concerned about the larger issues, obviously, as we all are as well.

The—we followed up upon learning of this assertion and I am told the director of CFS has followed up with the advocate by email already to ascertain exactly who these children are that were referenced in yesterday's commentary, and whether or not they've been reported or not, because, obviously, they have not. We would need to have the

information reported so that appropriate action can be taken immediately.

On the larger issues, of course, that were raised yesterday—important ones—we're excited to review the report and act as we have already on previous reports with significant interest and focus in making better lives for our children a reality in Manitoba.

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

Children's Advocate Report Implementation of Recommendations

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): So in addition to the 17 youth who were specifically referenced by the Manitoba advocate in their report yesterday, there is the larger question of systems changes that need to be undertaken to ensure that no other young person has to go down the same life experience and tragic end that Tina Fontaine did experience.

To that end, the Manitoba advocate laid out five specific recommendations under provincial jurisdiction that the government is to undertake.

And so I would like to know from the Premier whether he will commit specifically to enacting all five recommendations laid out by the Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth in the Tina Fontaine report yesterday.

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Well, I think, Madam Speaker, assertions, of course, of follow-up are fine and we have made those and will continue to, but the evidence would be in our actions. Past actions are the best indicator of future performance, and the reality is that we have followed up on over 90 per cent of the recommendations that emanated from the Phoenix Sinclair inquiry. We have followed up on the significant majority and are continuing to make progress on those that came from the TRC report, the truth and reconciliation report.

Our government has demonstrated its focus. We have seen just over the last year some encouraging news: largest reduction in the number of children in care in 15 years; reunifications increasing by almost 9 per cent; apprehensions decreasing by 9 per cent. We'll continue, Madam Speaker, as a government, to focus on making this province a safer place for all our children.

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

Addiction Treatment Services Harm Reduction Resources

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Again, further action could be preceded by a verbal commitment to implement all five recommendations by the Manitoba advocate.

We know that some of the details revealed in the report yesterday also highlight the nature to which the ongoing addictions and methamphetamine crisis in our province played in—to the ultimate death of Tina Fontaine, but also into the—many of the tragic circumstances which surrounded her life.

We know that the chief of police of Winnipeg, for instance, has been speaking about this issue for well over a year. At one point, he said that he felt like a broken record because he's been raising the issue of meth and addictions so many times here in the city of Winnipeg.

We know that the real human cost that goes beyond just an issue of crime and safety, those—though those are very important. We're also seeing an outbreak of STBBIs—blood-borne illnesses—here in the province as a result of this addictions crisis.

Now, I 'sympasize' with the chief of police, but we still need him to play that record. We still need him—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Well, Madam Speaker, we've taken numerous steps, as had been repeatedly enunciated here in the Chamber by myself, the Health Minister and others, in respect of the meth issue.

I'm not sure if the member is drawing a link to Tina Fontaine and meth. I'm not sure there is such a link, but there certainly is, I suppose, relatively speaking, a vulnerability that needs to be addressed and that is exactly what we're focused on doing. The vulnerability of our young people is critical to that. I'm not sure how giving Tina safe access to meth injection sites would make her life any better in hindsight, Madam Speaker. I doubt that that would be the case.

That being said, I do think it's critical that we continue to make progress in making this province safer for children, and that is exactly what we're focused on doing.

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

Mr. Kinew: Madam Speaker, the report lays out that Tina Fontaine did test for having amphetamines in her system, and that the person who was accused—though ultimately acquitted—in her death was also a methamphetamine user. So certainly a full-throated response on the part of this government would create a safer space for children and youth in the city of Winnipeg.

We know that one of the impacts on children and youth is the fact that there are now congenital cases of syphilis going on in the city and in the province. We know that other blood-borne illnesses, other STIs, are also on the increase. All of these could be addressed by harm-reduction steps, by increased access to clean supplies and, yes, by the creation of a safe consumption site in Winnipeg.

* (14:00)

So will the Premier recommit to combating the addictions crisis in Winnipeg, beginning with the creation of a safe consumption site but also expanded treatment and harm-reduction resources?

Mr. Pallister: I'm not going to accept the premise of the member that somehow Tina Fontaine's passing is a *cause célèbre* for introducing a site for safe injection of meth. Madam Speaker, I can't accept that.

I can accept that the things that we're doing to help those who have never taken meth not take it are good. I can accept the idea that we need to help those who want to get off meth, get off meth, and we are doing many things to address those folks' needs too.

But as far as facilitating the use of meth by Tina Fontaine, as the member is advocating, I'm not sure how facilitation of the use of meth by anyone is a way to help them in their lives.

Now, the member is using—is attempting to use Tina Fontaine's passing as a lever to advocate for what he calls safe injection sites, and most others do not call safe, Madam Speaker.

So, again, I accept and I appreciate his concerns about giving vulnerable children better supports and help, but—and on that we can certainly agree. But on this aspect of what he is attempting to advocate, I would take exception and disagree.

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

Mr. Kinew: Well, it would be a pretty strong and direct intervention, Madam Speaker, if you could reduce the chance that sexually exploited youth and women in the city have of contracting sexually transmitted infections or blood-borne illnesses. That would not only improve their lives, it would also have a significant public health benefit.

Conversely, or consequentially, we also know that it would have a very good impact on the delivery of health care in our system if we are able to arrest the current outbreak that is going on in the city.

Beyond that, we know that a safe consumption site can also function as an on-ramp to treatment and deliver more people to be able to get off meth, to get off opioids, to get off other drugs.

So again, the evidence is clear, the experts are onside.

Will the Premier commit to a safe consumption site in Winnipeg, as well as to real action to end the addictions crisis once and for all by focusing on root causes like poverty, systemic barriers and mental health challenges?

Mr. Pallister: Well, Madam Speaker, we are addressing a number of those directly and effectively. We are, of course, facilitating the safer use by those—by making—who choose to use by making needles available. We're doing a number of other things to assist those who wish to enter detoxification facilities. We've added the number of beds. We've done a number of things.

One thing that we do disagree on is the idea that we should facilitate or aid and abet an injection site. That is the one thing we disagree on and, of course, that would be the thing the member is now promoting.

But I would say that the worst potential consequence of what he's recommending is the normalization of serious drug use, and I would say that having a state sponsor and aid and abet illegal drug use is one of the least effective ways, according to many experts, of addressing the problem.

So we'll continue to use the expert advice that we've obtained. The member will continue to cite—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: The member will continue—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: –to cite–*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: The member will continue to cite anonymous sources and expertise that he has yet to put a name to, Madam Speaker. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Cancellation of Home Repair Programs Impact on Low-Income Manitobans

Mr. Ted Marcelino (Tyndall Park): Budget 2019 cancels all of the home repair programs for low-income Manitobans. And maybe we could agree on this: these programs support hundreds of elderly Manitobans and those with disabilities. It's cruel and it's short-sighted, as this will force people into public housing or personal-care homes.

Why is the minister doing this?

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance): Making important investments in housing and family-related items is extremely important to our government. That's why we've invested more than \$236 million in the Families Department since coming to office, more—the NDP ever did.

We've invested in the Rent Assist program that's allowed more than 3,000 Manitobans to have more supports that are there—*[interjection]*—and under this government—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Fielding: –the amount of children that are living in poverty has been reduced by 42 per cent. Manitoba is no longer the child poverty—of Canada, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Marcelino: Let me quote from the minister's own website: Effective immediately, renovation and repair programs will no longer be available. Manitoba Housing does not have any programs available at this time to financially assist you with repairs or renovations to your home/property.

Why is the minister making such a foolish cut?

Mr. Fielding: This government is very proud of the fact that we've built more than 750 new social and affordable housing units in the province of Manitoba. We've supported more than 3,000 people on the Rent Assist program, which has been clearly identified as one of the main driving reasons why Manitoba is no

longer the child poverty capital. That was the case under the former NDP government. Very proud of these investments. We'll continue to make investments to support vulnerable Manitobans.

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

Mr. Marcelino: Let me try again.

Madam Speaker, these programs provided \$5 million annually to hundreds of low-income Manitobans. This cut is foolish, as many will have to move into public housing or residential care if they lose their homes, and it's just cruel.

Why is the minister trying to balance the books on the backs of the poor?

Mr. Fielding: I hardly think of \$230 million additional budget appropriation, more than the NDP ever did, in things like housing is something that is a negative thing for Manitobans. We've made important investments. We've signed onto the National Housing Strategy—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Fielding: –that will bring \$300 million from the federal government, as well as \$300 million from the provincial government, in terms of housing. We built more housing. We're supporting things like the Rent Assist. That's going to help real Manitobans in a real, positive way, Madam Speaker.

Child-Care Services Access to Affordable Services

Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas): Manitoba parents need access to affordable, high-quality child care, but Budget 2019 appears to be putting child care further out of reach for Manitoba parents. Page 50 in their budget clearly indicates an over-1.4-million-dollar cut from child care. That means less support for kids in daycare and early childhood educators.

The wait-list for child care continues to grow under this government. There are nearly 18,000 kids on the wait-list right now.

How—why has the minister cut over \$1.4 million from our kids?

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance): Ensuring that Manitobans have affordable child care is important to our government. In fact, since April of 2016 we have created more than 1,656 spots from school and home child—community child-care

locations. Over 280 new home-based child-care spots have been created. We're making important investments. We're working with the federal government, investing more than \$47 million in a bilateral agreement to make sure that Manitoba families have affordable child care, Madam Speaker.

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

Ms. Lathlin: It's an honour to put this on record here. We have FIPPA'd documents that I table for the House today that show that this government is looking at increasing parent fees. Child care continues to be put out of reach of parents because of inadequate spaces and costs, forcing them to delay their return to work or not return at all.

* (14:10)

Will the minister guarantee today that parents won't pay more for having their kids in daycare?

Mr. Fielding: Our government is very proud of our investments in child care. We made important investments, more than 1,600 child-care spaces have been created.

We've also done something a little bit creative, and I know the—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Fielding: —NDP don't want to hear about creative, innovative things in government. But we created a child-care tax credit, Madam Speaker, and it's creating real spots. We are happy to be with—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Fielding: —members of the government to introduce a—new child care spaces in the Qualico development in Sage Creek, which I think is extremely important to members from Southdale and other areas.

We're extremely excited in terms of our investments. We want to continue to do that for Manitoba families. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order. Order.

The honourable member for The Pas, on a final supplementary.

Ms. Lathlin: The FIPPA documents that are currently in front of our minister clearly show that they are proposing to increase parent fees. To date, this government has not committed a single

provincial dollar of their own for funding new child-care spaces.

The federal funds are supposed to enhance investments in child care, not backfill the lack of provincial funding.

Will the minister guarantee today that parent fees will not increase and they—and make child care cheaper for families, not more expensive?

Mr. Fielding: We like to work with other levels of government to get things done. This is a perfect example of where our government has worked well with the federal government in terms of providing more—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Fielding: —supports for child care, a \$47-million agreement. What this did, Madam Speaker, not only did it build new spaces, over 1,600 new spaces, it also provided operating grant funding for additional seven-hundred-and-fifty-fifteen existing spaces that was not funded under the NDP government.

We're making important investments for Manitoba families. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Premier's Grand Bargain Proposal Internal Trade and Health Funding

Mr. Dougald Lamont (Leader of the Second Opposition): The Premier has proposed a so-called grand bargain, co-written with Brian Lee Crowley of the Macdonald-Laurier Institute, a right-wing propaganda shop dedicated to dragging Canada back to the 1870s. The proposal is simple. The federal government would give up any role in health care in exchange for provinces giving up any trade barriers, real or imagined.

In his proposal, the Premier complained about the federal government's insistence on funding boutique programs, apparently a reference to the \$400 million in funding for mental health and home care he has refused to sign off on.

What this looks like to me is a scheme to scrap national medicare, Madam Speaker, and the Canada Health Act, so that the Premier and Doug Ford can privatize health care as much as they want.

When the Premier says the federal government would get out of health care, does that mean scrapping the Canada Health Act and ending medicare as we know it?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Well, no, but members of the respected, internationally renowned Macdonald-Laurier research institute would be pleased to know that the member thinks they're a right-wing think thank.

Mind you, the state of the federal Liberals currently—and it's affecting the member's thinking, I guess—is that the rule of law should be supplanted by jobs for Lavalin in Quebec, regardless of their record of corruption, intimidation and bribery. So, Madam Speaker, the member's value system is put on display today by his comments.

Now, we're for lower taxes for Manitobans; he's for higher. We're for a level playing field for all political parties and not subsidizing his or anyone else's, and the member would rather he got a break than Manitobans.

These are clear now. These points are clear to Manitobans, and I encourage the member to make them even more clear in his subsequent comments.

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

Mr. Lamont: There is a second side to this supposed grand bargain, to the Premier's big deal, which is the questionable claim that total free trade within Canada will have incredible benefits for everyone. But that is not what the experts say.

Two years ago RBC said that free trade in Canada would add, quote, only minutely to growth, end quote. The Bank of Canada projected 0.2 per cent of growth, and the Senate report by Senator Dave Tkachuk—whose idea of political discourse is calling for his opponents to be run over by a semi—the benefits were projected between 0.05 per cent and 7 per cent.

Why should Manitobans be snookered into giving up national medicare for a 0.05 per cent drop in the price of t-shirts and wine? *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: Well, Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to know the member's moved so extremely to the left that he is now opposed to free trade. He's joined the ranks of the NDP. The Leader of the NDP signed a deal—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: —saying he was opposed to all trade deals.

Now the member doesn't even want us to trade with each other within our country, my goodness. Let's not trade with each other, Madam Speaker. It's \$1,500; that's the estimate from the Bank of Canada, \$1,500 on every Manitoba family and every Canadian family's kitchen table per year if we just knock down these silly barriers we have among our provinces.

The member advocates for less money on the kitchen table yet again, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Lamont: It's clear that this so-called grand bargain is the Premier's vision for the country as a whole. It's one that he shares with Maxime Bernier, the leader of the some People's Party of Canada that the federal government would get entirely out of health care.

