

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

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-Second Legislature

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, November 18, 2022

The House met at 10 a.m.

Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk): It is my duty to inform the House that the Speaker is unavoidably absent. Therefore, in accordance with the statutes, I would ask the Deputy Speaker to please take the Chair.

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

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

Good morning, everybody. Please be seated.

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): Good morning, Mr. Deputy Speaker. With a leave request, I'm not trying to start a tradition of casual dress Fridays, but it's obviously a special day today where a number of members are wearing Blue Bomber jerseys in celebration of the Grey Cup this weekend.

I wonder if there's a leave to allow for those who are wearing Blue Bomber jerseys and jackets to have the option to remove their jackets.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is there leave to—for those wearing Blue Bomber jerseys and a jacket to have the option of not wearing the jacket? Is there leave for that? *[Agreed]*

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

**Bill 4—The Minimum Wage Adjustment Act, 2022
(Employment Standards Code Amended)**

Hon. Reg Helwer (Minister of Labour, Consumer Protection and Government Services): I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen), that Bill 4, The Minimum Wage Adjustment Act, 2022 (Employment Standards Code Amended), be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Helwer: I'm pleased to introduce bill 44, the minimum wage adjustment act. This bill will set the minimum wage at \$14.15 effective April 1st, 2023, the next step towards an approximately \$15 per hour minimum wage by October, 2023.

Thank you.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Committee reports—*[interjection]*—thank you. My error.

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

* * *

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

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm seeking leave of the House—I know we're sitting earlier this morning, so it changed some of the time frames. But I wonder if there is leave of the House to allow for the Minister of Education to deliver a ministerial statement on Bullying Awareness Week.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is there leave?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I hear a no. Leave has been denied.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Order. Order. Order.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Holiday Season

Ms. Janice Morley-Lecomte (Seine River): As snow falls, people prepare for the next few months ahead. Hockey and winter sports activities begin to fill the calendar. Homes and businesses are decorated and lit up with lights and holiday decorations.

This time of year brings out the holiday spirit. People celebrate and embrace the festive season, which highlights the beauty of our city. Winnipeg's festive spirit has exceeded the limits of our city and Winnipeg has been referred to as the Christmas capital of Canada.

Families can walk or drive through their neighbourhood to view the many lit-up displays throughout our beautiful city. Many people have heard about Polar Bear, Nutcracker and Candy Cane Lane, which are some of the streets one can drive through to catch a glimpse of the holiday-themed cheer offered by residents in this neighbourhood.

Canad Inns Winter Wonderland and Assiniboia park Zoo Lights continue the celebration of the holidays with light displays that thrill and extract smiles and comments of awe from all who take in the beauty of the light displays.

St. Mary's Road has been a go-to favourite for those seeking out holiday light displays. In addition to the many holiday decorations, the many greenhouses which light the—which—sorry, which line the road, present the public with a light display and lit-up Christmas trees.

There are many homes that are decorated with festive lights and scenes. Ken's lights of hope on Aldgate is a work of art.

For more than eight years, the Gallant family has filled their front yard with a light show and animated, whimsical and twinkling Christmas decor in support of Make-A-Wish Foundation. To date, more than \$25,000 has been raised in support of this charity.

I am proud to live in a province known for its generosity and Christmas spirit. I want to take this opportunity to wish everyone and their families a merry Christmas and happy holidays.

Big Sky Studios

Mr. Diljeet Brar (Burrows): Today, I recognize Big Sky Studios, a new nine-acre, full-service motion production centre in north Winnipeg, and the film industry in Manitoba who make great things happen.

Big Sky Studios is a newly renovated facility. It is the biggest production studio in the province designed for film, television, multimedia projects and installations. The facility is 167,000 square feet and includes four large soundstages.

* (10:10)

Big Sky Studios managers Jocelyn Mitchell and Michael Thorn join us today, as well as executives from On Screen Manitoba, Manitoba Film and Music, National Screen Institute and the City of Winnipeg's Film and Special Events team, along with other guests in the gallery.

These are such important Manitoba organizations whose contributions over the years has led to the success of our Manitoba film industry.

I also recognize the impact of the Gimli Film Festival in showcasing our diverse narratives; ACTRA Manitoba in providing a wide pool of talents; IATSE 856 in harnessing motion picture technical support; as well as Inferno Pictures and Animiki See Digital Productions in providing high-class production services in Manitoba. Efforts of the Manitoba DGC in ensuring voices of thousands of on-screen creatives are duly represented as well cannot be overemphasized.

The Manitoba film industry has created several economic opportunities, which the representatives of Manitoba Hotel Association here in the gallery with us today can attest to.

Kudos to Big Sky Studios for taking initiative to invest in Manitoba's film industry for the future. I would like to include the names of guests present from Big Sky Studios and across the film industry to the public record. Please join me, welcome our respected guests in the gallery.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Obby Khan (Fort Whyte): Mr. Deputy Speaker, despite the challenges of the pandemic, Manitoba's film and TV industry remained strong. Manitoba was the first jurisdiction in the western world to return to film sets, and remained one of the safest. That is why last year, Manitoba had the most successful year with \$365 million in production volume; and with a new direct flight to LA from Winnipeg, that number will only continue to grow.

The direct flight was not only new development that contributed to this unprecedented growth. This was also due to the new studio space, Big Sky Studios, which opened this year on Inkster Boulevard.

The space currently includes two soundstages at 17,000 square feet and 12,800 square feet, renovated production offices, workshops, on-site equipment rentals and specialty areas for various film departments, all fully air-conditioned.

Located at 1771 Inkster Blvd., Big Sky Studios is 15 minutes from Winnipeg's international airport, 15 minutes from downtown and 10 minutes away from city limits—a convenient location with all of the services of a major urban centre, along with easy access to rural filming spaces.

Our government recently had the opportunity to travel to Los Angeles, California, and sat down with 15 studio heads at the Motion Picture Association of America. These were the top executives from all the big studios. They've all heard of Manitoba and look forward to coming here to film their next production.

Additionally, Manitoba's film and media tax credit, up to 65 per cent of Manitoba's labour or up to 38 per cent on eligible Manitoba expenditures, and a 10 per cent increase on the labour tax credit on the third film shot within a two-year period, is the most competitive tax credit in Canada. It is a significant incentive for producers and Big Sky Studios' ability to attract producers here to Manitoba.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is an industry that we really see an opportunity for, and Big Sky Studios—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Leave has been granted.

Mr. Khan: Deputy Speaker, this is an industry that we really see an opportunity for, and Big Sky Studios is projected to play a huge role in that. Our safe and smart return to set was admired in the film world, that additionally production have actually chosen—additional productions have actually chosen to come to Manitoba because they can be secure in the knowledge that we restarted production the right way and their cast and crew are safe.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Premier's Approach to Community Safety

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): The Premier's (Mrs. Stefanson) record on community safety has been an utter failure. When she was Justice Minister all she did was cut. She cut, to name but a few: the gang action task force, the Spotlight unit, restorative

justice programming, employment training programs for incarcerated citizens, the Elizabeth Fry Society.

There are consequences to cuts when you leave citizens vulnerable and desperate. And now, instead of supporting community and outreach, the Premier wants to continue taking a failed approach.

The Premier doesn't care about prevention or addressing the root causes of crime as evinced in her problematic Throne Speech, where she commits to, and I quote, increasing supports for front-line law enforcement officers through technology, specialized training and increased police presence, end quote.

Community-based experts know we must support children and families, feed children, invest in education, house citizens, ensure that citizens have access to mental health supports and health care.

We are not going to police ourselves out the present conditions that the Premier and every other failed Justice minister have created.

The PCs continue to advance an old, tired, conservative approach that demonizes citizens and divides communities by positioning it as either you're with us or against us.

Voters are smarter than that. Voters want equitable, innovative, restorative approaches.

Finally, let me be clear: sleeping in bus shelters or struggling with addictions or dealing with mental health issues does not make you—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Are there any other members' statements?

Habitat for Humanity Housing Project

Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Midland): On Wednesday November 9th, I had the honour to attend a key ceremony for a Habitat for Humanity housing project in Rosenort, Manitoba.

Mustaf, Magda and their children received the key to their new home. Previously, this family of seven had been living in a 600-square-foot rental apartment. Their new home has five bedrooms, two bathrooms and a spacious yard. Mustaf and Magda had completed the 500 hours of sweat equity long before taking possession of their home.

The community of Rosenort was also very involved in this project. K-Tec industries in Rosenort builds earthmoving scrapers. K-Tec and their suppliers built a scraper and auctioned off the machine,

donating the entire \$200,000 proceeds to Habitat for Humanity. This machine, complete with a Habitat for Humanity paint job, was bought by a dealer in Oklahoma and both the dealer and the young farmer purchaser attended the ceremony in Rosenort.

While the house project was happening, local groups provided meals for the workers. There is a long list of contributors to this housing project and I will include the list with this statement.

Home ownership is a key component to strengthening families and our communities. Our government has allocated \$3 million to Habitat for Humanity from the National Housing Strategy for families just like Mustaf and Magda's and to see them take possession of their new home was a very emotional event for everyone in attendance and for the community as a whole.

Thank you to Habitat for Humanity, K-Tec industries and their suppliers and the community of Rosenort for making this home a reality.

Congratulations to Mustaf, Magda and their family on becoming the proud owners of their new home. I know they will enjoy the benefits of home ownership.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Health-Care System Privatization of Services

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Just like Brian Pallister, this Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) wants to cut health care and privatize health-care services.

It's what they did with outpatient physiotherapy. When this government cut outpatient physiotherapy, it created a situation in Manitoba where people who get hip and knee surgeries now have to pay hundreds of dollars to receive what used to be a public health-care service. That's what we get when the PCs privatize health care: Manitobans paying more money out of pocket.