Madam Speaker, we've heard that this Premier is something of a one-man government. Some deals sit on his desks for months awaiting approval, and he's been micromanaging Crown corporations, makes major announcements without consulting his own MLAs and Cabinet, to say nothing of stakeholders or the public.

Are all of his ministers and MLAs on board with the idea of dismantling our national health-care system and prepared to defend it at the doors of this election, or is the Premier once again only speaking for himself?

Mr. Pallister: I can only hope for more of these, Madam Speaker.

All I can suggest to the member is if anybody's dismantling our health-care system, it's a federal Liberal government that's dropped us down below, not 50 per cent support, not 25; we're now about 18 per cent and going lower. And this member sits here and talks about how to be wise for us to have barriers among all our provinces so we could all do each other's laundry, I guess, internally and not trade with anybody else.

It's a ridiculous assertion, Madam Speaker. I'm glad he's making it, but it's not going to help his party's fortunes. He's running against his own statements of his own colleagues in eastern Canada because the Prime Minister himself has said that reducing interprovincial barriers to trade's a good thing, and finally—finally—the member's taken a position different from Justin Trudeau.

Unfortunately, in this case, Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister's right and he's wrong.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order.

Health-Care Services Government Record

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): The numbers don't lie. This government cut a quarter of a million dollars from health care this past year and \$150 million the year before, and now Manitobans are going to have to face more and more cuts to critical health-care services that they rely on because this Premier (Mr. Pallister) is cutting \$120 million from health care in his new budget.

The minister says otherwise, but, Madam Speaker, I have taken the liberty to do the math for the minister, which I will table here today. Budget 2018-19 minus Budget 2019-20 equals \$120-million cut.

Will the minister stop these unprecedented cuts to our health-care system and keep Seven Oaks and Concordia ER open?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): Well, Madam Speaker, last week, in an attempt to be helpful, I tried to illustrate for the member how from-measured from the forecast this year to the budget of this next year, health-care spending is \$118 million up.

But because that was ineffective, I will now table for the member a helpful graph that shows that health-care spending has been up every year under this PC government—every year up, up, up; more and more and more for Manitoba health care, for Manitoba citizens to get better care sooner.

* (14:20)

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

Mrs. Smith: Manitobans are not all fortunate to be able to go out of the country to get health care like we know some of the ministers across are. Manitobans want to be able to access quality health care here in Manitoba, just like everybody else, but this government keeps making it more difficult.

The Premier's millions of dollars in cuts means closures to Concordia, to Seven Oaks, to closing more clinics like the Family Medical Centre, increasing wait times when they say they've gone

down—not true—and cancelling services. This all adds up to bad health care for Manitobans from this government.

Will the Premier today commit to not closing Concordia ER and Seven Oaks ER?

Mr. Friesen: Well, Madam Speaker, I was wrong about one thing: it was I Love to Read Month, but she's stuck in the fiction section.

Madam Speaker, that member knows that the NDP's inability or lack of desire to actually improve metrics and drive down wait times did more to drive Manitobans out of this province to get their health care other places than at any other point in Manitoba history. That member also knows that when she is quarrelling with ER wait time statistics that clearly show that Manitoba is improving, she's quarrelling with the Canadian institute of health information.

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

Mrs. Smith: Manitobans' No. 1 priority is health care and this government is getting a failing grade from Manitobans, and in every front the Premier is making it worse. He's making cuts to a system and causing chaos in hospitals; even staff have written letters to this government. Do they listen? No.

Madam Speaker, \$120 million cut from the health-care budget this year, and who knows how much worse that that's going to get?

If this minister was good at math he would know that \$100 million would actually keep Concordia ER open for 15 years, Madam Speaker. That would mean real access to health care for tens of thousands of Winnipeggers in northeast Winnipeg.

Will the minister do the math and listen—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Friesen: Madam Speaker, old approaches by the NDP, same failing grade not only by the experts by—but by Manitobans, who knew only too well the failure of the NDP to improve the system.

What Manitobans want is results. Under this government what Manitobans are getting are better results: better results on ER wait times, bucking a national trend, falling where all other jurisdictions are seeing those rates rise; also, the highest number of doctors retained in this province in the last 10 years. I could go on and on: more nurses working, nurse overtime continuing to fall, bucking trends.

Madam Speaker, results, wait times and better increases to spending for this government. We're getting more results for Manitobans.

Provincial Finances Progress Update

Mrs. Sarah Guillemard (Fort Richmond): For 17 years the NDP mismanaged Manitoba's finances, doubling the Province's debt and leaving millions of Manitobans with a billion-dollar deficit and billions in interest payments.

I do need to clarify there is a difference between million and billion—they may rhyme, but they're different numbers—just for the benefit of the members opposite.

The NDP missed their budget targets year after year after year, resulting in three credit downgrades.

Can the Minister of Finance please tell us what these credit rating agencies are now saying about the PC government's fiscal track record?

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance): I want to thank the member from Fort Richmond for this important question.

We've been making great progress not just in our deficit reduction, but putting more money in Manitoba's pockets and the bond rating agencies are starting to recognize this. What did they say, Madam Speaker? What did they say? Well, they said the government's commitment to deficit reduction appears to be genuine and credible. The outlook for provincial finances continues to improve.

They truly recognize that it's a historic—historically, we've outperformed our budgets for three years in a row, Madam Speaker, above and beyond, making—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Fielding: —major progress in terms of deficit reduction. We're keeping more money on the kitchen table for Manitobans, which is so important.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Fatal Home Invasion Minister's Update

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): On March 3rd there was a horrific, random home invasion which resulted with a young, thriving man who was only 17 years of age losing his life. This extremely stupid and senseless crime has shaken our community and

we all offer our deepest prayers to the victim's family, in particular, his mother and father.

Madam Speaker, is there anything the minister can share with the House about the history of the attacker for the friends and the family of the community?

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I do appreciate the question from the member and, certainly, our thoughts and prayers go out with the family and certainly the community.

And, Madam Speaker, we are seeing too many of these incidents on our streets, and this time in a home and it certainly is troubling and it's troubling for all of us. Certainly, for those involved in police services, those involved in emergency services, they all take these incidents to heart and, certainly, we're thinking about them as—in these very challenging incidents when they do occur.

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

Community Concerns

Ms. Lamoureux: I'd like to thank the minister for his response.

The tragic death of this young man, who was going to graduate this June, has his family, friends and many in the community searching for answers to how an incident of this nature can take place. Many of the questions that are being asked are related to our police force, the issue of repeat offenders and Manitoba's meth crisis.

Can the minister please respond to these concerns?

Mr. Cullen: Madam Speaker, we certainly take policing and justice very seriously on this side of House. I will indicate to the member opposite we take it very seriously.

In fact, we just hired a new associate deputy minister by the name of Scott Kolody. He was the previous commissioner, the head of "D" Division RCMP. We've brought him onside for his expertise.

We also have a very ex-senior member of the Winnipeg Police Service who is heading our Strategic Innovation Unit here within the Department of Justice.

We take justice very seriously. Just last budget, we increased our budget to \$6.8 million to help police across the province.

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

Meth Addiction and Crime

Ms. Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, we understand that the attacker had a lengthy criminal record and was a known meth user.

What preventative measures is this government taking to deal with Manitoba's growing meth crisis and the many crimes that are taking place in our communities because of this very addictive drug?

Thank you.

Mr. Cullen: I will speak to the victims of these criminal activities.

We recognize that victims have very challenging times in front of them. We have a victims branch within Justice. We've actually, this year, increased the Victim Services supports to the tune of \$325,000.

This year's budget additionally sets aside \$2.3 million for provincial policing, specifically to target illicit drug trades.

So we are taking steps in Justice to deal with these—this very serious issue.

Curriculum Support Centre Elimination of Library Services

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): Madam Speaker, teachers and librarians continue to speak out against this government's arbitrary cut to the Curriculum Support Centre. When faced with this backlash from educators, the minister has doubled down and continues to refuse to listen.

His plan continues to be, as we understand it, to close the library on April 1st, even before he's talked with teachers, home-school parents, before any practical alternatives or enhancements have been developed. His statements to the media so far have been cryptic at best and have not answered the questions of parents, teachers and educators.

Will he halt this closure, talk to those parents and teachers before he closes the door on such a valuable resource?

* (14:30)

Hon. Colleen Mayer (Acting Minister of Education and Training): We are modernizing the approach to the Curriculum Support Centre, as every other province across Canada has done.

These resources will be still be available throughout our education system. We're simply

moving to an improved service delivery model where all educators from across Manitoba can access those resources.

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

Mr. Wiebe: Madam Speaker, teachers and librarians say cutting this education library is foolish and short-sighted. They know that the education library already provides a wealth of materials online, but the materials that they offer go far beyond that, far beyond the digital, and they include a significant physical collection.

Teachers, parents, librarians are telling us that this is an important resource that they use all the time in the classroom.

So they have questions and, so far, as I said, this minister has been unclear about what steps have been taken to actually develop these resources.

So will the minister halt the closure, talk to parents and teachers before they close the door on such a valuable resource?

Mrs. Mayer: What's foolish is being stuck in the Dark Ages and not revamping our systems, and that is exactly what we are doing.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order. Order.

Mrs. Mayer: We know, Madam Speaker, the truth hurts; hence, why we are hearing all the yelling from members opposite.

We are constructing new school libraries in Winkler and Niverville.

We're simply modernizing our system.

Would the members opposite get on board and get out of the Dark Ages?

Madam Speaker: Time for oral questions has expired.

PETITIONS

Daylight Saving Time

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

And the background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The loss of sleep associated with the beginning of daylight savings time has serious consequences for physical and mental health and has

been linked to increases in traffic accidents and workplace injuries.

(2) According to Manitoba Public Insurance news release, collision data collected in 2014 showed that there was 20 per cent increase in collisions in Manitoba roadways following the spring daylight savings time change when compared to all other Mondays in 2014.

(3) Daylight saving time is associated with a decrease in productivity the day after the clocks are turned forward with no corresponding increase in productivity when the clocks are turned back.

(4) There is no conclusive evidence that daylight savings time is effective in reducing energy consumption.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to amend The Official Time Act to abolish daylight saving time in Manitoba effective November 4, 2019, resulting in Manitoba remaining on Central Standard Time throughout the year and in perpetuity.

And this petition has been signed by George Giesbrecht, Anne Hiebert, Dan Weiss [*phonetic*] and many more Manitobans.

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

Flin Flon General Hospital Obstetric Services

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Access to quality health care is a fundamental right of all Manitobans no matter where they live.

(2) The Premier has slashed budgets and cancelled projects for northern communities, making it harder for families to get the primary health care they need.

(3) The budget of the northern regional health authority has been slashed by over \$6 million, which has negatively affected the doctor retention programs and the Northern Patient Transportation Program.

(4) With limited services in the North, the Premier is forcing families and seniors to travel further for the health care they need.

(5) On November 6, 2018, the northern regional health authority announced that obstetric delivery services at the Flin Flon General Hospital would be suspended, with no discussion regarding when they will be reinstated.

(6) The result of this decision is that mothers in Flin Flon and surrounding area will have to travel at least an hour and a half to The Pas, creating unnecessary risk for mothers and their babies.

(7) The people of Flin Flon are concerned for the health and safety of mothers-to-be and their babies, including the extra physical and financial stress that will be placed upon them by this decision of the provincial government.

(8) There has been no commitment from this provincial government that mothers and their escorts who have to travel to The Pas will be covered by the Northern Patient Transportation Program.

(9) Flin Flon General Hospital is a regional hub that serves several communities on both sides of the Manitoba-Saskatchewan border.

(10) Because this provincial government has refused to invest in much-needed health-care services in The Pas, the hospital in The Pas may not be able to handle the extra workload created by this decision.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to re-instate obstetric delivery services at Flin Flon General Hospital and work with the government of Saskatchewan and the federal government to ensure obstetric services continue to be available on a regional basis.

And this petition, Madam Speaker, has been signed by Brent Burke, Cody Burke, Andrew Lam and many other Manitobans.

Dog Overpopulation in Northern Communities

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): Miigwech, Madam Speaker. [*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Ms. Fontaine: I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Many Manitobans are deeply concerned about the safety of northern, isolated communities in the province owing to an exploding overpopulation rate of dogs.

(2) The current overpopulation of dogs is increasingly alarming to front-line rescuers, who witness the severe, difficult and heartbreaking conditions experienced by northern dogs, including starvation, extreme weather conditions, attacks by wild animals and acts of animal cruelty.

(3) As a result of non-existence—veterinarian services in most, if not all, northern communities, dogs are not adequately cared for, to no fault of the communities or their members.

(4) Roaming dogs are often sick, injured and alone, with no one to advocate for their care, and Manitoba's animal-welfare organizations are often the only ones sounding the alarm in this present crisis.

(5) Time and time again, front-line rescuers witness northern families who, with no access to veterinary care, watch their beloved dog perish from injuries or diseases which could—which would be easily preventable with better access to veterinarian services.

(6) This present crisis poses a serious and immediate risk to citizens, in particular children, in northern communities, with the threat of pack maulings.

(7) Many Manitobans and front-line rescuers are currently lobbying for stronger animal-welfare laws alongside provincial regulations for animal-rescue organizations in partnership with adequate veterinarian services and education for northern communities.

(8) Currently, vaccination rates for owned dogs in Winnipeg is 70 per cent, while in northern isolated communities the rate is less than 5 per cent as a direct result of this current lack of access to veterinarian services.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to immediately commit to addressing the overpopulation of dogs in Manitoba, more specifically in northern communities, by humanely removing and re-homing unwanted dogs.

(2) To urge the provincial government, in partnership with animal welfare agencies, the Manitoba veterinarian medical association—the MVMA—front-line rescues and the federal government to immediately develop a provincial strategy to spay and neuter dogs, while providing access to veterinarian services for owned dogs in northern communities, ensuring the safety of communities and their citizens.

And signed by many Manitobans.

ORDERS OF THE DAY GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

House Business

Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Deputy Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, on House business.

Madam Speaker: On House business.

* (14:40)

Mr. Pedersen: I would like to announce that the Standing Committee on Public Accounts will meet on Monday, March 18, 2019, at 5:15 p.m. for the purpose of electing a new Chairperson.