Not only is that wrong, because it's violating our fundamental Canadian value of universal, publicly accessible health care, but it couldn't come at a worse time amidst a cost-of-living crisis.

Will the Premier simply admit that she was wrong to privatize outpatient physiotherapy?

* (10:20)

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Deputy Premier): Again, the Leader of the Opposition is factually incorrect. Record investments in health care in Manitoba under this government's watch: more than \$1 billion more money invested in health care than the NDP governments ever did in their history.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this—over the last two years, over 12,000 Manitobans have received successful surgeries at private providers right here in Manitoba, over the last two years. That is something, apparently, the NDP would not allow.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, on a supplementary.

Mr. Kinew: Just like Brian Pallister, the Premier and this Cabinet want to privatize health care in Manitoba.

We've seen what happens with nurses working on the front lines at the bedside—or, maybe more accurately, what happens when they're not working at the bedside because of privatization ideology being pushed by the PCs.

When they took office, there were 400 more nurses than there are today. They are driving nurses away from the bedside. And because of the wrong decisions that they're making, it's private, for-profit nursing agencies that are rushing in to turn a profit.

In fact, this year, 40 million more dollars are going to private agency nurses. That's money that should be invested in improving working conditions for nurses in the public system, where you'd be able to get care when you need it.

Will the Premier just admit that privatizing health care is wrong?

Mr. Cullen: Sounds like the NDP are speaking out both sides of their mouths, because a few years ago, Gary Doer and his ideology said, you know, the Maples clinic was a good thing to have; the Western surgical clinic was a good thing to have—private clinics delivering health care for Manitobans right here. In fact, over the last eight months alone, 4,500 Manitobans reserved surgeries in private clinics in Manitoba.

Is the Leader of the Opposition saying that he would deny those 4,500 Manitobans the surgeries that they had?

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

Mr. Kinew: On that side of the House, they're for the big, for-profit companies. On this side of this House, we're for the patients of Manitoba.

Nowhere did we see this more clearly than when they privatized Lifeflight Air Ambulance and some of their big-pocketed friends rushed in to make a profit. What was the result? During the third wave of COVID-19, critically ill ICU patients were being transported by for-profit providers that didn't have the right equipment and whose staff didn't have the right training to be transporting ICU patients.

This is what you get with privatization: you push more nurses out of the public system, you get worse quality care for patients and you end up having to pay money to get services which used to be free.

Will the PCs just admit that this privatization approach is wrong and won't help Manitobans?

Mr. Cullen: Mr. Deputy Speaker, our government will stand up for Manitobans each and every day, and we will make sure that they get the services they need in a timely fashion.

Clearly—maybe the Leader of the Opposition thinks that he is now going to rescind the STARS contract that they entered into. Maybe this is doublespeak, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

We have lined up 13,000 more surgeries for Manitobans to be done here in private clinics over the next six months alone. Are the NDP going to deny those 13,000 Manitobans the surgeries that they deserve right here in Manitoba?

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

Personal-Care-Home Beds Government Election Target

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Here's why you can't trust the PCs on health care, and here's why you can't trust any of the numbers that they try and circulate in their press releases and their press conferences.

In 2016, during that provincial election, they ran on a platform that said they would add 1,200 personal-care-home beds in Manitoba. Now we go to the current situation. Here we stand in 2022. Did they add 1,200 beds? *[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: No. Did they add 1,000 beds? No. Did they add one bed? No.

In fact, we lost—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: —216 long-term-care beds since they took office.

Will the PCs just admit that they misled Manitobans and were always intent on cutting personal-care homes?

Hon. Audrey Gordon (Minister of Health): What we are intent on doing is ensuring that Manitobans, our seniors, have the care they need at the time that they need it, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

That is why our government is making investments in the public system; \$3.4 million to assist uncertified health-care aides with tuition supports, beginning with 120 students to expand staffing in personal-care homes, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

That is why our government has established the Ministry of Seniors and Long-Term Care, so that we can focus on the needs of seniors and ensure that a seniors strategy, a very comprehensive seniors strategy is put in place to assist seniors here in this province.

Will the members opposite support what our government is attempting to do for seniors?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The—*[interjection]* Order.

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

Mr. Kinew: The Minister of Health cannot deny that they broke the 1,200-bed promise and, in fact, cut beds by 216, because she knows it's true.

In 2021, there were 9,765 personal-care-home beds in Manitoba and now there are 9,549 personal-care-home beds in our province. You do the math: 216 fewer beds.

I will table the documents that this government has produced itself from their own Department of Health, which proves the case. Not only did they fail to add 1,200 personal-care-home beds, the year after the pandemic, in which we all agreed that we had to invest in long-term care, they, in fact, reduced the number of beds in our province by 216.

How do they justify cutting personal-care-home beds after everything we've seen seniors go through these past few years?

Ms. Gordon: The Seniors and Long-Term Care Department will be releasing a very comprehensive

seniors strategy that will look at the needs across the province in terms of personal-care-home beds.

But what the member opposite does not want Manitobans to know is about our record investments in capital infrastructure, Mr. Deputy Speaker: \$283 million to add 90 beds to the Portage la Prairie area, \$127 million to add 60 new beds in the new hospital in Neepawa, \$70 million to enhance and add 30 additional beds at Brandon Regional Health Centre, \$32 million to enhance and add 23 beds in Steinbach Bethesda hospital, \$64.4 million to enhance and add 24 beds at Boundary Trails.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the good news just keeps coming and coming.

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

Mr. Kinew: Who could believe anything the PCs say when they float these press releases and press conferences on health care? This is the case that undermines the entirety of their argument.

They came out in 2016 trying to seek election and they said they'd built 1,200 beds. Today, we prove that not only did they not build 1,200 beds, but they actually cut 216. And if you needed any further proof, the fact that the Minister of Health cannot deny this settles the case entirely.

We all saw how much seniors suffered during the COVID-19 pandemic. We all agreed as a society that we needed to fix long-term care.

In light of that experience, how does this government justify cutting 216 personal-care-home beds in our province?

Ms. Gordon: Mr. Deputy Speaker, our government is proud to be able to work with the various regional health authorities to identify their needs as it relates to personal-care-home beds.

* (10:30)

There are times when the health authorities have said, we want to change the types of beds that are being offered from the traditional personal-care-home beds to, sometimes, behavioural units. We want to be able to support their needs as it relates to their specific jurisdictions, and we're going to continue to work with the regional health authorities in the days and months to come.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to say to the Leader of the Opposition that the Minister of Seniors

and Long-Term Care (Mr. Johnston) will be bringing forward—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. *[interjection]* Order.

Ms. Gordon:—strategy, and they will be very pleased to see what we will be doing as it relates to personal-care-home beds.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I'm hearing chirping from opposition benches about the timing.

The rule is that when a question is asked to the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson), the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Kinew) and the Premier have one minute. That is—*[interjection]* Okay.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Okay, if members have issue, they can request clarity with clerks, who will relay to those members and to myself how those things work. I'll admit that is an honest mistake. I am told that that is 45. So that—we will move forward with that. But that is not something I'm aware of until this very moment.

We will proceed with oral questions.

Review of Provincial Parks Timeline for Release of Report

Ms. Lisa Naylor (Wolseley): Mr. Deputy Speaker, the PCs are selling off our parks piece by piece. We know that's been the agenda of the PCs, first under Brian Pallister, now for the Stefanson government.

After forcing Manitobans to send \$1 million to a Texas company just to see our parks, now the PCs are hiding a review of our parks that we know will lay the ground for privatization.

We know the minister has the report in his hands. Will the minister do the right thing and release it today?

Hon. Jeff Wharton (Minister of Environment, Climate and Parks): Certainly, we know the history and the record of the NDP when it comes to our parks, and the member knows that they cut everything in parks, except for the grass. We know that.

Our—we are getting things done by procuring a new parks reservation system that will replace the dysfunctional system that was under the NDP for 17 years.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are just getting done with ensuring our parks are there for Manitobans for generations to come.

Ms. Naylor: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the PCs have been sitting on this report for six months, and we do know why. It's because, just like Brian Pallister, the only agenda the Stefanson government has is for more privatization of our parks. But our parks should not be for sale or divestment or decommissioning or whatever word the PCs want to use.

Manitobans love our parks and know just how bad the PCs' plans for our parks are. We deserve to see this report.

Will the minister release it today?

Mr. Wharton: I certainly have the pleasure of representing the fine folks in Red River North, which includes St. Clements and East St. Paul, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We know that Grand Beach sits in that riding. We know under the NDP the disaster they left that park in.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are making investments across our parks to ensure, No. 1, that they are there for generations of Manitobans—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wharton: —to enjoy all 64 of our provincial parks.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Just before we proceed, I'm asking the clerks to stop clocks. We're going to add one minute in light of the recent exchange to make up for—*[interjection]*—yes, that previous misunderstanding.

Okay, we're going to go ahead with the honourable member for Wolseley (Ms. Naylor).

Ms. Naylor: For months, the PCs have been looking at divestment and decommissioning of our parks. That is their agenda. That is their words.

It's wrong. No matter how they try to spin it, it means selling off our beloved provincial parks piece by piece. The PCs should stop hiding this report from Manitobans.

Will the minister stop hiding and release his park privatization report today?

Mr. Wharton: It's a privilege to put the actual facts on the record when it comes to our parks, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Fact: we are getting things done—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wharton: —by partnering with Trails Manitoba to invest nearly \$1 million this year to support

recreational trails across our province, Mr. Deputy Speaker. *[interjection]*

Fact: we are getting things done by embarking on an ambitious, multi-year, strategic capital investment strategy in our publicly owned provincial parks, Mr. Deputy Speaker. *[interjection]*

Our parks are not for sale. They might be, under the NDP.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Order. Order, please.

I'm just going to call for a little decorum. Let's keep things moving smoothly as best we can.

Economic Review of Bipole III and Keeyask Request to Table Progress Report

Mr. Adrien Sala (St. James): In June of last year, the PCs interfered in Hydro once again and ordered them to implement all of the recommendations of the sham Wall report. That report means selling off Centra Gas and hiking up rates on homeowners. It's bad and it should be put in the trash, just like bill 64.

But the PCs told all Manitobans they would update them on the progress of implementing their terrible plans this fall.

Will the minister table the update on the implementation of the Wall commission today?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro): Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with the Grey Cup on Sunday, I feel like a football analogy is appropriate. That member has been fumbling the ball on bill 36 for months and months.

And I think the most important to note is the fact that he was advancing the ball one way for months in saying the PUB should not be interfered with, and then he got spun around and he started advancing the other way and saying now the NDP will interfere with the PUB.

One thing is consistent though. He fumbled it that way and he's fumbling again.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for St. James, on a supplementary question. *[interjection]* Order.

Mr. Sala: Yet again, this PC government says one thing and does another. It's just another broken promise from the PCs.

They told all Manitobans they would table a report on the implementation of the terrible recommendations from the Wall report this fall, but we've seen nothing and neither have Manitobans.

We know every Manitoban deserves to see the PCs agenda for privatization and rate hikes, so will the minister stop breaking his promises and table the report today?

Mr. Friesen: There was a flag on the play, and the member's offside again.

That member still knows that it continues to be fall, and only last week, we updated Manitobans to let them know that that report, of course, and the response to it, is coming.

But what that member clearly doesn't want is for Manitobans to have that response to that report, that report saying that NDP interference in Hydro cost billions of dollars of avoidable debt that now Manitobans are on the hook for. So no wonder the NDP does not want the expert report on Keeyask and bipole to come forward.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for St. James, on a final supplementary.

Mr. Sala: That's two times now the minister hasn't answered the question. I think it's clear he's got something to hide. *[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Sala: I've got a quote from the minister, from his government: A public formal response document that describes the actions that have been or will be taken in response to each of the ERBK recommendations will be tabled in the House in the fall of 2022. End quote. That's what the government said last year.

The fall sitting of this Legislature has now come and gone, but there's no transparency from this PC minister or anyone else on that side of the House.

Will the minister tell Manitobans why he thinks it's okay to mislead them about the terrible Wall report?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable Minister of Health—of Finance, sorry.

Mr. Friesen: The member's lost the coin toss once again. He won't take yes for an answer.

We've indicated that report and response is coming this fall and it is coming this fall.

* (10:40)

But let's be clear: the reason the NDP doesn't want to talk about that extra report and will try to shout me down every time is that we know that while they said that Manitobans wouldn't pay one cent for Keeyask and bipole, Manitobans now understand that the debt of Hydro has tripled, that billions of dollars were added to the debt, and it is Manitobans that are on the hook for it.

That is why our government is stabilizing Hydro, keeping rates low and giving the PUB a mandate that will prevent a debacle like that and the NDP in the future for all time.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Order.

Government benches, please. *[interjection]* And opposition benches also.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

The honourable member for Fort Garry has the floor.

Manitoba's Population Provincial Out-Migration

Mr. Mark Wasyliv (Fort Garry): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Manitoba has lost over 10,000 people to other provinces last year. That's the worst loss since 1989.

The PCs are not building a province that works for all Manitobans. There are just not the same opportunities for young people in this province, and as a result, they're voting with their feet. A generation of young people are leaving Manitoba.

Why isn't this PC government doing anything to address the loss of 10,000 people to other provinces?

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Economic Development, Investment and Trade): Well, actually, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we want to get Manitobans employed here. We're doing that.

We're investing millions of dollars in training, retraining and upscaling. We're working closely with our post-secondary institutions on developing new courses to make sure that Manitobans seize the opportunities that are here.

As of last month, our unemployment rate was 4.6 per cent, the third lowest unemployment rate in the country, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We've also—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Cullen: –last month alone, increased full-time employment by 9,900 jobs. That's 9,900 more Manitobans working today in Manitoba than there was even a month ago.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for Fort Garry, on a supplementary question.

Mr. Wasyliw: Mr. Deputy Speaker, 1989—that's how bad it's got. It has not been that bad in Manitoba since 1989. Thousands of jobs have been lost in the public service. Thousands more are being lost right now in northern Manitoba.

Brian Pallister did a lot of damage to our province and enabled by these members across the way. Nothing has changed, Mr. Deputy Speaker: 10,000 people left Manitoba for other provinces last year alone. That's the worst it's been in a generation.

Why is this government driving so many people out of Manitoba?

Mr. Cullen: In fact, last year Manitoba welcomed more than 16,000 newcomers from outside of Manitoba. That is a record.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know we have a lot of work to do. We do have job vacancies in Manitoba. We want to make sure that Manitobans seize the opportunities that are here. That's why we're investing millions of dollars in training and retraining. This year alone, 6 and a half million dollars supporting over 300 small businesses. That is training and upscaling over 3,000 Manitobans to fit the bill for the jobs that are here today.

These companies also contributed to the training to the tune of \$2.6 million. And also we're going to take in another—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable minister's time has expired.

The honourable member for Fort Garry, on a final supplementary.

Mr. Wasyliw: This Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) promised a different approach than the one they've actually delivered. So many talented people are leaving. Thousands of jobs are being lost in the North. Mr. Deputy Speaker, 10,000 people left Manitoba for opportunities in other provinces. It hasn't been this bad since 1989.

This government could have made different choices. They could have chosen not to cut health

care, not to cut education. They could have chosen to make life less expensive for Manitobans, but they didn't.

Will the minister change course and choose a different path?

Mr. Cullen: Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, again, the NDP are misleading Manitobans.

Record investments in health care, over \$1 billion more than the NDP ever did; record investments in education; record investments in social services.

We can do this because more Manitobans are working than ever before. In fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the labour force has increased month over month; 5,200 more Manitobans are working this month than they were last month. That's because of the policies this government has in place to get Manitobans to work, and we're working at that and Manitobans are working at it as well.

Progressive Conservative Party Cancellation of Events

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): Well, what we know to be true is that the Premier and her PC caucus can't face their own PC members.

First, the PC Party cancelled their annual general assembly, which violated their own constitution. Now they've abruptly cancelled their enchanted forest fundraising dinner without explanation, scheduled to tonight. It's clear, Deputy Premier, that the PC and her entire PC caucus are afraid to face their own members.

Can the Premier tell us why she's so scared to face her own PC members? *[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Order.

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Yes, I don't know about an enchanted forest, but I think that we should have a grassy knoll dinner and invite all of the members opposite, because they're living in the grassy knoll. There's some sort of conspiracy that they think is going on.

Clearly, this weekend there's a very, very important event going on that all Manitobans are going to be paying attention to, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Adam Bighill is going to be running on the field and disrupting the defence—or the offence for the Toronto Argonauts. We're going to see big Willie knocking down passes. We're going to see Collaros out on the field.

And I know the members opposite, despite what they're wearing now, are probably going to be cheering for the Toronto Argonauts, because they always cheer for the wrong side, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for St. Johns, on a follow-up.

Ms. Fontaine: Does anybody, actually, on that side, even understand how the game of football is—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Ms. Fontaine: The PCs—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Ms. Fontaine: —cancelled their annual general meeting—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. *[interjection]* Order. *[interjection]*

Rein yourselves in.

Ms. Fontaine: The PCs cancelled their annual general meeting, violating their party's own constitution. Then it was their enchanted forest fundraiser dinner.

Deputy Speaker, given how unpopular this Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) and her PC caucus is, it's likely that the ticket sales were very, very low. But one thing is certain, it's clear that the PCs are scared to face their own members.

And why wouldn't they be, Deputy Speaker? This PC caucus has shown time and time again it's not capable of running a province.

Why is the Premier so afraid to face her own party members?

Mr. Goertzen: Yes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I remember a time when you couldn't walk into the NDP caucus room without going through a body scan and having a metal detector because there was so much violence that was happening on the—in the caucus room of the NDP.

This weekend is a very, very important weekend for all Winnipeggers and Manitobans. We're going to see the Blue Bombers take the field on another Grey Cup. We're going to see us celebrate another Grey Cup win. And just like the PC government next year, we're going to see the Blue Bombers this year go back to back to back, Jack.

And that's the facts, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

* (10:50)

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

Ms. Fontaine: At this point, we know that the PCs are scared to face even their own shadows.

They've cancelled three straight annual general meetings, and now have abruptly cancelled their fundraising dinner. *[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Ms. Fontaine: Let's be clear: there's no good reason for the PCs to cancel their fundraising dinner. *[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Ms. Fontaine: The Grey Cup is on Sunday, and is a province away—also, go, Bombers, go. The only plausible explanation is the Premier is trying to avoid facing her own members and hearing—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Ms. Fontaine: —what they truly think about her dismal leadership and her failing, miserable government.

Can the Premier explain why she's avoiding her own party members?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Goertzen: Somewhere in the bowels of the NDP caucus, there's a paper that was called the solidarity pledge, Mr. Deputy Speaker, where the NDP caucus members actually had to sign on a paper to confirm that they supported their leader.

They may want to pull that out again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to see if they still have that support for their leader. They could ask the part-time MLA for Fort Garry whether or not he actually supports the leader. They could go around that caucus and see what kind of support they actually have.

I don't suppose there's much support there, actually. But I do know where there is support. There is support for our Blue Bombers, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We're going to be cheering them on. Some of us will be in Regina. Some of us will be in our home. Some of us will be in different places in Manitoba. We'll be in solidarity there.