Madam Speaker: It has been announced that the Standing Committee on Public Accounts will meet on Monday, March 18th, 2019, at 5:15 p.m. for the purpose of electing a new Chairperson.

* * *

Mr. Pedersen: Madam Speaker, will—can we resume debate on budget?

BUDGET DEBATE (Fourth Day of Debate)

Madam Speaker: Resuming debate on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding) and the amendment and sub-amendment thereto, standing in the name of the honourable member for Brandon East, who has 15 minutes remaining.

Mr. Len Isleifson (Brandon East): Just before I get into continuing my dialogue from yesterday, last evening when I left the facility here and I met a friend of mine for supper, as we were leaving supper we had about 30 students coming into the restaurant. I didn't recognize any of the students, but I did recognize a couple of the teachers that were with them and I told them that I would give them a big shout out today when I was speaking because the

Vincent Massey indoor track and field team are in Winnipeg competing. So I wish them all the best of luck because we have some same goals in mind here, where they're trying to do what's best for their community, which is in their school, in performing to the expectations of what their coaches have for them and the outcomes.

We're doing the same thing in government when we look at the budget. When we look at listening to Manitobans and taking over thousands and thousands of inputted data from people in Manitoba and putting it into our budget certainly helps us produce something that Manitobans look forward to.

I ended my conversation or my comments yesterday talking about previous commitments that I had made and—when I worked with the regional health authority or that I had when I had my own small business on the forefront, and even now when I look at our constituency office, and I'm always thinking how can I better serve the constituents? How can we do things better in our office?

Mr. Dennis Smook, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

And we look at that as government, too; can we shop smarter, can we eliminate duplication, can we identify deficiencies and can we enhance and build on efficiencies to make everything that much better?

It not only creates opportunity to move forward with plans for better Manitobans, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but it also provides better value for each and every taxpayer in the province of Manitoba.

When we look at Budget 2019, one of the things that really stands out is that it effectively reduces the summary deficit to \$360 million and it does—doing that it does, in fact, also help in the growth rate of the debt-to-GDP ratio to a practice that is much more manageable and predictable. And again it'll help us create some orientated, outcome-based financing and 'procurement' strategies.

So we look at the opportunity with our finances and put those in the forefront. Your government is committed to fixing our finances and I am very pleased to say that we are getting the job done.

In our province, we look at—again, we talk about budgeting and the numbers that go back and forth in this House, and I'm sure it confuses people at home when they listen to both sides of the House talking about numbers and how some say, you know, we're cutting, and then we say, you know, we're not.

So I took the liberty of going back and do an actual apples-to-apples comparison when I look at the summary budget details for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2019, so, in our budget, and I compared that to the same summary budget details from 2015.

When I look at Education and Training, \$3.788 billion, 2015; in this budget, four billion dollars, five hundred and sixty, an increase of \$772 million. I look at Families, \$1.151 billion in 2015; \$2.174 billion in 2020 or '19-'19-2020. Health, Seniors and Active Living, 2015 budget, \$6.088 billion; 2019-20, \$6.651 billion, an increase of 563. And debt servicing, one of interest, 2015, the debt servicing cost, \$842 million; 2019-2020, unfortunately, \$1.021 billion.

So we certainly look at—and when you look online, too, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you can go way back and you can pull up every single year way back—and do the comparisons. And I know in here, you know, we say what we want to say and I've always said it's easy. I get up here and I speak on the facts that I have presented to me, and I wanted to make sure I was speaking those facts today when I was continuing my dialogue.

So, again, I went online and checked those figures out to make sure I had—and I didn't look at different parts of the budgets. I looked at the summary deficits so that I had both side by side and could look at them and compare them confidently so that I'm sure when I'm speaking, I can back up what I'm saying. And, again, as I said, Mr. Deputy Speaker, anybody can go online and pull up that information, have a look at it and see for themselves.

When we look at other areas of what we've committed to do, when we're first elected and how it carries over from year to year, and we even look at this budget here. I remember running in the election—and I even mention this in my first response to the budget in 2016—and I remember talking about a lady that I had approached at a door and asked what her concern was, and her concern was—and it really touched me closely, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because I worked in health care for 21 years—and she said to me that there was one incident where she actually called a taxi to take her to the hospital. She wasn't feeling very well and she thought she'd better get some looked at, and so she went to the emergency room by a taxi because she could not afford an ambulance.

And, unfortunately, she was having a heart attack at the time—she didn't know that. Fortunately,

she did survive, so I'm very happy, and I believe I mentioned that back in 2016 in my speech as well.

Why I bring it up is we had committed going into that election that we would reduce ambulance fees, and when that was mentioned at the doors, it certainly got a lot of my constituents and the people that I know who know my history and my work history very excited at the opportunity to move forward and look at greater outcomes in health-care results. So they were very pleased with that.

But, honestly, too, I heard lots of speculation. You know, oh, you're a politician. You know, are you going to hold true on that? Politicians tell us things all the time and do the opposite. And I assured them that, no, this is a commitment that our government had made.

And we heard in this budget here that as of this year our ambulance fees will be down to \$250 which is 'arun', if not more than the 50 per cent reduction that we had promised.

So, again, this budget that we have in front of us addresses a lot of issues. It certainly responds to the challenge of the meth crisis and the addictions that we have throughout Manitoba. I know before we had introduced RAAM clinics and different aspects, working with the federal government in partnership on committees to look further into the issues because it's—it is not just a Brandon issue. It's not just a Winnipeg issue. It is a Canada-wide issue, and we need to work with our partners to ensure that.

But \$1 million in new funding for the expansion of withdrawal management beds in Brandon and Winnipeg are certainly great news. I had talked to some advocates recently who want to see us move forward in meth, and they're very excited with the fact that at one time they had said, well, at least show that you're starting to do something. And we are doing more than just starting to do things; we actually are moving quite forward.

We have a total funding increase in health, again, of \$47.8 million for addictions treatment, Pharmacare and paramedics. It is search—and certainly, again, an opportunity for me with my contacts with the health authorities in this province and still having those relationships with folks to carry on that dialogue and keep seeking their input and their information.

Every week when I have the opportunity, when I'm at—back in the constituency I try to stop in at the local hospital and stay in touch with the front-line

staff, whether that be a nurse, whether that be someone who is cleaning the floors. They all have a very important role in the facility because if you don't have clean facilities, you can't do the operations and then pretty soon you're in a lot of trouble. So again, it all works together.

When we talk about education funding for both operations and capital, we realize that the increase in funding in this area of more than \$62 million this year over last year, it sure ensures that we continue to grow the services that are available.

I know there was a comment made. I can't remember which member of the House made it. The opposition stood up and said, we on this side of the House stand up for students; and that's great, I'm glad they do. Unfortunately, when they were in power standing up for students mean—meant being 10th out of 10, being last in math and science and reading.

* (14:50)

Again, there's different challenges that come along and, with our government investing more money in education, it gives us the opportunity to work, as we're doing right now, in the review to ensure that we're moving forward and hearing from those in the industry on why we need to do what we do in education.

This is our future. These are the students that will be looking after us when they graduate out of high school and out of university.

So I see the time is running down, but I do want to just say one really big thing: I'm so proud of the thing that our—this government holds forth. And that's when we went to the doors and we talked at the doors and we said that the PST will be reduced to 7 per cent in our first term once we are elected. And, again, I've got lots of detail to go in on that one.

But, you know, we've got to ask ourselves—and I know everybody else asks this—questions why is our government doing all these great investments and all these changes. And it's very simple, Mr. Deputy Speaker; it's because Manitobans deserve a break.

Thank you very much.

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): I'm pleased to get up—I don't know if pleased is actually the right word in the sense that there's nothing really positive to say on the record today in respect of this Pallister government's fourth budget. But I'm up to put my official words on the record and to highlight for Manitobans just some of the many cuts that this

Pallister government has undertaken since taking office and which have only been exacerbated in this last budget that we see.

I mean, I guess it should be no surprise that I'm going to focus my comments on—the vast majority of my comments on what the Pallister government—what this Premier (Mr. Pallister) has undertaken in respect of women's and girls' infrastructure in Manitoba here, in respect of our health care, because I think it's—as I said in—on international woman's day, it's important for Manitoba women to know what this Premier has directed and what his ministers have undertaken or what some of his ministers are—and certainly some of the backbench have sat by while his—while their boss—their Premier has systematically eroded the infrastructure that was in place in respect of women's reproductive health care.

I think that it is a right of Manitoba women and girls to know what this government is doing. And certainly I think it is the right of Manitoba women and girls, based on that knowledge, that robust and comprehensive knowledge of what this government is doing, to make informed choices when they go to the polls, whenever that may be. We know that the Premier is—has said that there might be an early election. And I don't know if the Premier did that to make people scared on this side of the House, but I—you know, if there's an early election, then bring it on, Deputy House Speaker.

It's—I think that, you know, we've seen with—you know, some of the things that the Premier has attempted to do—the public isn't buying into it. They're not, you know, mindless voters that you do one little thing and you expect that the Manitoba voters are going to support that and just mindlessly vote for what's going on here. Manitobans are very thoughtful, engaged individuals, and I suspect—and from what I hear on the—when I talk with my constituents—or, no matter where I go in Manitoba, because I'm often all over, visiting and meeting and talking with all types of different Manitobans and stakeholder groups.

Everyone—there's a clear message on what Manitobans are seeing. And, again, it is fundamentally based on what—and it is predicated upon what the Premier is doing and what his ministers are allowing to be done or just sit idly by while it is done.

And, you know, the No. 1 thing that I hear consistently from everybody is that the Premier just doesn't care. The Premier doesn't care, and it's

evinced in the cuts that the Premier executes supposedly on behalf of Manitobans.

But I can tell the House, you know, that the women, Manitoba women, didn't ask for lactation consultants to be cut. In fact, I think that we made it very clear in this House and certainly member—Manitobans made it very clear when they protested in front of the Leg.—which, incidentally, I don't remember any of the members opposite being outside with us as we met with mothers who were nursing or mothers who formally nursed or women that were just concerned about this cut.

I don't remember any of the members opposite out there. Had members opposite been out there they would have heard how important lactation consultants are in the reproductive health of Manitoba women and certainly for their babies.

So nobody voted for that. Nobody voted for a lactation—to cut lactation consultants and then, you know, nobody voted for the Pallister government to cut the mature woman's hospital or centre.

And, again, I know I've said it a couple of time in the House, but it does bear repeating again that this was a best practice across Canada in respect of having a one-stop shop for women that are dealing—mature women that are dealing with a variety of different issues in respect of our reproductive health, and it was employed by—it was staffed by experts.

You know, again, as I've shared before, there were two nurses that are the only ones trained in that particular expertise in all of Manitoba and, in fact, they had to go outside Manitoba to get that level of expertise to be able to staff the level that needed in the Mature Women's Centre to be able to give that care to Manitoba women. That was gone.

And I don't know if any of the members opposite or any of the ministers had an opportunity to tour the woman's—the Mature Women's Centre before they dismantled it—and God knows where it is—but it was an excellent facility.

It's—everything was on one floor, but, again, I had the opportunity to meet some of the nurses there, again all women, which is, you know, in line with—it's the broader kind of context of all of these cuts towards women's health that actually you're also attacking women themselves by deleting, you know, nurse jobs or making nurses work mandatory overtime or disrupting where they're going to work and where—how long they're going to work. And so—and I've shared this a couple of times—I don't know if I

shared it in the House, Deputy Speaker, that I did have an opportunity to meet some of the nurse and I just said that, you know, on behalf of our caucus, you know, we really appreciate and thank you for all of your hard work and that I was sorry that this was happening, and those women were crying.

And so you can imagine that, you know, for these staff, these nurses, these highly—these experts in their particular field, to be crying in front of a woman that they've never met is pretty indicative of how hurt they were by the actions of this government. You know—and I think that we can—I can go on from there, but I don't have much time so I want to focus on a couple of other things.

What else have we seen, and we've heard nothing in respect of another minimum wage increase from this Premier (Mr. Pallister), and thus far what we've seen is only a raise of 25 cents, and we know that the vast majority of folks who work in minimum wage jobs are, again, also women, and we know that women have a huge responsibility as the breadwinners for their families.

And so we have women who are struggling, are balancing, trying to attempt to balance their work, which could be two or three jobs at a minimum wage employment with the responsibilities of raising children, sometimes with the responsibilities of going to school at the same time while also trying to attempt to navigate the daycare system and trying to get on at a daycare.

*(15:00)

And so imagine, then, from the perspective of Manitoba women who are in the midst of all of this, which I would suggest to the House is a very stressful situation—you know, the government which should have a, you know, a responsibility in lifting up folks—you know, throws at them a mere quarter to raise the minimum wage.

You know, I'm really proud to belong to a party that, when we were in government, raised the minimum wage each and every year. And that is something that is—something that we should be proud of. And, you know, I think that it is something that the Premier should take note of and, you know, as we move forward, as we get closer, you know, somewhat closer to October, you know, make up for the years that he's kind of missed and give a substantial raise to the minimum wage. It is the least that the Premier can do—the very least the Premier can do—to help lift up Manitoba individuals and

certainly Manitoba women, who are the primary breadwinners in their families.

And I think that—I would hope that most people in this Chamber would know that when you lift up women, when you have ability to create an economic or social infrastructure that lifts up women either via, you know, the ability to have employment, to be well-paid, to access education, to access health care, you don't only lift up that particular woman or that particular mom, you lift up—it becomes transformative in her family's life and their family's life.

I mean, I look at just in my own family, my own immediate family with my two sons and, you know, in the way that I grew up to the way that I am and now my sons are on this completely different path because that is the transformative effect of when we get the support as women, when we get the support to help us lift up and be the best that we can be.

And so, at a very minimum—at a very minimum, the Premier can go back and make up for the years that he did not apply a substantial or an adequate raise to the minimum wage. That's the least that the Premier can do. And I would hope that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding) will take that up himself, as well. And if the Premier is saying, no, that he can't, I hope that the Finance Minister will find some courage and actually say, you know, no—you know, women—Manitoba women deserve that raise.