They can fight on Monday. Today, we're all united as Manitobans cheering on the Blue Bombers, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**PC Party Candidate for Kirkfield Park
Concerns Regarding Peter Nygård Connection**

Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface): Yesterday, when I asked about Peter Nygård, the Minister of Justice suggested I move to China.

The PCs may not have read the class-action allegations against Peter Nygård—[interjection]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Lamont: —in which 57 Jane Does tell their stories of abuse, but I have, and it's—[interjection]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Lamont: —stunned me.

It also alleges that Nygård funnelled money to politicians in the Bahamas, and in a video leaked online called Nygård Takes Bahamas Back 2012, he boasted how he had won the election for the PLP party.

The senior executive in charge of government relations for Nygård, who is in that video and who appears on page 99 of the class-action lawsuit—which I table—is the PC Party candidate for Kirkfield Park, Kevin Klein.

When can Manitobans expect an explanation of exactly what kind of work Kevin Klein did for Peter Nygård, and why the PCs have no problem with it?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Well, I don't know if I suggested that he should move to China. I would miss the member for St. Boniface if he left Manitoba.

I may have suggested that there are countries like China and like North Korea that have justice departments that direct—politically—prosecutions. So if that is the kind of system of justice that he likes, then he could move to China and support that system of justice.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for St. Boniface, on a supplementary question.

Mr. Lamont: According to the CBC article I table, written by the Premier's (Mrs. Stefanson) current press secretary, quote, Klein worked for Nygård during two period—different periods: four weeks in 2012 and just under four months in 2014; his work in communications and in a government relations role for a biotech company partially owned by Nygård. My role at the time was as senior executive for government relations, Klein said.

I table documents showing that Nygård paid Bahamian *[phonetic]* and PLP MP Shane Gibson \$94,000 prior to the general election in 2012 and into 2013. Gibson's brother, as well as many police officers, were also on Nygård's payroll, speaking of people of justice systems. And the stem-cell company in question was at the centre of the controversy.

Brian Pallister hired a private investigator to dig up dirt on the NDP.

Did anyone think—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member's time has expired.

Mr. Goertzen: There wasn't actually a question there, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I don't imagine he could figure out how to pose one on that ramble.

The member opposite used to work for Frank Magazine, a satire magazine from Ottawa that had a lot of his own sort of challenges. Does he want to defend everything that he helped to publish in Frank Magazine?

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Order. Order.

Government benches, cool it.

Mr. Lamont: I wrote about—thank you. I wrote about Peter Nygård for Frank Magazine.

The class-action lawsuit in New York that details the allegations of horrific, violent crimes by Peter Nygård states that, in the months leading up to the general election of May 2012, many politicians visited Nygård Cay to receive cash for their campaigns. Nygård spent \$5 million to get politicians he could control and turn a blind eye to what he did. And the stem-cell company that Nygård was proposing used stem cells from aborted fetuses for his anti-aging treatments. That was at the centre of the controversy.

And the Nygård executive representing that company was, again, the PC Party candidate for Kirkfield Park, Kevin Klein, the anti-crime candidate who worked for Peter Nygård who's currently facing 57 allegations in New York and charges in Toronto and Quebec and—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Goertzen: Once again, he didn't actually form a question. He may want to spend the weekend, after he watches the game, trying to form a coherent question with some logical, actual facts, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Early Learning and Child Care Agreement Creation of New Spaces in Rural Manitoba

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): Unlike the former government, our PC Party is dedicated to actually creating more child-care spaces for all Manitobans. That is why our government signed the historic \$1.2-billion Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement.

Can the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning tell the public how our PC government will actually implement quality, accessible child care across the province?

Hon. Wayne Ewasko (Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning): I'd like to thank my colleague, the MLA for Portage la Prairie, for that great, great question, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Earlier this week, alongside the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson), municipalities and the federal government, I had the honour—the honour of announcing 1,200 new child-care spaces in 17 locations across this great province of ours, Mr. Deputy Speaker. These first nine sites were specifically chosen in the rural and Indigenous communities that the NDP had abandoned over their 17 years of dark days, forcing families to drive miles and miles and miles for child care.

Also on top of that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we've released an expression of interest, which is out for eight additional sites, which I encourage all municipalities and Indigenous communities to apply for.

Thank you very much.

Agricultural Crown Land Leasing Reduction in Beef Herd Production

Mr. Diljeet Brar (Burrows): Mr. Deputy Speaker, the PCs' approach to the cattle industry has failed.

Manitoba accounted for 9 per cent of Canada's beef farms in 2021. That's down from 10.7 per cent in 2016. Producers are leaving the industry. Manitoban's beef herd is in decline.

Will the minister change course and take action to restore beef producers in Manitoba?

Hon. Derek Johnson (Minister of Agriculture): We're the government that's getting things done.

We have increased excess moisture insurance by 50 per cent. That's 50 per cent, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

An Honourable Member: How much?

Mr. Johnson: Fifty per cent, that's how much, yes.

The member needs to start consulting with producers across Manitoba and get some of his stories straight.

Mr. Brar: Mr. Deputy Speaker, moisture is not cows.

Beef farms are declining and the PCs' changes to Crown lands have made the situation worse. Beef producers are saying—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Brar: —that younger producers are being outbid under the new system. We need to be encouraging young producers to enter. Instead, this government is watching the number of beef farms decline.

Will the minister take action to restore beef producers in Manitoba?

Mr. Johnson: Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is a government that's taking action. We have increased the vet seat spaces by 33 per cent to service the beef producers in Manitoba; 33 per cent.

What did they do? What did that government do? Nothing, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Nothing.

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

Mr. Brar: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Bill Campbell of Keystone Agricultural Producers says, that, I quote, will essentially lost a generation of expertise in the livestock industry.

* (11:00)

Manitoba is falling behind in its share of beef farms across Manitoba. Their approach to Crown lands have left so many producers behind.

When will the minister take action and address the problems his government has created in the Crown land program?

Mr. Johnson: Our government is a listening government.

And if the NDP don't believe me, they—maybe they'll believe Brent Benson, president of the Manitoba Crown Land Leaseholders Association. In an article written by the Manitoba Co-operator about the rent reduction on ag Crown lands, Brent Benson says, and I quote: It appears that the minister is actually listening to producers, and we are hopeful that the consultation process will result in more positive changes to come.

I table that letter, and let me tell the member opposite, there's more positive changes to come.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The time for oral questions has expired.

The—petitions.

PETITIONS

Hearing Aids

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

A hearing aid is a battery-powered electronic device designed to improve an individual's ability to perceive sound. Worn in or behind a person's ear, they make sounds louder, helping people hear better when it's quiet and when it's noisy.

People who suffer hearing loss, whether due to aging, illness, employment or accident, not only lose the ability to communicate effectively with friends, family or colleagues, they also can experience unemployment, social isolation and struggles with mental health.

Hearing loss can also impact the safety of an individual with hearing loss, as it affects the ability to hear cars coming, safety alarms, call 911, et cetera.

A global commission on the state of the research for dementia care and prevention released an updated consensus report in July 2020, identifying 12 key risk factors for dementia and cognitive decline. The strongest risk factor that was indicated was hearing loss. It was calculated that up to 8 per cent of the total number of dementia cases could potentially be avoided with management of hearing loss.

Hearing aids are therefore essential to mental health and well-being of Manitobans, especially to those at significant risk of dementia, Alzheimer's, a disorder of the brain affecting cognition in the ever-growing senior population.

Audiologists are health-care professionals who help patients decide which kind of hearing aid will work best for them, based on the type of hearing loss, patient's age and ability to manage small devices, lifestyle and ability to afford.

The cost of hearing aids can be prohibitive to many Manitobans, depending on their income and circumstances. Hearing aids cost on average \$995 to

\$4,000 per ear, and many professionals say the hearing aids only work at their best for five years.

Manitoba residents under the age of 18 who require a hearing aid, as prescribed by an otolaryngologist or audiologist, will receive either an 80 per cent reimbursement from Manitoba Health of a fixed amount for an analog device, up to a maximum of \$500 per ear, or 80 per cent of a fixed amount for a digital or analog programmable device, up to a maximum of \$1,800. However, this reimbursement is not available to Manitobans who need the device who are over the age of 18, which will result in financial hardship for many young people entering the workforce, students and families. In addition, seniors, representing 14.3 per cent of Manitoba's population, are not eligible for reimbursement, despite being the group most likely in need of a hearing aid.

Most insurance companies only provide a minimal partial cost of a hearing aid, and many Manitobans, especially retired persons, old-age pensioners and other low-income earners, do not have access to health insurance plans.

The Province of Quebec's hearing devices program covers all costs related to hearing aids and assistive listening devices, including the purchase, repair and replacement.

Alberta offers subsidies to all seniors 65 and over and low-income adults, once every five years.

New Brunswick provides coverage for the purchase and maintenance not covered by other agencies or private health insurance plans, as well as assistance for those for whom the purchase would cause financial hardship.

Manitobans over age 18 are only eligible for support for hearing aids if they're receiving Employment and Income Assistance, and the reimbursement only provides a maximum of \$500 an ear.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to consider hearing loss as a medical treatment under Manitoba Health.

To urge the provincial government to provide income-based coverage for hearing aids to all who need them, as hearing has been proven to be essential to Manitobans' cognitive, mental and social health and well-being.

Signed by David Montgomery, Bonnie Okaluk and Alvin Semanel [*phonetic*] and many others.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: My apologies, my mic came off. Just going to pin it back on my Winnipeg Blue Bombers shirt here.

An Honourable Member: It's actually my shirt.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It's actually—actually, it's a jersey and actually, it's your son's.