So what else have we seen from this government—from this Premier and, again, from other ministers, who have either executed the Premier's directives or who have sat idly by and said nothing at the Cabinet table?

Well, we also saw a \$25,000 cut to the mobile breast cancer screening unit. I'm not sure who does that. Like, who cuts \$25,000 to screen for breast cancer in a mobile unit that goes all over, to ensure that women's health is healthy—that we are healthy?

And if we're not, if we have, you know—we are at the beginning stages or if there is something that actually, it's caught in time—and instead, this Premier cut \$25,000 to that. As if \$25,000—as if a \$25,000 cut to the mobile breast cancer screening is going to help with his austerity or whatever the heck he's trying to do, as if it's really going to make a dent in all of the cuts that he's trying to do.

But let's just attack women's breasts. Let's attack women's breasts and not give that opportunity to have that screening for some Manitoba women.

What else have we seen the Premier (Mr. Pallister) done? Well, in—and again, this is kind of all in concert and coupled with one another. We've seen these kind of underhanded attacks on the birth centre. Again, instead of supporting—unequivocally supporting the birth centre, we've seen these underhanded attacks. We've seen the Premier, under the Education Minister, the former Education minister, cut the midwifery program, when we know—and everywhere you go across Canada, if you read the statistics, everybody knows that Manitoba families are more and more wanting to have access to midwives so that they can have that as a part of their birthing plan.

But in Manitoba we have cut that program, and so we have no more cohorts of midwives down the—coming down the pipe. We have what we have and we're going to have to deal with it even though it is hands-down known that people would like to be able to have midwifery services.

So you've cut the—you've attacked the birth centre. You've cut the midwifery program, and then just to, like, the cherry on the cake or the topping—whatever that saying is—I never get those sayings right—they cut birthing services to Flin Flon.

So instead of—and, you know, we've heard the Minister for Health repeatedly say, well, you know, that members opposite know that it was not me that did it; that it was, you know, the A, B and C that did it.

But the bottom line is that the responsibility for birthing services in Flin Flon fall under the Minister of Health, and if the Minister of Health really was all that concerned about the ability for women in Flin Flon and all the surrounding areas to be able to stay in their home communities or somewhat in their home communities, to have closer access, to be able to have—to labour and to birth at home or close to home, he would have made it happen. It's as simple as that. To give us some cop-out, you know, question period after question period, or in Estimates, that his hands are tied and there's nothing that he can do, then why are you a minister?

Like, why are you, honestly, the Minister of Health? If you feel that you can't do anything as the Minister of Health even though it falls under your responsibility, go be a backbencher then, or, alternatively, do your job and open up birthing services in Flin Flon. Make it happen.

It's very simple, but we've seen this kind of lean towards an absolute attack on women's reproductive health, but, literally, just an attack in those three that I just said on women's ability to birth how we want, where we want, and safely.

So, you know, there's nothing—members opposite shouldn't be proud of that. I wouldn't understand why members opposite aren't going to Cabinet or aren't going to caucus and saying, like, what are you doing, Premier? Premier Pallister, the Pallister government, you know, we don't want to be part of a Pallister government that goes down in history as the government that systematically dismantled the infrastructure for women to be able to labour and birth in the way that they see fit.

How is it that any member opposite wants to be a part of that history? Why wouldn't you want to stand up and say, you know what? No, we're not going to—we cannot abide by this. This is—this goes against our conscience. We want to make this right. So let's get the Health minister to, you know, develop or put in place the infrastructure for Flin Flon. Let's support the birth centre. Let's, you know, go to the Minister of Education and say, where are we with the midwifery program? Let's get that up and running. But, no, everybody's just sitting there too scared to say anything to their Premier.

So again, in that—as well—so, like, as if that wasn't enough, you have this kind of blanket attack on nurses all over Manitoba. And I was recently speaking to a nurse—probably about a month ago, six weeks ago—and she was saying how she was so sick—and these are her words, Deputy Speaker. She was so sick and tired that every time there's a Conservative government in Manitoba the first area that they start to focus on and attack are nurses, which are predominantly women.

I think that that's kind of being lost sometimes when we talk about the attack on the health care and attack on nurses, that the vast majority of nurses—absolutely there are men—absolutely. But the vast majority of nurses are women.

So why is it that this Premier thinks that it is perfectly acceptable not only to attack Manitoba women who are birthing or who want to become midwives or who want to learn how to breast feed, not only that, you attack the women who take care of the women. You're absolutely undermining the whole infrastructure of women's reproductive health in Manitoba.

And, again, while all of that is going on, all of the members here, you know, clap themselves on the back; they clap for their minister's responses, and all it does is just show that they don't care about women. So I don't know what they're all excited about when they clap, but it really is—just highlights how much they really don't care about women or certain women.

*(15:10)

So, not only—what else did this Premier (Mr. Pallister) direct his—himself and his ministers and all his backbenchers to do?

Well, he directed all of his members, his caucus, to vote against Bill 200. Whether or not people in this Chamber agree with a woman's right, a woman or a girl's right to have an abortion, is neither here nor there. It is, at the end of the day, it is a woman's right and a girl's right to choose what she does with her body. That is, she can choose to terminate a pregnancy, she can go ahead with a pregnancy or, alternatively, she can have many pregnancies. That's her right.

But we have members opposite—we have a Premier that is so ideologically bent and the antithesis to supporting women's and girls' right to abortion, they voted against actually protecting women and girls as they're walking into hospitals that have abortion services, not only women and girls that have abortion services so that they don't have to be inundated with all of these really gross, violent imagery and being harassed on the way to exercise their right in what they want to do with their body and access our health care, they—

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): The member's time has expired.

Mr. Doyle Pivniuk (Arthur-Virden): Mr. Deputy Chair, I just want to give my condolences out—goes out to Stu Briese's family, the passing of Stu this past Monday. Stu has been—was a great colleague and many of our colleagues that were here were part of the original 19 before the election and Mr. Briese was such a gentleman. He was a scholar and he knew how to deal—he was very approachable with people.

And I remember very many great conversations I had with Stu over the two years that I had the honour to work with him. And he's going to be greatly missed by our colleagues, and everybody in the House because he had the respect with everybody in the Chamber.

And Mr. Briese, you know, I know he did a lot of work with Child and Family Services over the years and he also—his last critic role when I was in the Chamber was, when I got elected five years ago, he was the critic for indigenous relations and, again, he had such a great relations with the First Nation communities, especially in his constituency of Agassiz, and he'll be greatly missed by that community, too.

Mr. Deputy Chair, I just want to say that all those years that Stu Briese was in this House, I know the last year before I came here as an MLA, I know my colleagues, the 19 colleagues before me, before I got—replaced Larry Maguire as a MLA for Arthur-Virden, they spent many summers in the Chamber fighting the raise of the PST. And they spent all summer debating the PST and trying to stop the—that increase, and I'm so glad that Stu—I know he knew that what we did by lowering that PST with all the work he's done to help us battle that, and I'm happy that to say that he was able to witness it.

Being that I'm an MLA from Arthur-Virden, you know we have a kind of a unique situation there because not only do we have the border that borders Saskatchewan, but we also have the border that borders United States. And when it came to the PST increase I remember I was—well, the first year before that the Selinger government basically added PST on certain items such as, in my industry, the insurance industry. That was a big impact to a lot of households and that was taking a lot of money off the household tables, especially to lower income earners.

And then the next year they increased by 1 per cent, and that was kind of the reason I think I—like, that was one reason that I decided to run because I saw this—the inequity between doing a—running a business in Manitoba versus Saskatchewan.

When Saskatchewan's PST was at 5 per cent, we increased our PST from 7 to 8 per cent, and so there was a disparity between the businesses who were going to locate in that area, especially with the oil industry.

It was really ramping up and a lot of businesses decided to start up in Moosomin, Saskatchewan, and we, actually, we could see the towns—I think our population in Virden, Manitoba, grew by 3—less than 3 per cent, and Moosomin grew by 13 per cent in the last one census between—I think it was 2011.

So also we had a lot of impact to our retail in our area. In the whole constituency of Arthur-Virden, you know, money—we have a Walmart actually just on the other side of the border from Boissevain-Deloraine in a community called Bottineau. That was a big impact for the area when the PST was raised.

And so now with us lowering the PST—and, actually, what we're also doing on this—the 2019-20 budget, is that we're also increasing the tax brackets so that we compete with Saskatchewan that—you know, for people who want to locate in Manitoba.

It gives us another advantage of more—than what's also with the personal exemption too. We are also increasing the personal exemptions. So we've taken about 8,000 off of paying taxes, the lower—lowest income earners paying taxes in Manitoba. So this is a budget that is good for all Manitobans.

And when it comes to the advantages of the—I was—this past summer—no, actually was December. I was honoured to give a presentation to the Executive Council when it came to the Council of State Governments for the Midwest legislative division. And my report that I gave to the other—there was, like, nine other—there—11 states and three other provinces that we gave our—what was all happening in each of our jurisdictions. And I remember in my case, I was able to—we—I heard from Alberta first and they were saying that—despair—they were really hurt by the oil prices going down.

The oil industry, the vacancy rate in—I think in Calgary right now is, like, 30 per cent. And now with the lack of oil pipelines getting their oil to market, they're actually selling their oil at a very—huge discount and it's really hurting the economy, and that—you can thank the federal Liberal government for not pushing these pipelines for completion.

And so, when we also hear in Saskatchewan they have the same fight, that they're—also had problems with getting their oil to market. And, you know what? I had to honestly say, when I—it was my turn, I was saying how the—our oil industry's actually increasing now because we do have lighter crude. We do have a pipeline. This pumping station is in Cromer, Manitoba, which is in my constituency, and the oil is right there.

And so it's a light crude, so refineries would love that oil because it's light crude. And so they were able to blend it and refine it better with the heavy crude that you get from, let's say, Alberta. And so,

Mr. Deputy Chair, what we found there was that it was helping out our—art—region of our economy for the province. But what we also had with—when it came to—since we came into power in 2016, we've actually led any—all provinces in Canada for the biggest investment capital outside of our province—that came into our province.

And, you know, we have examples like Roquette, the pea plant that creates pre-protein. It's a French company who is—who—I think its investment is over six million—\$600 million. Then we have the expansion of Nestle Simplot, which is a huge potato manufacturer just west of Portage. And they're doing a huge expansion, there.

I think the—like—I was told that it's going to be one of the largest potato plants in the world. And then we also had the expansion of western companies such as Maple Leaf and 'hylike', who are doing major expansions and ramping up more employees and production so that they can send their product, their pork product all across the world.

And I think what—either told it was over \$1.5 billion of investment capital that's coming into Manitoba since we took over power. And, you know, now with the lower PST that's just going to enhance more businesses wanting to come and have an environment that they want to come to Manitoba to do business.

I just had a lunch—the other day I had lunch with a colleague of mine—not a colleague but a good friend who actually now runs—he's a partner in the Pinnacle employment services company. And he was telling me that over the years when the NDP were in government he was always concerned on what was coming at him next.

As a business owner he wanted to know what was coming at him. If it was going to be another regulation, another, you know, inspection that was basically was a job creation to their people and—there was also the possibility that, you know, we're going to increase taxes again.

And then—he told me now, since we came into government he says now I can—not have to worry. I can sleep at night and I can actually focus on my business and run my business and not having to worry all the stuff that's coming at him. And he wanted to thank us for all the work he's done.

And he also has a lot of clients who are in the manufacturing sector, and what he's saying is that—with the lower—with the competition that we're doing

with the budget now, we actually got upgraded when it comes to our—better for our bond markets now. They say that our bond markets rating, it could increase if we continue the way we're—if—the way we're going right now with the type of business that we—if—the decisions of policies that we're making.

* (15:20)

So this is great to hear that, even in the private sector, there's hope and people want to invest again. And again, what—investing back in the private sector, that's—creates jobs. When it creates jobs, that also 'increases'—increase revenue when it comes from taxation because of these new jobs, and also includes property taxes.

And all those types of taxes will then be able to pay for the services that we require in Manitoba, like when it comes to health care, education; when it comes to families' situations, kids in care—those are kind of revenues that we increase that we can actually afford these types of services.

And, when it came to the other—we've—again, we're investing more money into health care, health care that's sustainable. And some of the decisions that we made, they were tough decisions that we made. And when it came to increase in paramedics, that's very important when it comes to being in rural Manitoba.

When we look at 65 more paramedics and 65 new ambulances, you know, the days—I was told one time that the days of an ambulance attendant or a—it was the same person who drove the ambulances who was also driving a 'hearse'.

And it was a funeral—sometimes it was a funeral director that actually drove the 'hearse' and the ambulance because if the person was still alive, they actually took that patient to the hospital. If they didn't survive, they went to the morgue.

And so what's nice about this whole thing with these paramedics, even up to the time I first moved to—back to rural Manitoba in Virden, Manitoba, we all—all we had in our area was a garage, we had an ambulance, but we all relied on volunteers.

And a lot of times, a lot of these volunteers got a lot of training but, at the same time, what they were there for was, basically, pick up that patient and transport that patient to the closest hospital or facility where there was a doctor who can perform, you know, a procedure on them, whatever.

So then, when the—when we started to now—hiring paramedics, now when you phone 911, as soon as you make a phone call to the Medical Transportation Co-ordination Centre in Brandon, Manitoba, you're actually getting a paramedic right on the phone. And that paramedic is actually now giving people advice to what they need to do to stabilize that patient until the ambulance gets there.

And, when that ambulance gets there, then they actually have paramedics who have been trained so well that they can actually stabilize that patient and they can triage where that patient's going to go: if that patient's going to go to the local hospital where there's an ER, or do they go to Brandon, or do they go to Winnipeg.

And one of the nicest things that we've done as a government is that we've created the Health Sciences Centre as shared services. And with shared services, now that hospital's—now it's the Manitoba hospital and it's no longer part of the W—Winnipeg RHA.

And because—I know anybody that I know from the rural Manitoba have always been—gone—had been transported. If there was a life-threatening situation, they would always go to the Health Sciences Centre. Now with the Health Sciences Centre being focused on all the resources, most—with three ERs now in Winnipeg—I know my dad went both to the Health Sciences Centre and also to St. Boniface for procedures that he had to deal with—when he had health issues.