Anyway, are there any other petitions? I don't believe I see any. So we're going to keep moving here. There are no grievances during—[*interjection*—yes, Throne Speech.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Mr. Deputy Speaker: So orders of the day, government House business.

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): Thank you, Mr. Jefferson. Could you please call for—sorry, Mr. Deputy Speaker, not—could you please call for debate the Throne Speech.

THRONE SPEECH (Third Day of Debate)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Okay. We will resume debate on the proposed motion of the honourable member for Borderland (Mr. Guenter), and the amendment thereto proposed by the leader of the—the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Kinew), standing in the name of the honourable member of—for St. James, who has 15 minutes remaining.

Mr. Adrien Sala (St. James): It's great to have a further opportunity here to comment on this Throne Speech presented by this government.

I want to talk a bit about, right now, about community safety, and this government's failure to present a credible or serious plan to respond to some of the challenges that we're facing right now in this province.

Before I do that, I also just want to just take a moment to comment on some of the comments yesterday from the Minister of Justice (Mr. Goertzen), who's in many ways responsible for so much of our community safety here in Manitoba, who spent, you know, most of his Throne Speech response yesterday making a lot of serious comments or accusations about folks on this side of the House not caring, or not being concerned about community safety.

I thought that was in particularly poor taste for someone who has such a high level of responsibility to cast those accusations. Also want to say that it was particularly rich to hear the Minister of Justice make those accusations, when it's he himself and his government that is responsible for creating the situation that we're in.

You know, this enough-is-enough business that we're hearing from them sounds ludicrous when we know that it's this government that is largely responsible for the community safety challenges that we're facing here in this province. So here we are now, in an election year, and we're seeing the PCs suggest that they have a concern about crime and community safety in Manitoba.

And that's after they've created the conditions for these—for increases in violent crime in Manitoba and other types of crime. And that's after years of gutting social programming and programming that helps to respond to those issues. And suddenly they care about the outcomes of their disinvestment from our communities.

Instead, of course, of talking about the actual reasons why we're seeing these big increases in violent crime, we're seeing them just spew more ideological rhetoric. They haven't proposed anything new other than more video cameras and more police.

Levels of violent crime in Manitoba are too high right now. We know that. The stats show that. But we also have too much property crime and other types of crime happening in Manitoba right now. And, you know, I hear a lot about that in St. James. Folks are seeing seemingly a spike in people breaking into their garages, stealing bikes, sort of disorganized crime. Crimes of inconvenience that create, you know, challenges for folks in our communities.

Those crimes are also going up in St. James. And people want to see action in response, and they want to know why this is happening and they want to see a government that is taking this issue seriously. But what we know and what's clear is that the ideological crime-and-punishment approach that we're seeing emphasized by the Tories, for the benefit of the media or whoever else they think they're speaking to with these comments, will not work. We know—studies have shown over and over again that that will not help to decrease crime.

* (11:10)

You know, that is not a serious response to improving community safety in Manitoba. In fact,

what it will do is it—that it will lead to more over-incarceration of low-income people in this province. That's what it will do.

And, frankly, we don't need more police in those neighbourhoods. We need more investment in those low-income neighbourhoods. We need more investment. We need to ensure that we invest in housing, in job training, in mental health supports, in addictions supports, in good quality programs that are designed by folks in our communities and led by folks in our communities.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there's a very well-established relationship between community disinvestment and rises in crime rates and social challenges. It's a very well-established relationship, and that's exactly what's happened here in Manitoba under this PC government.

If I had a chart, we could see very clearly PC disinvestment in social programs matching up very closely with an increase—a slow and steady increase with crime in Manitoba. And if you speak with Manitobans of an older generation—I have the privilege of speaking with a lot of older Manitobans who live in St. James—they'll tell you the same thing happened under the last PC government, when Gary Filmon cut 55 or so social programs that were playing a key role across Manitoba in helping to keep communities safe.

He cut those programs, and what happened? We saw, during that last PC government, the same thing happened: a spike in crime. So disinvestment from communities is the PC way and, unfortunately, the results of that disinvestment are very predictable.

We need to be investing in our communities. We need those job supports. We need mental health supports. We need good housing. And we need to fund grassroots, community-led programs—led by people from within our communities. Those are the investments we should be making instead of disinvesting from those programs, as this government has done.

If they did that, that would actually demonstrate a real desire to do something about the community safety challenges we're facing here in Manitoba right now. That would show Manitobans that they're serious, that they understand the true causes of crime and that they actually wanted to do something about it. But we know that's not going to happen because we know this government would prefer to continue taking an ideological approach.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in Manitoba, we had a really great program under the last NDP government. It was called Neighbourhoods Alive! And that was a phenomenal program that ensured that government dollars were spent in our communities in a way that reflected what our communities needed. It helped to ensure dollars went where they were needed.

That program had a significant impact in improving life in our communities, in making our communities safer. And this government cut that program. And what did they do with those dollars?

They shifted it to another program, Building Sustainable Communities, that forced applicants to come up with 50 per cent of the funding if they wanted to get access to those dollars.

And guess what that did? It ensured that only wealthier communities in this province could access those funds. And what it did is it ensured that the communities that needed those funds the most were not able to access them. And that had a significant impact in our communities. It privileged wealthier communities and ultimately led to a demise of a lot of the programming that we're feeling the impacts of right now.

More cameras, more police officers is not a serious or well-informed approach to improving community safety. We should be empowering community-led solutions and programs and helping our communities that are struggling to help themselves.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to shift now to talk a little bit about affordability. And we saw, of course, that this Throne Speech did not present anything new to help Manitobans to help them to deal with this affordability crisis. We saw them rehash old announcements and we saw them to—continue to double down on their proposals to disproportionately benefit the wealthiest people in Manitoba.

We saw a lot of recycled ideas, but one thing we certainly did not hear about in this Throne Speech was any reference to the out-of-control rent-increase issue being faced by folks in this province right now. AGI increases are one of the biggest drivers of our housing affordability crisis in this province.

The Free Press just reported last week that last year AGI requests averaged 17.5 percent. The average above-guideline rent-increase request last year was 17.5 percent. And we know that 100 percent of those requests are approved.

Process that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. What are the impacts of that if every single rent-increase request that's coming in is approved and the average request was 17.5 percent? Think about what that's doing to the cost of rental housing in this province if we allow that problem to continue and continue to grow as this government has done.

There is currently a huge imbalance in the way that we approach this issue and we have a huge imbalance in the power. And the scales are currently tipped too strongly in favour of property owners, and we need to shift that balance back to ensure that we have the interests of renters that are represented—better represented.

We know this government doesn't stand for the interests of working people in this province. We know that. Increases of 17.5 percent mean two to three hundred dollars more a month on the average one bedroom in this province. Thousands of units are seeing those types of increases every single year.

And if this government really cared about the challenges facing people in this province, they would know that that is not acceptable and it's not sustainable. It is not sustainable. We need to take action to put a stop to the out-of-control above-guideline rent-increase issue in Manitoba and I'd hoped we'd see a commitment to that in this Throne Speech, but we did not.

Two years ago, we identified this issue. We brought a solution into this House. We've identified that this problem is ongoing. This issue has been ongoing for a long time under this government. We proposed a solution in the form of a bill. They didn't want to pass it.

We're going to introduce it again in the hopes that they're listening, that they care about the challenges facing working families in this province, facing seniors in our rental accommodations, facing people on fixed incomes. And we're going to keep pushing that forward.

But we know that instead of taking that solution and running with it and fixing this issue, the government just wanted to pat themselves on the back for a rent freeze they imposed that had no teeth, that was ultimately just where we saw property owners going around that over and over again with this above-guideline rent-increase channel that allows them to continue raising rates in an unsustainable way.

This problem needs to be solved, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It was a huge shame that we didn't see it in

the Throne Speech. We're going to keep fighting to make sure that that problem gets fixed.

I want to use the last portion of my time here to talk a bit about one other huge failure of this government, and something we did not hear enough about in this Throne Speech, and that's concerns about child care. This Throne Speech failed to instill any confidence that this government has been listening to child-care experts or listening to families who are using our childcare system here in Manitoba.

It did not provide any evidence or hopefulness that the government will be using the significant funds that the federal government is transferring to this province to benefit Manitoban families. What we received instead are a bunch more empty promises, which we know this government likes to make and we know that we hear them make commitments all the time that just simply don't go fulfilled.

And one of the things I think that Manitobans wanted to see most clearly was that this government was actually going to finally commit to actual universal \$10-a-day care. That is something that Manitobans wanted to see and they wanted to see it because they're struggling with an affordability crisis right now. And if you're a Manitoban family with a kid or a couple kids or kids in child care, child care as—I know, as a father, is expensive.

We have the opportunity to take those federal funds and make universal \$10-a-day care, and this government is wasting that opportunity. Instead of making child care \$10 a day, instead of ensuring that it's affordable, we're seeing this government continuing with their plan to be the only jurisdiction in all of Canada to distribute those federal dollars, those affordability child-care dollars with a subsidy approach.

And the result has been a complete and total, unmitigated disaster. The minister would know that if he spoke with any families who are using child care or child-care directors, he would know that. One conversation with a child-care director would inform him of that issue.

* (11:20)

That they're listening that that—if they were listening to child-care centres, they'd know that that subsidy approach that they're forcing child-care centres to use is resulting in massive inequities in the way that those federal dollars are being distributed.

And that's because there's mass confusion on the part of families and child-care centres as to how those dollars are supposed to be disseminated. They do not know with clarity how those dollars are supposed to be disseminated because this government has created mass confusion with their rollout, and the impact is significant.

The effect is that families using different child-care centres are receiving very different levels of benefit. If you happen to be at one child-care centre where that director in that centre has managed to figure out how to navigate the outrageously complex approach that this government has asked them to use, you may be lucky to have received some of those federal child-care dollars. You may have saved thousands of dollars if you were lucky enough to be in that centre.