And then I remember, anybody I talked to always went to these two hospitals. So we know, in rural Manitoba, that the Health Sciences Centre will be now equipped with—and all the resources are going to be focused on life-threatening situations there. And I'm really—and people in rural Manitoba are very happy with that.

The other thing is, too, is that, like, paramedics, they will also, you know, do procedures. Like, a lot of them are getting more and more training so that they actually can do a lot of things that maybe some of the hospitals can do that have a doctor, even, just to get that patient stabilized to go to a medical facility that they need to have emergency surgery.

I remember—I know the member from Concordia was talking about his situation where he put his arm through the glass. And I remember my young brother, who was only 4 years old, I remember we were running to the house and I—he—we were having a race and he—I gave him a head start. He did the

same thing. He put his hand right up to the window, and he didn't go through.

And I said to him, I said, don't do that because you're going to—your arm—your hand's going to get—go right through that window. So, the next day, my brother challenged him on a race, and he actually ran and he actually beat my brother but, unfortunately, his hand did go through the glass. He didn't have five stitches. He had 42 stitches. And we actually lived 25 miles from the closest hospital, to the closest ER.

And I remember—I don't know if we're tougher in rural Manitoba, but I remember he hardly even cried, and I remember he said, well, just put a band-aid on it. He didn't want to go to the hospital, actually, and so my mom and dad, my mom who had someone who worked for a doctor was able to understand what there was to do. But back then there was no ambulances and you had to race your child to the ER. And I remember my mom did a tourniquet and was able to take my brother to the hospital, my mom and my dad, and he got 42 stitches.

But I remember when I was five years old—four years old—no, I was actually three. And I remember I was walking with my brothers and we're going—my brothers, all my brothers were going to show me a fort. And I stepped on this log and it had—I got stung 13 times with hornets. And I still remember my mom and dad rushing me to the hospital in Russell, again 25 miles away, and I remember the police stopped my dad, and he wasn't stopping him for speeding; he was stopping for purple gas, to check for purple gas.

And look at how much our education with our—our paramedics, our police officers and our firefighters, they're all now working, co-ordinating together to understand emergencies of everything.

So we've come a long way since the days that I grew up, and you know what? Like I said, if we have more resources than these three hospitals in Winnipeg, this is what we want because we don't have people waiting in waiting rooms like we had in the—with the NDP government. So I—kudos goes out to our Minister of Health, who has done major decisions and are going to be good sustainable decisions that we're going to have in the long term.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair.

Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook): I think it's very unfair that I got a nice increase in my pay and that most of my people are struggling because they have only seen pennies, not even full pennies in theirs, and this budget does nothing to address that fact.

Is it the chicken before the egg? That's the reoccurring thought that I have. This abrupt and illogical shuttering off of our economy has caused dire impacts to many of our Manitobans. The PCs are causing so many people to declare bankruptcy—*[interjection]*—in small businesses throughout my constituency. And I don't appreciate the member laughing because none of my people in my constituency have actually been brave enough to come and let them know.

There needs to be a balance. There needs to be investment. There needs to be spending in our province, healthy spending. You know, the NDP did spend, but it was largely unhealthy for our province. So we can learn from that, but they did spend, and we need to make sure that there is a nice balance so that we're not shuttering our province.

You know, I'm tired of saying that we—I come from a have-not province. Why are we always idly sitting by as other provinces are flourishing? You know, we are so heavily dependent on federal transfers. You know, I would really like to tell the PC team, you know, get our province off of the federal welfare line.

Once again the Province does not allow for our First Nations to have jurisdiction over our children in care.

Why is it that there's always, all of a sudden, so much money for foster parents? Why can't this money be found immediately to support actual parents? Why aren't we apprehending parents and placing relatives in the homes to ensure children are kept intact emotionally, physically and mentally?

And, yes, I do recognize that some apprehensions are very well justified.

When we look at the history of our province, farming was heavily invested into. I believe if those same concepts or types—and types of capital investments were made into our human capacities, you know, intellectual intelligence, knowledge centres or investments into the arts and culture sector of our province, you know, we would flourish that way as well.

In my riding, I don't have one single family that even has \$10 on their table after getting paid, never mind the \$200 to \$500 that the PCs mention. You know, costs increase every single year—thank you—and this government seems to turn a blind eye to this, and quite unfair.

* (15:30)

In-pot holes are only going to get bigger under this government. Under—and I mentioned this already—under the Infrastructure Canada proposal-program, for indigenous projects, the feds would have paid 75 per cent of any project. You know, this has never been done before. And, again, other provinces are jumping all over this, you know. I really do need my all-season east side road, so that we can grow prosperously just the same any municipality or town.

You know, the PCs really need to invest in my people. They really need to invest in the North. We need this job creation and employment activity.

I would like to talk about health care. So many people in my riding are facing quite the opposite of what the PCs are spinning. You know, cancellation after cancellation of surgeries due to this shortage of staff. And that's one of the—that is a common theme on Facebook; I can't have my surgery today, on my wall, because the doctor said there's a shortage of staff, or the nurses come in and said there's a shortage of staff.

You know, I've personally escorted many of my constituents to the ER and I've seen it first-hand. And I would encourage that every MLA do that, to come and see what those doctors and nurses are facing at the hospital and emergency rooms, because it is unreal and it's quite shocking. And, you know, these are people that are at their most vulnerable time—when they're having a medical health crisis and they can't even be seen for anywhere from seven to 12 hours. It is quite unfortunate that they're being treated that way.

And to house—and to have to sleep with your bed in a TV room—in a very public TV room at the St. Boniface general is very frustrating and should not happen to anyone.

So, with those comments, you know, I feel that this budget does not do justice to our province. We could do so much better and we need to do so much better. Miigwech.

Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain): I'm proud to be a member of a government that keeps its promises, Mr. Speaker.

Prior to the 2016 election, our Progressive Conservative government—or, our Progressive Conservative Party promised Manitoba residents that, when elected, we would roll back the provincial sales

tax to 7 per cent before the end of its first term. Budget 2019 delivered on that promise with the announcement that the PST will drop by 1 percentage point, to 7 per cent, on July 1st of this year.

It is significant that the reduction will happen on July 1st, as that is the date that, in 2013, that the previous NDP government raised the tax to 8 per cent after promising during the 2011 election they would do nothing of the kind. Of course, the increase to 8 per cent came on the heels of the NDP deciding to add the PST to more goods and services, including home insurance.

This cut in the PST will save Manitobans an estimated \$237 million in the nine months of the 2019-20 budget year, and \$325 million over a full one-year period.

Mr. Speaker, this is the largest tax cut in Manitoba history and will 'benet'—benefit families, businesses and local governments. A single individual is expected to save \$180 per year while a family of four will save approximately \$500. This is more of their hard-earned money left on their kitchen table that they can make the choice on where to spend, not the government.

Manitoba businesses pay PST on all their purchases. This reduction will save them over \$130 million annually. It is estimated that up to half of the business savings will be passed on to consumers, which will benefit the average family of four by an additional \$170 per year.

Municipalities, school divisions, post-secondary institutions, regional health authorities and other government agencies are expected to save a total of \$90 million with the reduced PST. These savings will help local governments and school divisions balance their budgets without raising taxes on Manitobans.

The basic personal exemption will be increased and tax brackets indexed, saving Manitobans another \$36 million in 2019-20. Almost 8,000 low-income wage earners will be removed from the tax rolls with a higher basic personal exemption.

And more good news, Mr. Speaker: Budget 2019 is forecasting a deficit of \$360 million, which is \$160 million less than was forecast in Budget 2018. After inheriting a deficit of nearly \$1 billion—\$932 million, to be exact, when we took office, our government has reduced that number each and every year due to prudent fiscal management and

shopping smarter. Left unchecked and without the promises the NDP made during the last election campaign, the deficit was forecast to rise to \$1.7 billion in the 2019-20 budget year.

The PST cut and deficit reduction are happening at the same time as our government is making record expenditures in Health, Education and Families. Health spending will increase by \$118 million this year to \$6.19 billion, which is \$500 million more than the NDP spent in their last year in office.

The myth of cuts to health care being spread by the unions and the members opposite is just that. More money is being spent on health care and a job is available for every nurse or health-care aide who wants one in Manitoba.

However, we are not just spending more, but getting much better outcomes, with lower wait times to see a doctor in emergency rooms, additional capacity for MRIs, which is—with lower wait times, more hip, knee and cataract surgeries. As well, Mr. Speaker, statistics show the total number of nurses and doctors working in Manitoba has increased year over year.

The fee to call an ambulance in Manitoba is being reduced to \$250 in Budget 2019. To put this in perspective, when we formed government the basic fee to call an ambulance was \$522, and we have lowered it three times since we were elected.

As part of our plan for residents to access better health care sooner, the budget provides for the hiring of 35 additional full-time primary care paramedics, as well as setting aside funding to purchase 65 new replacement ambulances.

Full-time paramedics have been welcomed with open arms in rural Manitoba. These highly trained individuals provide primary care immediately upon arrival at a home or business and continue with the care while on the way to the most appropriate health-care facility.

Education and Families will also get increases in Budget 2019. Primary and secondary school funding will increase by \$6.6 million. As well, capital funding will be increased by \$56 million to support structural repairs, roof replacements, new mechanical systems, and accessibility projects in schools across the province.

Funding of \$1.4 million has been earmarked for operating support for an additional 496 child-care spaces across Manitoba.

The community of Rivers in my constituency of Riding Mountain will benefit from this support, as later this spring they will open their first daycare facility, filling a need that has existed for many, many years.

Mr. Speaker, here are a few more highlights that will directly benefit residents of my constituency:

Our government will be funding 29 new positions for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in Manitoba. Twenty-seven of those positions will be for front-line officers that will bolster detachments all across the province.

As this House is aware, an officer in my constituency was seriously injured after being shot while responding to a break-and-enter in progress near Onanole last year. This incident sparked many of my constituents to speak out on the need for more boots on the ground in rural areas. I am pleased that our Justice Minister has made this commitment in Budget 2019.

The Young Farmer Rebate program, which is intended to help address the rising costs of starting a farm operation, will be enhanced with a 32 per cent increase in funding, to \$2 million.

*(15:40)

The conservation districts in my constituency have been very active in conservation projects that enhance natural areas and infrastructure, strengthen flood and drought protection and support climate change adaption. These efforts will receive a boost of \$5 million from the income of our \$102 million Conservation Trust that was established in Budget 2018.

Municipalities in Manitoba will continue to receive enhanced basket funding, which allows councils to decide where the money they receive is best spent. As well, \$10 million has been allocated for municipal bridges and roads, something I know our municipalities welcome.

We're investing an additional \$2 million more in the Manitoba Water Services Board to provide municipalities outside Winnipeg with additional support to address critical water and sewer infrastructure needs.

I'm pleased that our government is responding to our municipal partners by adding resources to the Public Utilities Board to help them clear the backlog of municipal applications for utility rate increases. I was just made aware last week at a meeting with the

Town of Minnedosa that they've been waiting five months to have their application returned to them.

Budget 2019 calls for spending of more than \$1 billion on strategic infrastructure such as roads and bridges, water and waste-water projects, flood protection, hospitals, schools, universities and college.

Mr. Speaker, I want to mention the new school our government's building in the south end of Brandon, in the constituency of the member for Brandon East (Mr. Isleifson). This school is very near and dear to my heart, as I expect my eight-month-old granddaughter Kennedy will be attending the Maryland Park School in the fall of 2023.

Of this \$1 billion in infrastructure projects, \$350 million is earmarked for highways, including the reconstruction and paving of Highway 21, south of my home town of Shoal Lake. A further \$45 million has been allocated for highways and roads as we celebrate Manitoba's 150th birthday throughout the year of 2020.

Like many Manitobans, our government believes in saving for the future and for events such as floods that are active nature—acts of nature and cannot be predicted. That's why in Budget 2019 we are adding \$50 million to further replenish the rainy day fund, which will bring the balance to \$265 million.

Our government knows our public service has great ideas for doing their jobs more efficiently and saving taxpayers money at the same time. That's why we are making further investments through our \$50-million ideas fund that will support the implementation of a public service transformation strategy.

Mr. Speaker, today is an exciting time to live in Manitoba. Taxes are coming down. Services are being strengthened, and infrastructure is being repaired. Manitobans feel a sense of pride that their government is ensuring their day-to-day needs are being met in a fiscally responsible and sustainable manner. Unfortunately, this was not the case for many years under the previous NDP government. In the lead-up to the 2016 election, our PC team promised to fix the finances, repair the services and rebuild the economy of Manitoba. It's been less than three years since we received an overwhelming mandate to fulfill these promises. I am proud to say that our PZ-PC government is getting the job done.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Ted Marcelino (Tyndall Park): I just lost a dear friend. His name is Alfredo Nonoy Hermano. He died last night. He's a brother to a very good friend and fishing buddy, Lino Hermano. He's the brother-in-law of Lourdes Hermano, a retired teacher of the Brooklands School. May he rest in peace.

He suffered from the joys of smoking and was killed by it. I will miss him and his jokes. We went together, as friends, doing a pizza delivery team in 1980s, and we were making 25 cents tips on a \$4-per-hour wage, and we were both happy—and our memories of yesterday.

Now, I will have to come to the meat of my speech today, which is survival.

In 1980, when I first arrived, everything that I did was to survive. Everything that I dreamed of went down by the sidelines. And I had to work. I had to work as a tire retreader for Quality Tire, a tire retreader, cold process, for tractor tires. I didn't realize they were big. I thought they were just tires. And I made do with what we had.

And as new immigrants, we tried keeping up with the day-to-day expenses. And I'm kind of reluctant to even say anything more about how we lived our lives because when I lived at 341 Keewatin, it was difficult. My neighbours were all on welfare and I didn't realize that even the bus fare was very scarce at that time. It was only 50 cents, but then they still don't have it. Two quarters, they don't have it. And they would knock on our door and ask for a dollar because that's the only way that they could come back.

Most of them were indigenous, right there on Keewatin. And they lived lives that are not that far away from now, those guys who are living on Gallagher, Alexander, Ross in the Brooklands area. And I ran on the basis of trying to help out and make an impact on their lives. And I have failed, I think, because things have not changed. The attitudes of governments, whether it was past governments or this government, is to get rid of poverty by pretending that they don't exist. Well, they do. And when even food on the table at night are chips and a drink, that they only have is Pepsi or Coke—that's their dinner—and that's on Ross Avenue, right at the Weston.

And, if you don't believe that, it existed prior to 2011, when I first ran. And this budget right now—I wish I had more than 20 minutes. And there's that \$500. Let's—let me talk about the \$500 fee for

newcomers. It's a head tax; there are no two ways about it. It is a tax on people who are trying to make a better life when they come here to our province.

And it's a head tax, which is reminiscent of what was imposed on the Chinese and the Japanese and everybody else who came after. And I guess this government has to remove it. It's only worth 3 and a half million in your coffers, but it's \$500 that they can ill afford. They have to borrow money just to pay for it, pay for the privilege of applying through the Provincial Nominee Program. That's in addition to what was imposed by the feds, which is \$1,040, which is right of landing fee, which has been with us for so long I don't know what they're doing with it.

* (15:50)

Newcomers are just like innocent refugees who have come to learn that they have to cope with the new problems that they encounter in the new environment that they have to live in.

Madam Speaker in the Chair

They are very thankful that they have been accepted as immigrants, and posed with the hardships that come with the territory of becoming a new immigrant, language sometimes becomes a barrier. Your accent, my accent, betrays my source country, and I pretended that I could speak like the rest of those people who were here earlier. I spoke through my nose so that I won't betray that I was from the Philippines.

And I was successful for a while until I was told by my son that I should not change the way that I say things because it also brings forward that I could speak other languages other than English. I speak three.

And the difficulties that we had then was compounded by the weather. It's a constant reminder that you are 180 degrees away from your source country.

The \$500 was supposed to help us out, or at least those who came after me. The Provincial Nominees who came here were supposed to be helped by the \$500 for the Manitoba Start or the English as an Additional Language programs, and everything else that comes with being a new immigrant.

But here we are with a government that seems to relish on another source of income, but they won't call it a tax; they call it a fee, and when it is called a fee, therefore, it's different from a tax.

Well, the truth is they come from the same pocket, right? And the weather that was different from way back has not changed; it's even worse. It's now a little bit colder and a little bit wetter and a little bit more harsh. And don't pretend that it will not come—the flood will.

And there's a reluctance on the part of the Conservatives. This government tries to not call a cut as a cut. They call it a savings so when they do not spend anything that was programmed for any expense they call it, well, savings, and it is misleading and it perpetuates a myth that you can call a rat a mice and pretend that your cheese will be safe from the mice because a mice is a rat is a mice. And a cut is not a savings; it is a cut is a cut is a cut.

And I wanted to speak more about the nature of good governance. I'm jumping from one topic to the other; maybe it's so that—maybe it will catch on so it will wake you up.

Good governance is a hallmark of an honest leader who seeks to raise everyone from the bottom and bring everyone to the heights where nobody will be left behind. Nobody will be left behind.

And, when we say that nobody will be left behind, that includes every single Manitoban, educated or not, rich or poor, young or old. And, when we say good governance, we say it has to be from a leader who will allow the potential of everyone to rise, to be above the fray, to be able to eat three square meals plus a little bit more, and to have a roof over their head.

And what do we have today? What we have today is a government that betrays our health-care system. How? They pretend—this government pretends that wait times are down. It's not true. You haven't been there. I was there with my kidney stones. And my kidney stones, I waited 14 hours, for crying out loud. Do you know how painful a kidney stone is? And they recur. And, when those kidney stones were happening to me, blocking some of my tubes—14 hours—what do you mean, one and a half hours wait time? That's 14 hours of pain.

And there's a flooding threat. You know, I see in the budget, the budget says that the emergency funding for disasters have been given back or allocated towards the departments of the Infrastructure and Sustainable Development, two departments who will get it. And it says here, that it

was because of the necessity to not take the risk of supplemental funding.

And this goes back to 2011, 2011 during the floods, and prior to that, to 2007, and prior to that, to 1997. I remember 1997, I was not here yet in this Legislature, but there was somebody who was Emergency Measures chief.

An Honourable Member: Who was that?

Mr. Marcelino: I won't mention names. But the threat of the flood was right there. And the water was coming. And somebody quit. And that was—if that were the measure of performance, I'd say that's the performance of somebody who quits when the going gets tough.

You cannot do that. You're not supposed to.

And the flooding threat that now exists from south of the border, maybe before Good Friday, the waters might have crested somewhere in the south. And by Easter Sunday we might have something like lots and lots of water. And I just hope that this government does not sacrifice lives, or property, or people's morale by saying, oh, we don't have the money for that.

I just pray that it does not happen. And I just pray that Grande Pointe has been sufficiently protected, and that we could still travel through Highway 75, and that Morris would still be safe, because if Morris were not safe, the member from Morris could be in big trouble.

And the bigger threat, though, is not from the flooding alone. It's from that sneaky way of attacking democracy in a very profound way. And it was somewhere in the latter portion of the budget.

* (16:00)

And it's not really funny, because it's an attack on the smaller parties. And I think everybody knows what I'm talking about. It is the election funding that has been taken out, the election rebate that has been taken out, the 50 per cent that was supposed to subsidize political parties and candidates.

And I worry about it. And right now, I can afford to fight a good battle. My sister just got lucky. She hit a million dollars. And it's true: January 30th, she hit a million dollars. So I could just borrow \$30,000 from her and spend it.

But for those who aim to serve, there's now a reluctance on their part because the banks won't allow them money. They won't lend them money

because there's no guarantees about getting repaid unless they are able to fundraise. And it is a problem, but then, it is something that I was half-expecting from this government.

This government represents an attitude of, well, if we could hit them hard while they're down, might as well hit them hard. And I guess it's part of my nature too. I have killer instincts. And I guess it's part of political tactics, but it's very abhorrent to the nature of democracy. It's a very sinister way of killing off your opposition by denying them resources.

It was done before when food supplies were cut from the allies during the war, and this is reminiscent of a big war. And the big war now is the Pallister government versus democracy.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): It gives me great pleasure to stand up today and put a few words on the record.

I guess, first of all, to the—my colleague from Tyndall Park, he spoke that he wanted more than 20 minutes, and just for the record, I mean, he left some time on the clock. So, I guess, the budget news this year really isn't all that bad in the perspective of the NDP.

I think this is absolutely the best budget that has been brought down in the history of Manitoba, Madam Speaker.

I would like to take a few seconds to welcome you back to the spring session, of course, the table staff, the pages and absolutely everybody else here at the Leg. that helps us get through the day-to-day business here in the House. And so, I look forward to challenging debate and moving various pieces of legislation forward all the way to the beginning of June and then into the fall as well, Madam Speaker.

As I said, I—it gives me great pleasure today to stand up and speak to the 2019-20 budget. As we've seen, back when we took power in 2016, we were basically handed a mess, but we were up to the challenge, Madam Speaker. And so that's where we're showing progress and—steady progress on the way to, you know, fixing our finances, rebuilding the economy and repairing our services.

We take a look back in 2016, you know, we had the 2016 budget, we called it or we named it Correcting the Course. The 2017 Budget was Responsible Recovery, 2018 was Keeping our

promises and the 2019 budget—and I know that members on all sides of the House has the—this year's package and it's titled Getting The Job Done.

I am not in support of the two motions put forward by the two opposition parties the other day. And, again, much like the member from Tyndall Park and other members of the NDP caucus and even the Liberal caucus today—I think the member from Kewatinook spoke for just over five minutes, so that's interesting; she left a lot of time on the—because, you know what? I agree with them, Madam Speaker.

Basically, it's—they don't have a whole lot of bad stuff to say because this budget is so incredibly beneficial to all Manitobans. The motions put forward by the NDP and the Liberal Party, the opposition parties, we know where they stand. They stand with the high-tax and high-spend policies of not only their leaders and their previous leaders, but also the—their federal representatives as well.

I must take a second, Madam Speaker, to just take a sidestep from the budget for a quick second here and not necessarily contradict but give another perspective to the health-care system as opposed to my friend and colleague from Tyndall Park.

I just recently had a bit of a fall, bit of an accident, that landed myself—me, up into the Emergency Department at the Health Sciences Centre, and I would just like to take this opportunity to thank all the nurses and the doctors, all the staff, the security, absolutely everybody at the Health Sciences Centre Emergency Department, for helping me through the journey for that evening.

Basically, I waited. You know, I know that I wasn't dying, so I was in the emergency waiting room. I waited there for three hours and then was wheeled in, and by the time X-rays and all that ended up happening for my knee, just about a total of eight hours. I left there with a brace and some crutches and with an appointment to see a specialist after that, Madam Speaker.

So, you know, the member from Tyndall Park—*[interjection]* See, and I hear the member from Point Douglas chiming in from her seat, and she'll have an opportunity to speak unless she has already—oh, she did. Okay, she probably left some time on the clock. But the point is is that the wait time was three hours, the wait time before I saw a professional. The nurses who were at the receptionist desk when they were first assessing my injury, they asked me if I needed

anything for the pain, and they gave me that, and so, basically, the care started right then. But, as far as being wheeled in, I mean, there were people in much more dire need than me who definitely needed to get in there, and they got in there.

The member from Tyndall Park talks about kidney stones, and he's not the only one in the world that's ever had kidney stones, and they hurt like heck, Madam Speaker. I mean, I've had the displeasure of having those. And, you know, what, I'll take him at his word that he waited 14 hours, but I doubt that he didn't see anybody in those 14 hours when he was at emergency because that's not the experience I've had in the Manitoba health-care system, so I know that when I've had kidney stones I've had faster care than that.

But, to get back to 2019-20 budget, Madam Speaker, we are moved away from the dark days of the NDP party. We are getting into the sunshine, the new Manitoba way.

We are seeing that the dollars that are being spent in, just to name a few, in health care, Education and Families are up by millions and millions of dollars. In Health alone, we're looking at just over \$500 million more being spent in the budget. We're looking at Families, 310; Education, \$700 million. Those are more dollars being spent on services for absolutely every Manitoban.

You know, I can't help but mention the reduction in the PST. The NDP talk about cuts. Well, this is the largest tax cut in Manitoba history, Madam Speaker. *[interjection]* I know that the member from Point Douglas, I know she had a chance to speak, and she wants to speak more, and I guess she'll have to ask for leave from somebody to get up and put a few more words on the record, but she wants me to talk about the increase in funding that has gone into Health and Education and Families, and I'll repeat it again. We're looking at roughly, you know, \$800 million more in those three departments.

* (16:10)

But let me get back to the PST, and we labelled our 2018-19 budget as Keeping Our Promises. Well, here we are, 2016—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Ewasko: —we said that—when we were going to those doors, we were knocking on those doors, Madam Speaker, we were knocking on the doors, and we were saying, you know what, to all those

Manitobans, we are not going to be like those NDP members and—going door to door in 2011—the 2011 election, they went door to door under the Selinger regime.

And many of the members—okay, correction, many of those members are long gone, but there's some, they're still here. And you know what, actually, there's a few of them that are actually leaving. They'll be gone before the next election, before 2020.

But they went door to door and they promised—they looked grandparents, the elderly, the seniors, young people with young families—they looked at them in their eyes and said, you know what, this is nonsense that we're saying that we're going to raise the PST.

This is what Greg Selinger went on TV and absolutely everywhere, door to door—you know, I know the member from Fort Garry-Riverview went door to door because we were—we both came to the Legislature the same year. He went door to door saying that they weren't going to raise the PST.

And here we found out, Madam Speaker, through some freedom of information and whatever else, some of their backroom dealings that they were talking about before the 2011 election is that they weren't going to necessarily raise the PST from seven to eight. They were actually going to go to nine.

And so we found this out from, you know, some of our great sources and even some of the leaks from the NDP party, as well, that not only did they raise the PST from seven to eight, Madam Speaker, in 2013—after we spent months and months hanging out here in the Legislature fighting them, keeping their feet to the fire, pleading on behalf of Manitobans for them not to raise the PST. But they went ahead and did it in 2013.

That was a year after, Madam Speaker, they took many goods and services that each and every Manitoban needs—house insurance, birth and death certificates—they went and they expanded the PST onto all those services. And then they hit them even harder, to the tune of almost a half a billion dollars in extra revenue.

This—the previous NDP government, the Selinger government had coming into their coffers. And what did they do, Madam Speaker? They drove our debt up and up and up.

In 1999, when the Doer government and then later on the Selinger government took over, they are at about—Manitoba was about \$12.3 billion in debt. Where are we now? When we took over in 2016, they were approaching \$25 billion. They over doubled the provincial debt by 12 and a half billion dollars.

So what are we doing? We made the promise to reduce the PST. Why? Because the PST affects absolutely everybody. We're putting \$3,000 per family of four back into their pockets by 2024, Madam Speaker: 3,000 for a family of four by 2024. *[interjection]* Oh, so that member from Point Douglas is talking again, so I'm going to repeat it for her so she hears it: \$3,000 for a family of four—into their pockets by 2024.

What is—why am I mentioning 2024, Madam Speaker? Well, 2024 will be the end of our second term and almost the beginning of our third term.

So in addition, I know that the members opposite want to get up and put their five minutes on the record. And I know that they're getting ready. I've got more time here on the clock, Madam Speaker, so I am going to put a couple other things on.

A couple of the big points I know that definitely gets across to all Manitobans: keeping our promises, of course, saying what we said we were going to do. We were—when we won in 2016, we were tasked with three main factors, and that was to fix the Province's finances, to repair the services, our wait times are going down, unless you're the member from Tyndall Park. But besides that, I think there's some holes in the story. But you know what, I like the member from Tyndall Park, and I'll take him at his word, so there was—must have been something goofy there going on with his medical stay. And, of course, rebuilding the economy, Madam Speaker.