And you could simply be down in a child-care centre down the road—this is the reality—you can be in a child-care centre just down the road and have a very different experience, where that child-care centre may not have been able to navigate the approach that this government is forcing them to use and you may have missed out on thousands of dollars.

It's a complete gong show. It's created hugely unequal outcomes for families in the midst of an affordability crisis. This government should be ashamed. They had a chance to change course. We hoped we'd see that in the Throne Speech, but they didn't do it.

We know why they're using a subsidy approach, because it allows them to ensure that government dollars go to private child-care centres. If they reduce the daily maximum fees, that would disincentivize private child-care centres from establishing themselves.

We know that we should be moving to a universal \$10-a-day approach.

This government failed Manitobans. We need to help them with the affordability crisis that they're facing.

I'm grateful for this chance to speak to this Throne Speech.

Thank you.

Hon. Jon Reyes (Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Immigration): It's an honour to rise—*[interjection]*—thank you. It's an honour to rise today on behalf of my constituents in Waverley. I was pleased to be nominated on November 8th and

represent Waverley at its—as its next PC candidate for a 2023 general election.

Mr. Brad Michaleski, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

I also want to welcome and congratulate Her Honour Anita Neville, the first Jewish woman and third female Lieutenant Governor in Manitoba. I also want to thank Ms. Janice Filmon for serving seven years as a—the LG. I wish her well with her husband and former premier, Gary Filmon.

First of all, my constituency, I can't thank them enough. It's a great constituency. A lot of diverse newcomer and immigrant population, a growing number of small businesses and entrepreneurs, new and affordable housing. Two new schools, a K-to-eight and a nine-to-12 will be built, and we have an increased population in that quadrant of the city of Winnipeg.

Our government's Throne Speech is making life more affordable for families, for businesses, for students and anyone living in Waverley. Communities also are safer, more competitive and more inclusive as a result.

The Throne Speech is delivering on our commitment—government's commits to make constituencies like mine strong and vibrant, and I'm pleased of recent government funding into my constituency, Green Team, Building Sustainable Communities and the Arts, Culture and Sports in Community grants all help to make my constituency of Waverley a better place.

For example, \$5,000 to the Sri Lankan Association of Manitoba, 177 and a half thousand to the South Winnipeg Community Centre, 28 and a half thousand to the Winnipeg Chinese Senior Association, one hundred and twenty one point eight thousand to the Manitoba Islamic Association and \$75,000 to the South Pointe Parent Advisory Council.

Funding helps with community engagement with programming, with providing those access to events, but most of all, to make our communities more vibrant and inclusive. And I'm proud of my Waverley constituents, individuals such as Yan Jiang of the Winnipeg Chinese Senior Association; Marny Campbell, a community leader helping Ukrainian families; Jose Tomas, a Filipino trailblazer involved with basketball and youth sports. Many of them—and those are just a few names that I've mentioned—have contributed to our communities in my constituency and for the betterment of Manitobans.

Our government is putting more money in the pockets of hard-working Manitobans. Unlike the tax-and-spend NDP and the out of touch NDP-Liberal federal coalition, our government is lowering taxes and reducing the tax burden, have lowered the PST from 8 to 7 percent, giving back 50 per cent of the education property tax rebate next year to hard-working Manitobans, and reached a balanced budget in 2020 after many years of the NDP not being able to accomplish that feat. We are making life more 'affordle' for all Manitobans.

Growing the workforce is a priority, and Manitoba's supporting investments in adult, continuing and post-secondary education are on track. It is essential that we strengthen our collaboration with post-secondary institutions and businesses to identify skills and labour needs in response to the training, research and development needs of Manitoba businesses, including the manufacturing sector.

Our government is considering all post-secondary program proposals that will help address labour shortages and foster economic growth.

Government's also taking a close look at ensuring equitable funding across post-secondary institutions as our Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) has stated. Our government will work with colleges to refine the college growth proposal to address labour and skills shortages.

Earning micro-credentials is becoming increasingly important, and our colleges are adapting programs to serve students, employees and businesses. I've had many conversations with leaders of post-secondary institutions, and micro-credentials is becoming increasingly important, as we know.

A comprehensive review to inform the development of an adult education strategic plan is under way on how best to retain Manitobans to address high demand, well-paying trades in our province. Promoting skilled trades as a strong career path will help Manitoba build and support a skilled, diverse workforce.

Our government is investing in post-secondary and adult learning: over \$1 billion is invested in our Manitoba post-secondary institutions each year; more than \$217 million in student loans, grants and bursaries; over \$44.7 million to graduate an additional 400 new nursing seats; investing \$20.3 million to strengthen adult learning and literacy.

So we are taking action and listening to post-secondary institutions, something that the NDP did

not do in their 17 years of government. And we're still cleaning up the mess the NDP left us behind.

We are making life more affordable for post-secondary students. Manitoba has one of the lowest tuitions in Canada. Many students, including international students, are choosing to study and stay in Manitoba.

Manitoba is the home of hope. Immigration is a key component of our economy and our labour supply plan. Throughout our history as a province, Manitoba has been a destination for those fleeing conflicts around the world, seeking peace and the opportunity for a better life for their families.

Our province continues to welcome and support newcomers to our province. Last year we welcomed more than 16,000 newcomers to our province, and we had a record number of 6,275 nominations last year into Manitoba through our Provincial Nominee Program.

We will continue to work with the federal government to ask for more MPNP allocations so that more newcomers can come to friendly Manitoba.

And this year, in little over six months, the welcoming and generous spirit of Manitoba was exemplified by how we united as a community to welcome more than 12,000 people fleeing from the brutal and unjust war in Ukraine.

This is due to the leadership of our Premier and our government. We are the gold standard across Canada for welcoming refugees from Ukraine, across to the federal Minister of Immigration. This demonstrates once again that when we work together, we win together.

The final report of Manitoba's Immigration Advisory Council will be delivered soon with our recommendations to enhance the successful Provincial Nominee Program that we already have. But there's always an opportunity to improve and enhance programs and services, as I've stated in the past.

This group, the Immigration Advisory Council, 20 esteemed Manitobans, have been hard at work all year, meeting to discuss ways to improve and enhance immigration programs and services so that our communities remain strong and competitive. There were 14 immigration public meetings this summer and fall, and I met hundreds of Manitobans, including international students, recent newcomers and immigration service providers that shared with me their thoughts

on how to make Manitoba more welcoming, stronger and inclusive.

I want to remind everyone that it was a PC government back in 1998, under the steady leadership of MLA Bonnie Mitchelson, that created the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program. A generation later, our PC government is improving and passing the program, something the NDP government could not do in their 17 years.

* (11:30)

Our renewed Canada-Manitoba immigration agreement will ensure our province is able to attract potential immigrants based on provincial economic priorities, while collaborating on the settlement and integration of newcomers.

In closing, I am proud of the direction that the Speech from the Throne is heading. Our government is making life more affordable, making communities more safer and stronger and making Manitoba more competitive. We are taking action and listening to Manitobans.

I want to thank my family for their ongoing love and support, and to my constituents of Waverley, I thank you time and time again for the opportunity to serve you as best as I can each and every day.

And one more final point there: I just want to wish good luck to my friend, No. 4, Adam Bighill and the Winnipeg Blue Bombers. Hoping for a three-peat in Regina. Go Blue. Go Bombers, go.

Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Brad Michaleski): Before we continue, I would just like to remind the House, as Speaker, I have to hear the people that have the floor, and the background noise, the general conversation, is getting a little bit loud. So if you can just tone it down, that would be much appreciated.

Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface): You know, there was a lot of hype around this budget about bold ideas. But in so many ways, this is a stand-pat budget. It offers many of the same ideas and solutions that we've seen for 40 years that haven't really worked.

And it happens at a time of crisis—not just one crisis, but multiple crises. We have environmental crisis. We have a health-care crisis. We have a cost-of-living crisis. We have lots of crises all happening at once, and that requires something more than just sticking the word bold on the side of it and hoping for the best.

I do just want to say that I did—that I was lucky enough to attend the commemoration of the—Louis Riel's execution the other day and, you know, he was their first founder—he's the founder of Manitoba, one of the fathers of Confederation and he fought for things like making sure people could have the French rights and le mot français n'apparaît pas une seule fois dans le discours du trône du Manitoba.

Translation

The word French does not come up once in Manitoba's Throne Speech.

English

So the word French doesn't even appear once.

But we can look at what the government's priorities are when they say, it's not really—because I don't think it really is about making our—helping our community safer because it actually targets the vulnerable people who are homeless or who have mental health crises or an addiction and blames them for violent crime, which is dangerous and unfair nonsense.

It's not really about helping families make ends meet, because when you look at how much money is being spent that's going to the biggest property owners or the biggest earners in Manitoba, it's clear that we're giving much more to the people who already have something than the people who need it.

We're actually—this government is actually going out of its way to borrow money to make rich—the rich richer, while we're seeing people treading water and going under. It's a sad state of affairs.

And they put health care third. I mean, I think that speaks about this government's priorities. You know, they say they're strengthening health care and reducing surgical and diagnostic backlogs, but there's two things about this.

One is that the actual deadlines, when we're talking about rolling back and achieving objectives when it comes to surgical and diagnostic backlogs, well, those were already bad and getting worse for three days leading up to the—into the pandemic.

We put out a report in December of 2019 pointing out the CIHI statistics made it absolutely clear that the—that wait times for hip and knee replacements and cataracts were getting worse every single year for three years, from 2016 to 2019 as we led into the pandemic.

So to say that, you know, to declare a victory and say that they cleared the backlog when the backlog was already getting worse prior to the pandemic, it's no—it's not really a victory. When you set the bar so low you just put it on the floor, you can step over it, that's not really an accomplishment.

And helping make Manitoba more competitive—again, this is the same failed strategy to debase Manitoba and our labour in order to export profits from our province instead of building it up and making sure that we've got supports for locally owned independent business, who are going under right now. And I think that's an enormous concern that's completely ignored in this Throne Speech.

It's actually—when it comes to the economy, this is one of the—we're seeing local businesses, long—basically local institutions, go under. We've heard—seen three in the last week. Even if just—KUB—you know, KUB Bakery have gone under. I just heard that Kelekis is going under and Quest Musique.

Like, these are all long-standing, locally owned Winnipeg businesses and they've all—they're all going under in the last week. This is a huge red flag for where we're going and this government actually needs to be stepping up with more support for businesses.

And when it comes to, you know, protecting our environment, climate and parks, it's a government whose legacy in the environment really just—it matches the NDP's. The recent BITSA bill actually gives a fuel tax cut to peat harvesters, which means that we're subsidizing—fuelling climate change.

And there is a heading for advancing reconciliation in the Throne Speech but as you scroll down, there's actually not any content. So I don't know if that was just a typo, but it certainly is an unfortunate indication of where this government is heading.

You know, the world has changed and new ideas and old truths have been unearthed. And honestly, this government is still pursuing ideas that have been—some of which have been tried and failed for 40 years.

One of it would be the example of the funding they're—the funding—what is it, performance-based funding that they're holding over the heads of universities. This was tried in Tennessee in 1979 and if we're really talking about ideas that are new and modern and applicable to Manitoba, why are we looking to Tennessee in 1979?

I don't really think of that as being the best model because it was actually an atrocious plan, and most

states that adopted this—have adopted this measure abandoned it again because it doesn't work; because it's based on an assumption—a mistaken assumption—that universities actually aren't doing their job, when universities and—are actually doing a very good job of graduating and teaching people.

Part of the problem is the labour market. The labour market has changed and it is bad, but we also shouldn't be imposing—I don't know what government—it's—we—we're imposing more government control, more bureaucracy and more costs on a university rather than just letting them be free to do what they do best, which is teach people and to research. And that's what they should be focused on and not on—try and make the immediate needs or forcing people in—and denying people choice when it comes to the decisions they want to make around their own education.

And I have to say, you know, when it comes to economic development, this government is doing—it's more of the same because it's more top-down, trickle-down economics. In three years, in the last two years and the next, this government is going to borrow \$900 million in unfunded property tax cuts that go to people who own property. And the more property you own, the more money you'll get.

So that money is not being spent—or not necessarily being spent or reinvested in Manitoba and it's certainly not going to people who need it the most, who need—who are having trouble paying for their groceries.

And so we're borrowing money. We're borrowing money to give it to the—some of the largest companies and wealthiest shareholders, not just in Manitoba and not just in Canada, but in the world. Because some of the companies that are benefitting are owned by Bill Gates. Some of the companies are owned by Jeff Bezos. It doesn't make sense.

And we're cutting \$6,000 cheques to condo owners in Tuxedo and cheques for tens of thousands of dollars are just going to company headquarters out of the province.

So the idea that this is good for our economy just isn't true. It's just not true. And I'm—look, I am concerned that the government needs to do much more to help local businesses. We're hurting—hearing from small businesses that they—it's actually tougher now than there was at any point in the pandemic. So they're running out, and we need to be prepared to step up with innovative programs to make sure that they're supported.

And I do want to talk about health, especially because this government has been pursuing a very misleading narrative that Brian Pallister did about health-care funding. *[interjection]*

The Acting Speaker (Brad Michaleski): Order. *[interjection]* Order.

Again, I just want to remind the House that the background conversations are getting quite loud and it's difficult for me to hear this—to the person that has the floor. So I'd ask for your help on just bringing the level of conversation down.

Mr. Lamont: And when it comes to health-care funding, it is incredibly important that we talk about equity. It should be part of the national conversation, but it hasn't been. Because if we put equity back into how the health—federal government funds provincial health systems, instead of just funding based on head counts, we would actually see an immediate increase for nine out of 10 provinces—nine out of 10 provinces—because the money would be more efficiently allocated and more fairly allocated; because it would be funding based on people who are sick, the people who need care, and not just giving money to everybody whether they're sick or not.

* (11:40)

That's the difference. It's really—what we're calling for is the reversal of a Harper Conservative-era policy that funded provinces based on a strict per-capita model. It was slipped into the 2007 Budget, although it didn't take effect until 2014 and it had a very dramatic effect.

The Globe and Mail in 2013 wrote: Based on estimates for 2014-15, Alberta will receive \$954 million more into the new formula and every other province will lose money as follows: Ontario will lose \$335 million; BC—minus \$272 million; Quebec—minus \$196 million; Newfoundland—minus \$54 million; Manitoba—\$31 million; Saskatchewan—\$26 million; Nova Scotia—\$23 million; New Brunswick—\$18 million; and PEI—\$3 million.

Now this was voted for by a number—in fact this was voted for by the former premier, Brian Pallister. And we've been the only—we're the only party who's been calling to have equity brought back to how federal health funding works, because we should be considering the number of seniors, we should be considering the number of people with diabetes as well as distance into the cost of a health-care system.

If the federal government put equity back into their funding formula, nine out of 10 provinces, including Manitoba, would see a funding increase. And taxes would be the same. It wouldn't actually be any more money. We'd actually just be allocating it more efficiently and more fairly.

And we don't have a problem with strings being attached to health funding because what's happened before is that if it isn't actually specifically targeted to health, it won't go there. We have equalization funds that are a billion dollars more a year than they used to be, but they're not going to health care. They're not. We know they're not because otherwise health care would actually be getting more funding. And it's not that—that's not happening.

And we have to make the distinction between building buildings, which don't actually provide health care, and supporting people because nurses, doctors and everybody else who works in health care, those are the people who actually provide the care. A building on its own can't do that. So let's stop mixing infrastructure and health-care funding and pretending that infrastructure funding is health-care funding when it's not.

And, you know, I'll—when helping Manitoba—making Manitoba more competitive, which is—it's the same failed strategy to debase Manitoba and often our labour in order to export profits from our province instead of building up. I do not understand the idea that we always have to go somewhere else, that jobs exist somewhere else and we have to import them, that businesses exist somewhere else and we have to import them, that investments exist somewhere else and we have to import them.

Those are all things we can do ourselves. We can create jobs here, we can create businesses here, and we can have investment here. And when that happens, it ends up with a virtuous cycle and we end up actually being more independent, more and more self-reliant, and that's what we need more than anything.

When we see shattered supply chains, when we see inflation, when we see the difficulties people had buying things before and during the pandemic, it's because we have lost so much of our own self-reliance. We need a marshal plan to build our way out of this.

But instead we keep giving massive tax breaks and giveaways to the biggest companies in the world

while we're letting independent, locally owned businesses go broke. So it's the free market for small business and socialism for the top.

When it comes to protecting our environment, climate and parks, again this is a government—it's—it really has been a continuation of the NDP's lack of interest, but it also—the recent BITSA bill—or sorry, the recent BITSA bill, again, gave a fuel tax cut to peat harvesters, which actually accelerates climate change and there's no mention of Lake Winnipeg whatsoever in this—in the Throne Speech.

And when it comes to building stronger communities, again, this is overwhelmingly focused on—*[interjection]*

The Acting Speaker (Brad Michaleski): Order.

Mr. Lamont: —on bringing individuals from Manitoba just to fill labour, just to say, well, we're going to have people leaving, so we're going to bring some more folks in. We have to find ways to keep people here, to attract and retrain them. And if we're really pushing for international students, we need to be very clear about what we're asking new Canadians to do because Manitoba's seeing record losses of people leaving our province.

Again, when it comes to advancing reconciliation, there's nothing. We have said that there should have been an apology and a commitment to return the funds that were taken, that the Manitoba courts determined this government violated the rights of thousands and thousands of First Nations children in the care of CFS. Right now, this government's being sued and other governments is being sued by a billion dollars. They need to be settling this. We need to actually make this right.

And, you know, it's not bold. This is largely the same—unfortunately the same stale, discredited ideas in—I have to say, you know, when this government pretends, they talk about ideology, they pretend they don't have one.

Ideology is when you think you always have the answer no matter what the question. It means you don't have to think. And, quite frankly, we have two parties who've both been highly ideological. And in not—and this province has not been particularly well served of them.

So with that being said, I'll move on to the Throne Speech subamendment.