We are saying—seeing more investment into this wonderful province of ours, which is going to be bringing new jobs, new opportunities, unlike the dark days of the NDP. Unlike the dark days of the Kinew opposition party, they are promoting high taxes, lower jobs, The Leap Manifesto with keeping it into the ground, and I did mention an era, Madam Speaker, so it's not a—it was definitely not anything else.

Point of Order

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Concordia, on a point of order.

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): I think we're entering some new territory here with language that's being used in the House. I'd like to get your ruling on the particular word, I know that we're very cautious about using members' names in this Legislature and, of course, the member just referred to one of the members by his last name. Just wanted to get some clarification from you if I could, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: I do thank the member for raising that point of order. He is right in saying that we are in some uncharted territory right now, because that has never come up in here. We—I do know that the names of the government leader has been used in relationship to the government. But we have not so far gone down the road of attaching the name of a leader to an opposition party. So I would rule, at this point of time, that would not be allowed in this House.

* * *

Mr. Ewasko: Thank you, Madam Speaker, but I do believe I've used it before, but I'll take your ruling, of course, to heart and will move on with my speech.

So we were tasked with, in 2016—we were tasked with to fix the finances, to repair the services, and to rebuild the economy and that's exactly what we're doing.

This budget speaks volumes, Madam Speaker, volumes. We're looking at our summary deficit, which, under the NDP, if it continued—if we had continued the 'trajectory' of the deficit, the higher taxes, more spending, we would have hit \$1.7 billion this year.

Our budget is showing \$360 million [*interjection*], we have a lot more work to do Madam Speaker—[*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Ewasko: —but we're getting the job done.

Thank you, Madam Speaker, for your time.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Some Honourable Members: More.

An Honourable Member: It's the NDP's turn.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Order, please.

In my rotation, I do have it listed as an NDP member. Is the NDP member wishing to pass their—oh.

The honourable member for Wolseley.

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): Classic example of be careful what you wish for, Madam Speaker.

Ah, the budget. Budget's garbage. Kind of tempted to sit down right now. That really is the thirty-second takeaway from this. Phony numbers, derived from a phony political strategy and based on a completely phony understanding of what Manitobans need and what the world is facing.

Every day, Madam Speaker, I and my colleagues do our best to bring to light the issues that this government is just adamantly determined to ignore. And day after day, the government's representatives—from the Premier (Mr. Pallister) all the way down to the back benchers supporting this yahoo charade on a regular basis, are determined—bound and determined—to keep the blinders on and their heads thoroughly buried in the sand.

*(16:20)

Everything from the meth crisis, and meth itself is a new drug, a relatively new drug, which is adding to underlying social conditions that have been with us for a very, very long time. But crystal meth itself, the nature of what it can do to a person, its prevalence, the impact that it's having, this government's response has been absolutely tragically minimal and dismissive, and the Premier's answers today were yet another classic example of someone who just does not get it and who's determined to not understand what is going on, despite all the evidence to the contrary that's being brought forward.

The myth that this government is bringing forward a sound fiscal plan or that they have done anything even remotely creative when it comes to the Province's finances, that myth needs to be dispelled very quickly. This government did not run on a promise of cuts; they didn't mention that once. They had some sort of magic wand they were going to wave around in the air. There would be no cuts to services. They had a premier who was proud to be a union member. He was proud to have been a teacher. He wouldn't cut education. He wouldn't cut health care; no, of course not. And all of us who've been here for longer than 30 nanoseconds thought, oh, yes, whatever.

Lo and behold, that same Premier, the moment he comes into office, what happens? All they do is cut, Madam Speaker. That's not innovative; that's not new. That's the only reason that they're doing what they're doing. Conservatives don't believe in government. How ironic is it that a Conservative

shows up on your doorstep, will knock on your door and say if you are dumb enough to hire me to look after your government in Manitoba, I promise you I will not believe in the organization. I promise you I will do a lousy job, and I promise you it will be in worse shape—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order, order. I think on both sides of the House I'm going to ask that members respect each other. I know sometimes it's easy to get really testy in here and to start to make some comments that are probably not very respectful, and certainly the public wouldn't, if they were watching this, would not like to see that kind of dynamic going back and forth.

And I know when it gets late in the day there's a tendency for people to misbehave in terms of that, so I would ask everybody for some co-operation here, please. I think the public does expect better of us, and I think there is a way to have respectful debate, to put things on the record, but I would urge members to not try to slag the other party, as we're doing all of this, to the extent that I am hearing it this afternoon.

Yes, you know, you can put comments on about the other party and about policies, but there are respectful ways to do it without lowering that level of debate to a disrespectful level.

So I would ask everybody's—everybody's caution this afternoon, please, so that we can have a respectful debate in the Manitoba Legislature.

Mr. Altemeyer: Right. Where was I? The irony of an election is that it is an extensive job interview where the different parties that you just referred to, Madam Speaker, will go door to door with every stakeholder group and with every citizen and they will try and convince them that they are the best candidates for the job of running the province.

And my point, merely, and I cannot speak to whatever it is you were hearing from the opposition, they usually—multiple members yelling at me every time I stand up, so I can't distinguish which one is which, but if you can hear it, kudos to your hearing. I wear hearing aids.

But the irony is that when those members went door to door knocking on people's doors and saying we're not going to cut any of your services, there are not going to be any layoffs, what was that, Madam Speaker? Was there even a shred of truth to that the moment they were saying it?

No, there wasn't. And how do we know that? Because their actions speak louder than words. Who's going to be paying more on their property taxes this year? Pretty much everyone. How many municipalities have had their money frozen and cut by this government? All of them. That's not creative. That's not a magic wand. That's a funding pact, plain and simple.

How many university students and college students, whether they're at the University College of the North, which, I will point out, this government voted against even creating; our government built and supported—whether they're the UCN up north, whether they're downtown at Red River College, whether it be U of W, St. Boniface, U of M, Brandon, wherever it may be, how many of those students are going to be paying more in tuition because this government cut funding to post-secondary education? All students. All the students are going to be paying more, and their parents, if their parents have the means to help them out.

That's not creative; that's a Conservative being a Conservative when a Conservative is elected to public office. They do not believe in the public good, they do not believe that everyone has a fair shot. They believe that some people should get it, if they have enough money, and if you have the money you should be able to buy whatever you want.

They would have been—they probably would have been listed in the recent admissions scandals in the United States, buying their way to get their kids into the very privileged schools down there. That is exactly the same ideology that we see here, in place here in Manitoba.

There's one set of rules for the insiders, there's another set of rules for everyone else. This government has no problem, they have no problem—starting with the Premier (Mr. Pallister)—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Altemeyer: —all the way down, picking fights with every single person or organization or level of government that doesn't agree with them. But are they capable of looking in the mirror and seeing that they themselves are guilty of the same behaviour? Absolutely not.

My father's research on right-wing authoritarianism, if any of them wants to read it, I'll get you a copy of his book, might be a bit of an eye-opener for you. One of the hallmarks of a right-wing

authoritarian is the inability to realize their own self-inconsistencies.

So let's take a live example: the rule of law. The—[*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Altemeyer: —rule of law, Madam Speaker.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Altemeyer: Is this part of that respectful dialogue we were all encouraged to do a little while ago? I don't know. Are we being respectful, class? Is everyone listening to each other, the one with the talking stick?

You—[*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Altemeyer: —know, another hallmark of a right-wing authoritarian is they have absolutely no problem being bullies, trying to shout down people who don't agree with them. When you sign up for this job, Madam Speaker, you got to do your research so you know who you're going up against.

I am under absolutely no illusions of who and what I'm up against.

Let's take the example of the rule of law. This Premier (Mr. Pallister), his ministers, his back-benchers, have had no problem challenging the federal government on the SNC-Lavalin case, in contrasting that with the Prime Minister's statement that the rule of law guides all in Canada. We are in agreement on this. We think there's a serious problem in Ottawa when an inside corporation is able to get inside favours, when undue pressure is put on a Cabinet minister to cut a deal, let someone off the hook, give them the inside track because they're a friend of the government, or the government's in favour of what they're doing, regardless to what the law says.

What's going on at Hollow Water First Nation right now, Madam Speaker? We have land being cleared on the traditional territory of Hollow Water First Nation, and this government has been completely unwilling and unable to provide any documentation showing that the corporation doing that work has permission to do it. That's the rule of law in Manitoba under a Conservative government. And they cannot see—[*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Altemeyer: —that what they accuse the feds of doing is exactly the same thing that they are doing here. It's not just a question of different priorities. I think the two biggest problems in the world are rising inequality, which is going to get worse under this government, not better, and the total environmental collapse that we are all imminently facing so long as governments like this remain in power.

Those are my own values. Those are my own beliefs. We can debate those, no problem. There's supposed to be a consistent application of the law and a consistent application of rules so that fair behaviour can happen. And it's not what's happening. And I just used the Hollow Water example as just one.

This Premier and his ministers continue to do a disservice to Manitobans all over the place. And it is their political right. They won an election, they have the right to ignore science, they have the right to ignore evidence, they have the right to ignore good advice.

But we, as Manitobans, need to make it absolutely clear that that is what they're doing. That is what they are doing every single day in here.

Let's just take climate change. I don't know, has anyone heard about that one lately? Anyone on that side of the government tracking that at all? Any Tory in this room? Any Tory in this room who wants to believe—[*interjection*]

* (16:30)

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Altemeyer: —that their children, that their children are being served by what their government is doing, is lying to themselves.

There is no way—[*interjection*]—right from the minister is trying to chirp at me right now. She doesn't want to hear it. Another hallmark of a right-wing authoritarian: let's shout him down because we don't want to hear it.

It's like the young indigenous woman who was shoved to the ground by the angry old man at the Trudeau rally recently—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Madam Speaker: The honourable Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade, on a point of order.

Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Deputy Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, the member spoke about—used some particular words which I do not care to repeat, about—to the extent of mistruths.

I would just ask you—through you, to him, that he use parliamentary language when speaking in this Assembly.

Madam Speaker: And there have been some remarks that are being made. I'm not sure they're going to the full scope of being unparliamentary, but we're getting pretty close to some name-calling in different ways.

And I would just urge caution by all members that yelling across isn't going to achieve better democracy in Manitoba. I know people have a tendency to get under each other's skin, but I would urge—everybody has a chance here to stand at—in their turn and to be able to put comments on the record.

And I would urge that—a respectful environment, that this Chamber be held to a respectful environment at all times, in every way. So I would urge members to be very cautious, because sometimes some of the things we're saying maybe doesn't grab us right away but it comes pretty close to some name-calling, or labelling certain groups in certain ways.

And it really does not, you know, reflect a good democratic debate in here by trying to undermine somebody else by denigrating them in certain ways, by putting labels on somebody else. And I think we need to stick very clearly to what the discussion should be today.

And I urge everybody, because I'm very close to starting to identify people's names for not listening. I have, many times in the last few days, given people a free ride because we are at the beginning of our session. I know we're coming in here rusty, but I'm coming very close to starting to identify those names of people who sit there and heckle, and their heckling is heard very, very loudly.

So I would compliment those that have reined in their heckling, but there are others that have not, so if I could please ask for everybody's co-operation and caution in language in this House.

* * *

Mr. Altemeyer: Thank you much, Madam Speaker. I thank you, again, for keeping track of decorum in the House. As I said, when multiple of my political

opponents are yelling over themselves to try and interrupt me, I have no idea what they're saying, so I leave it your good hands to steer us a clear path forward.

I believe I was starting to mention climate change before the minister involved and others tried to silence me, and I'm sure they're pretty embarrassed by their record on climate change, as well they should be. And this, again, starts right at the top.

Let's remember, this is a Premier (Mr. Pallister) who waltzed in here and said, oh, yes, carbon taxing—carbon pricing, we're going to do that. We believe in it. He's got quotes right in the sham of a green plan, in his opening statement, attesting to that, and then later on is like, well, no, not really, not so much in support of putting a price on pollution.

Then he was back on with it, okay, for a little while, if it meant that it might reduce the risk he would lose some federal money. But then he killed it altogether, and then after that, came back and said, well, maybe, you know, if they're willing to put that money back on the table, maybe we'll talk about it.

Nobody knows what the guy's actually talking about. No one knows what the minister's actually talking about.

I know what the scientists are talking about, because the United Nations scientists, under the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change have made it abundantly clear that if the world does not cut its emissions in half in 11 years and become carbon-neutral in 30 years, my kids, her kids, his kids, everyone's kids and grandkids, they don't have a future on this planet. They simply do not have a sustainable future to live on.

And the pages in this room, as the youngest ones in the audience, they're going to be living—their generation are going to be living with our decisions way longer than any of the rest of us. That generation is the one we need to keep in mind, and this government has made Manitoba's climate emissions—absolutely, they make no impact whatsoever on them. Like, what has this government done? I've raised the question. I gave the minister, you know, the old cantaloupe, overripe cantaloupe softball question in question period one day. I said, what have you done? Name one thing that your government's done to actually reduce carbon emissions in Manitoba. What did she say? She didn't have one. They didn't have an answer to that.

But they came back 48 hours later and said, wait, wait, we found something. We found something. We're going to reduce the government fleet by a couple hundred vehicles. Here's the question: Where are those vehicles going to end up? Are they going to be mothballed? Are they going to be scrapped? Are they going to be taken off the road? No, they're just going to go back to the company they lease them from. They're still going to be on the roads in Manitoba. They're still going to be emitting pollution.

She hasn't changed anything related to the electrification of transportation. They've made transit worse. They've cut funding to every single public transit service in Manitoba, from the North in Thompson right down to the inner city of Winnipeg. What happens when you cut transit? Well, let's see. The local governments can't afford to keep operating as many buses. They can't afford to keep providing as many routes. They have to increase fares.

Even to a so-called market-conscious Conservative who thinks that prices matter, apparently not, when it comes to climate change and when it comes to transit funding. You can cut that as much as you want, and nobody cares. In fact, they're fully in favour of it. That's going in the exact opposite direction.

Never mind the disaster that has happened with Power Smart. Never mind their unilateral cuts to the solar program that we had in place. This government's done absolutely nothing to reduce carbon emissions in Manitoba. And yet it's only the future of the world that hangs in the balance.

This government has not even committed to following the scientific advice yet from the United Nations. If that's what they are going to take on board, if that's what they are going to use, they're going to use science to craft their response, their response to the future generations that ask them, what did you do, what did you do, Minister, what did you do, Mr. Premier, what did you do, Tory backbencher when you knew what you needed to do and you didn't do it, and, in fact, you made it worse? How are you going to answer that question from your grandkids and from your own children when they ask you that?

I don't want to be in the room when that conversation happens, believe me, because it is going to get ugly. That is going to be a question that each family is going to have to have and the deniers and

the delayers are going to have their day of atonement.

I hope that day doesn't come because I hope very much, and I very much believe, the public in Manitoba will realize that addressing climate change means our society will improve. It means we can create more jobs than we would lose. We can transition to that green economy and save people money in the process as we do it. We can make sure that Manitoba Hydro is earning more money at no additional cost, using the power that it already has to offset fossil fuel use and create more jobs and save people money right here in Manitoba.

This government has no vision, no vision whatsoever other than doing what Conservatives always do: they come to public office, they cut public services, they sell off public assets and they call themselves great fiscal managers.

This government is using massive increases in federal supports, federal payments, payments that they have long railed against: oh, we're a have-not province; oh, isn't it terrible that we have to take money from Ottawa. Well, they're taking the money from Ottawa, they're cutting funding to education, they're cutting funding to municipalities, and they're rolling that up into a tax cut, which is just going to end up prolonging the inaction of all the other issues that need to be addressed. When you prevent a problem in advance, when you address something seriously up front, you will save money. A Conservative should understand that and yet they don't.

When you invest in child care—just look at the experience in Quebec. The government of Quebec made money on child care. How'd they do it? They spent hundreds and hundreds of millions more dollars providing universal child care across their province.

* (16:40)

How on earth does that mean—[interjection]—how on earth—[interjection]—how on earth could that actually make them money? Because Quebec now has the highest participation in their workforce of women of any province in the country. They have dramatically improved income levels because people have managed—often women who are at home raising children—when you have universal child care available—well, lo and behold, people—not always women but often women—they can go get training.

They can go into a workforce. They will end up making more money.

Quebec actually made more money by investing in the universal child care program than they ended up spending. You don't believe it? Go ask them yourselves.

But, no, no, this government's perfectly content to allow the waiting list for children needing child care in Manitoba to reach 18,000 children. Eighteen thousand children. And yet Conservatives lacking any interest or knowledge or inclination to enhance the public good—their response is to do next to nothing. Next to nothing, Madam Speaker.

And on health care, my goodness, I've mentioned crystal meth and the government's complete inaction there. How much sense do you think that it makes to shut down all of the emergency rooms except the largest ones in the inner city in Winnipeg? The Misericordia Urgent Care Centre's gone. Lo and behold, it was supposed to be replaced by something else—I'd encourage anyone here walk on over, take a look. What's that space being used for? Nothing. It's got drywall over it. There's no inclinations. There's going to be no IV clinic there.

The other facilities that were available for folks—I've used them myself—to go there, the QuickCare clinic right across from The Forks—oh, that's gone. So where do you think people living in Wolseley, West Broadway, Spence, St. Matthews, Daniel Mac, Point Douglas, where do they all get to go now? Oh, we get to go to the ER in Health Sciences. Oh, we get to go to the ER in St. Boniface. And what's the experience of the ERs in Health Sciences and St. Boniface? Oh, my goodness. My colleague from Tyndall Park—14 hours of experience and he would just as soon not have had to live through.

This government is not to be believed on anything. Not a thing, Madam Speaker. It is one hundred per cent spin based on delusions, based on a mean-spirited approach to weakening the lives of Manitobans no matter where we live. And the only way things get better is through a different government other than a Conservative one.

Ms. Janice Morley-Lecomte (Seine River): It is with great pleasure that I stand before the House today to put a few words on record with respect to the 2019-2020 budget.

Manitobans are known to be resilient. The geographical location of Manitoba creates many

challenges for those people who call it home. I believe everyone can remember not too long ago the severe winter conditions we endured this winter. We are tough and are prepared to deal with anything that we have to face. This is the backbone of what makes Manitoba: We are prepared to face the storm and build from our strength a better community, province and future for our children and their children.

Our government has presented a budget that shows reduced deficits, increased spending to support departments, increased funding to front-line workers and a reduction in taxes individuals have to pay. All of this means our children have more money invested in their future and our economy is stronger because of fiscally responsible spending.

Madam Speaker, our budget supports all Manitobans. Families deserve to be in charge of where they spend their money and to whom or what they spend it on. Our government will give back to families the choices that they had taken away due to the burden of increased taxes under the NDP government.

Programs were reviewed, front-line workers were met with and listened to, town halls were held and Manitobans were encouraged to go to online websites to comment on the budget and changes within the government. You spoke and we listened—listened to the doctors, lawyers, police, child-care workers and many community members who work every day to ensure the health, welfare and safety of our Manitobans—that they were ensured safety.

Madam Speaker, as I highlight some of the many positive changes our government has implemented, I want to thank the people of Manitoba for taking the time to provide feedback on what matters to them.

Health care continues to be our No. 1 priority. Health spending is one of the largest areas in our budget which is dedicated to the well-being of all Manitobans. In the 2019-2020 budget, our government is committed to spending \$6.19 billion. This is an increase from the 2015-16 budget, which was \$5.65 billion.

Our government knows the future begins with our families and their well-being. Spending money on health ensures everyone can seek the medical attention they need within our province and not have to seek medical attention elsewhere.

Our government has kept its province—promise to lower ambulance fees. The investment in health care has seen a decrease in ambulance fees, to \$250.

The investment and then creation of additional primary care paramedics and an increase of \$2.4 million devoted to the renal replacement therapy, lowering ambulance fees, investing in primary care paramedics and purchasing 65 replacement ambulances will not only support paramedics in responding rapidly and effectively to medical emergencies, but with a more efficient and modern fleet of vehicles to ensure premium care.

Madam Speaker, renal therapy is a broad field, which encompasses dialysis, hemofiltration and hemodiafiltration. This includes the many ways of filtration of blood with or without machines. Manitoba has an increasing population which requires renal therapy. As our population ages and our lifestyles change, there has been an increased need for this treatment. As the needs for renal therapy increase, so does demand on our health-care system to provide these necessary services.

We are ensuring those who need medical attention are receiving it now and, by investing in technology, our government is offering individuals treatment that is more convenient, puts control of their health back in their hands and provides options for those who are unable to afford the frequent hospital visits.

Everyone knows someone who has been affected by addictions or mental health. Reserving \$20 million in funding allows the Province to sign on with the federal government. Money will be invested into programs to ensure better health care for families who are affected. The investment of money will enhance current and future programs. These programs include opening five Rapid Access to Addictions Medicine clinics, drugs for paramedics who are assisting individuals who have used meth and a new phone- and web-based counselling service for children and their families.

Supporting families and offering health-care options grows confidence and resources so families can feel comfortable knowing their loved ones have the best possible medical attention our health care can offer.

Our government continues to invest more in health care each year. Through additional funding and partnering with the federal government, our government is ensuring families have peace of mind with their health.

Madam Speaker, our government's budget is filled with good news. The commitment to support

families through ongoing investments is evident in the many departments in our government. The Department of Families continues to invest in programs to assist and support families. The budget highlights some of the areas that have received increased funding: Community Living and disability services, an increase in child-care spaces which, since April of 2016, had—was 1,656, and with our budget and an additional 1,600 new spaces, there should be close to 3,100 spots by March 2020. It's a huge increase to needs of families in our community.

Financial assistance is also provided to homeowners and an increase in funding for individuals on EIA who require dental, dentures, optometrists' work and some of the non-prescription drugs that were not covered.

Madam Speaker, investments in programming supports families by providing resources and financial opportunities which are key in the hand-up-not-handout approach.

*(16:50)

Families want to succeed. By investing in programming, our government offers the opportunity to Manitobans to become more invested in their future. This investment strengthens the economy, which helps grow our future.

Our government not only identifies but supports diversity within our province. Diversity strengthens and encourages networking within the many levels of social, financial and geographical communities Manitoba is home to.

Madam Speaker, for too long, under the NDP government, families had to attempt to do more with less. Families were broken. Children were placed in foster-care families under CFS care, away from their community, home and family members.

Our government puts children first. Children belong with their families. Families offer nurturing environments and security and provide the history and community connection children need to grow up in in order to be stable and healthy individuals. Our government recognizes the value of belonging.

This is why we believe CFS authorities and their mandated agencies know what is best for their children in their care. Government will provide block funding to these authorities and their agencies who will care for their children in need.

Communities are built on the foundation of safety, security and a vision for future growth. The

Department of Justice wants to ensure the foundation for community stays strong. The addition of 27 new RCMP officers and two administration staff will enhance the already strong police presence in our communities. The addition of police officers will increase the visual presence in communities while offering families peace of mind and protection.

Investing further money in programming targeted at drug-related criminal activity will help ease the stress on our police force. Manitobans will feel more secure knowing there are additional safety resources available to assist police in their daily work. The family court support program will assist individuals who have experienced domestic violence. Individuals who have been traumatized need to not be retraumatized or revictimized when they have to appear in court. The court program will help navigate the court system so an individual can get the legal support they need without undue stress.

Madam Speaker, many of the services people access are interwoven between the many government departments. Strengthening existing resources, removing redundancy and implementing new programs ensures that Manitobans are receiving the resources available. This interweaving of resources and supports strengthens and grows the safety network families have utilized for themselves. Families are then able to focus on building a strong future for themselves.

Our government has kept its promise to put money back in the pockets of Manitobans. The deficit has continually been reduced each year our government has been in power. In 2018, Manitoba's deficit was reduced by \$225 million—[interjection] Yes, a lot of loonies. This brings the total deficit reduction to \$500 million since our government has been elected in 2016.

Families now have more money to spend because the basic personal allowance for low-income earners has been indexed. What does this mean to Manitobans? It means that in 2019 an additional 3,810 Manitobans have been removed from the tax roll.

Further, this equals an additional annual saving for our government. We are a government for families and for their success. Lowering taxes helps those who most need financial support. Money is put back in their pocket while offering them a hand up.

Madam Speaker, our government keeps its promise. We ran on a campaign which stated we

would reduce the PST by 1 per cent. On July 1st of 2019, this year, the PST—

An Honourable Member: That soon.

Ms. Morley-Lecomte: —yes, that soon—will be reduced by 1 per cent in Manitoba. This means Manitobans will now pay 7 per cent, not 8 per cent, on PST on items and services they purchase. This 1 per cent savings in taxation means Manitobans will save more than \$300 million on an annualized basis. This represents the largest tax cut in Manitoba's history. Further, this puts Manitoba as the third lowest provincial sales tax in Canada and the lowest east of Saskatchewan.

It has been previously mentioned but needs repeating: the savings individuals will see is about \$180 per person per year, or \$500 for a family of four. This is a lot of money that a person or family can save and have to spend on personal items: purchases people decide for themselves, not a tax they have to pay.

Additionally, Manitoba will see an increase in our competitive advantage with respect to small businesses and businesses in the 'construction' and manufacturing sector. Imagine saving \$100,000 on a \$10-million investment. This is great news.

Our government is reducing the deficit and reducing the taxes Manitobans pay. It has been years since a tax reduction has been a part of Manitoba's budget. Under the NDP government, there were 15 taxes raised in 14 years.

The NDP raised the fuel tax by 18 per cent, the PST to 8 per cent and expanded the base to which the PST was charged. This base included home insurance, insurance families purchase so they and their loved ones are safe.

Hair cuts were also included, and as a woman, I can state that the cost of a haircut is more for me than my male colleagues. I could also say that this expansion of PST was more of an attack on me than my male colleagues. This does not present as friendly, nor as a tax equally charged to all Manitobans.

Madam Speaker, our government has kept its promise to lower taxes; put more money back in the pockets of individuals; expanded and enhanced services, programming and resources; sought out and listened to front-line workers voice opinions; and removed redundancy in our legislation.

We have made it easy for Manitobans to access the services they need without the hassle. The evidence has proven, through the efficiency, transparency, and ability of our government to reverse Manitoba's poor credit rating.

We are a government that supports families, continues to invest in the future of our province and in a stronger tomorrow.

Thank you.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: Prior to proceeding with budget debate, we have some guests that just arrived in the gallery.

We have, seated in the public gallery, from Sister McNamara Boys and Girls Club–Youth Empowerment Program, 12 students under the direction of Amanda Clark, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Logan (Ms. Marcelino).

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

* * *

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): I'm happy to get up this afternoon and have a couple of minutes to begin my response to the government's budget.

Under my Status of Women portfolio, I wanted to first mention that this wasn't even brought up during the budget. The whole Status of Women department—not one word with respect to it in the budget. This, unfortunately, is not surprising. We have noticed a trend under this Pallister government, and this trend has made its way to social media.

I know this because I had several people forward it to me. It highlights the negative actions this government has taken towards the Birth Centre, to

the cuts to lactation consultants, the closure of the Mature Women's Centre, the delay to the Women's Hospital, the cuts to the midwifery program, the elimination of the birthing program, the cuts from the North Point Douglas Women's Centre, and, Madam Speaker, there's more.

This budget cut \$1.3 million from daycare services and \$25,000 from CancerCare's mobile breast-cancer screening services. All of these cuts are sending us back in time and discouraging women from pursuing their goals.

With respect to post-secondary education, this government continues to put up barriers. More than ever, we need an education, yet it's harder than ever to have access to post-secondary education, in large due to affordability. The reality is funding is frozen, and this is limiting the growth of our province immensely.

Madam Speaker, another huge gap in this budget is the fact that immigration was not brought up. This is really telling of the fact that this government does not understand the importance of immigration. Our economy wouldn't be what it is without immigrants, and immigrants are not being valued enough by this government.

In fact, this government continues to take advantage of immigrants by charging them an additional \$500 fee once approved under the Provincial Nominee Program, and people are still waiting—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member will have 18 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

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