Mr. Andrew Mickelfield, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

I move, seconded by the member for Tyndall Park (Ms. Lamoureux),

THAT the motion be amended by adding after clause (bb) the following clauses:

- (cc) failed utterly to recognize the COVID pandemic is not yet over and that for many people, businesses and organizations, life and work now is harder than at any point during the pandemic; and
- (dd) failed to accept responsibility for its own role in creating a health-care crisis by cutting and freezing actual health spending and forcing the closure of clinics; and
- (ee) failed to commit to equity in 'health'—federal health-care funding for Canadian Health Transfers, which would see an immediate improvement in Manitoba's health funding if were calculated based on need, instead of the current, grossly unfair per capita formula; and
- (ff) failed to commit to being responsible and accountable for federal health-care funds for mental health, seniors, and instead demanded money from others without accountability; and
- (gg) failed to apologize to nurses for forcing them to endure impossible working conditions which include not ending mandatory overtime or providing them and other health-care workers coverage for burnout, as requested by the Manitoba Nurses Union, which is driving nurses from the system; and
- (hh) failed to maintain or strengthen hospital capacity which has resulted in a critical shortage of bed space and excessive wait times for patients that resulted in a bottleneck of patients waiting for medical care and surgeries; and
- (ii) failed to introduce a plan to increase the capacity of family and specialist physicians in Manitoba, where the province currently boasts the lowest and third lowest number in the country respectively; and
- (jj) failed to develop a comprehensive retention plan to ensure equitable health-care delivery in rural and northern communities; and

- (kk) failed to reinstate full and proper health-care coverage for international students while recognizing the disproportionate impact in inflation on living costs for students; and
- (ll) failed to present a comprehensive strategy to tackle diabetes in Manitoba; in particular, by not providing complete coverage for insulin pumps and CGMs for people of all ages or implementing strategies as proposed by Diabetes Canada's Diabetes 360 framework; and
- (mm) failed to launch awareness campaigns and education about diabetes prevention and complication issues, particularly among Indigenous communities and vulnerable populations; and
- (nn) failed to ensure equitable access to dialysis services in rural Manitoba; and
- (oo) failed to recognize hearing loss as a medical treatment under Manitoba Health and provide income-based coverage for hearing aids to all who need them, especially seniors age 65 and older; and
- (pp) failed to provide dental care for seniors who cannot pay for coverage without sacrificing basic needs; and
- (qq) failed to take action to create an independent, non-partisan seniors advocate to assist in creating policies and recommendations on issues that have been ignored for decades under previous governments; and
- (rr) failed to articulate a plan to increase Manitoba's economic self-reliance, choosing instead to focus on Manitoba as a branch-plant economy where Manitobans will toil for owners investors, with the result that all profits will be relocated outside the province; and
- (ss) failed to create a venture capital fund that is politically independent and accessible to all Manitobans; and
- (tt) failed utterly to pursue justice measures or take action against gangs that will be effective in reducing crime through prevention, ignoring proven and effective measures of the anti-gang interventions, youth justice committees and community intervention, such as providing individuals with positive alternatives in recreation and jobs, including safe spaces for youth; and
- (uu) failed to call inquiries into the construction of Winnipeg's police headquarters, despite multiple requests to do so and evidence of bribes and other illegal activities taking place; and
- (vv) failed to call a public inquiry into Peter Nygård, who's currently awaiting trial on multiple accounts of sexual assault, attacks on women and underage girls, including Indigenous women, in Manitoba and beyond; and
- (ww) failed to ensure that municipalities have adequate funding to fund community services and safe spaces to keep people out of trouble; and
- (xx) failed to prevent against provincial vulnerability to a dependence on federal transfers, instead of strengthening Manitoba's own source revenues to fund core programs and services; and
- (yy) failed to protect ratepayers by introducing measures to weaken and politically interfere with the Public Utilities Board, which will result in substantial, irresponsibly imposed hydro rate increases; and
- (zz) failed to apply education property tax rebates through a model of equity, whereas the current model has resulted in enormous cheques for wealth property owners while squeezing the incomes of the lowest income Manitobans; and
- (aaa) failed to realize the toll that the cost of living has taken on the most vulnerable populations and failing to address the basic needs of these Manitobans, particularly seniors, families and children, and people living with disabilities; and
- (bbb) failed to protect women and children fleeing domestic violence by cutting and freezing resources meant to support victims, including women's shelters, second stage housing, shelter crisis lines and specialized programs; and
- (ccc) failed to ensure that children who age out of care from CFS and those with learning disabilities, ADHD and autism are provided proper supports when and after they turn 18; and

- (ddd) failed to commit to returning \$338 million that was illegally seized by successive PC and NDP provincial governments from children belonging to First Nations in CFS from 2006 to 2019, and recognizing that doing so is an important step in the process of reconciliation by the provincial government; and
- (eee) failed to ensure that full and universal coverage is available for individuals accessing opioid agonist treatment, OAT, and failed to ensure that people without appropriate health-care coverage are able to access timely treatment for opioid addictions; and
- (fff) failed to adequately support the transition to electric vehicles in Manitoba by insufficiently investing to ensure widespread availability of electric charging stations in Manitoba and insufficiently supporting the purchase of electric vehicles; and
- (ggg) failed to mention the importance of preserving the quality of groundwater in southeastern Manitoba; and
- (hhh) failed to put forward a strategy to reduce the use of pesticides and herbicides in Manitoba; and
- * (11:50)
- (iii) failed to mention any effort to support the immigration of people from Afghanistan to Manitoba to help those whose lives are threatened in their country of origin and to help address skilled shortages in Manitoba; and
- (jjj) failed to put forward a plan in the Throne Speech to advance reconciliation.
- Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Okay, a couple things. There were some slight errors in the member's reading, so he has to go back to the—no, I'm just joking, he doesn't have to go back to the beginning.
- But, is there leave for the subamendment to be accepted—considered as printed, not as read? [*Agreed*]
- THAT the motion be amended by adding after clause (bb) the following clauses:*
- cc) *failed utterly to recognize that the Covid pandemic is not yet over and that for many people, businesses and organizations, life and work now is harder than at any point during the pandemic; and*
- dd) *failed to accept responsibility for its own role in creating a health care crisis by cutting and freezing actual health spending, and forcing the closure of clinics; and*
- ee) *failed to commit to equity in federal health care funding for Canadian Health Transfers, which would see an immediate improvement in Manitoba's health funding if it were calculated based on need, instead of on the current, grossly unfair per capita formula; and*
- ff) *failed to commit to being responsible and accountable for federal health care funds for mental health, seniors, and instead demanded money from others without accountability; and*
- gg) *failed to apologize to nurses for forcing them to endure impossible working conditions which include not ending mandatory overtime or providing them and other health care workers coverage for burnout, as requested by the Manitoba Nurses' Union, which is driving nurses from the system; and*
- hh) *failed to maintain or strengthen hospital capacity which has resulted in a critical shortage of bed space and excessive wait times for patients that resulted in a bottleneck of patients waiting for medical care and surgeries; and*
- ii) *failed to introduce a plan to increase the capacity of family and specialist physicians in Manitoba, where the province currently boasts the lowest and third lowest number in the country respectively; and*
- jj) *failed to develop a comprehensive retention plan to ensure equitable healthcare delivery in rural and northern communities; and*
- kk) *failed to reinstate full and proper healthcare coverage for international students while recognizing the disproportionate impact of inflation on living costs for students; and*
- ll) *failed to present a comprehensive strategy to tackle diabetes in Manitoba, in particular, by not providing complete coverage for insulin pumps and CGMs for people of all ages or implementing strategies as proposed by Diabetes Canada's Diabetes 360's Framework; and*

- mm) failed to launch awareness campaigns and education about diabetes prevention and complication issues, particularly among Indigenous communities and vulnerable populations; and*
- nn) failed to ensure equitable access to dialysis services in rural Manitoba; and*
- oo) failed to recognize hearing loss as a medical treatment under Manitoba Health and provide income-based coverage for hearing aids to all who need them, especially seniors age 65 and older; and*
- pp) failed to provide dental care for seniors who cannot pay for coverage without sacrificing basic needs; and*
- qq) failed to take action to create an independent, non-partisan Senior's Advocate to assist in creating policies and recommendations on issues that have been ignored for decades under previous governments; and*
- rr) failed to articulate a plan to increase Manitoba's economic self-reliance, choosing instead to focus on Manitoba as a "Branch Plant Economy" where Manitobans will toil for owners and investors, with the result that all profits will be located outside the province; and*
- ss) failed to create a venture capital fund that is politically independent and accessible to all Manitobans; and*
- tt) failed utterly to pursue justice measures or take action against gangs that will be effective in reducing crime through prevention, ignoring proven and effective measures of anti-gang interventions, youth justice committees, and community intervention such as providing individuals with positive alternatives in recreation and jobs, including safe spaces for youth; and*
- uu) failed to call inquiries into the construction of Winnipeg's Police Headquarters, despite multiple requests to do so and evidence of bribes and other illegal activities taking place; and*
- vv) failed to call a public inquiry into Peter Nygard, who is currently awaiting trial on multiple accounts of sexual assault, attacks on women and underage girls, including Indigenous women, in Manitoba and beyond; and*
- ww) failed to ensure that municipalities have adequate funding to fund community services and safe spaces to keep people out of trouble; and*
- xx) failed to protect against provincial vulnerability due to a dependence on federal transfers, instead of strengthening Manitoba's own source revenues to fund core programs and services; and*
- yy) failed to protect ratepayers by introducing measures to weaken and politically interfere with the Public Utilities Board which will result in substantial, irresponsibly imposed hydro rate increases; and*
- zz) failed to apply education property tax rebates through a model of equity, whereas the current model has resulted in enormous cheques for wealthy property owners, while squeezing the incomes of the lowest-income Manitobans; and*
- aaa) failed to recognize the toll that the cost of living has taken on the most vulnerable populations and failing to address the basic needs of these Manitobans, particularly seniors, families with children, and people living with disabilities; and*
- bbb) failed to protect women and children fleeing domestic violence by cutting and freezing resources meant to support victims, including women's shelters, Second Stage Housing, Shelter Crisis Lines, and specialized programs; and*
- ccc) failed to ensure that children who age out of care from CFS, and those with learning disabilities, ADHD, and autism are provided proper supports when and after they turn 18; and*
- ddd) failed to commit to returning \$338 million, that was illegally seized by successive PC and NDP Provincial Governments from children belonging to First Nations in CFS from 2006-2019, and recognizing that doing so is an important step in the process of reconciliation by the Provincial Government; and*
- eee) failed to ensure that full and universal coverage is available for individuals accessing Opioid Agonist Treatment (OAT), and failed to ensure that people without appropriate healthcare coverage are able to access timely treatment for opioid addictions; and*

- fff) failed to adequately support the transition to electric vehicles in Manitoba by insufficiently investing to ensure widespread availability of electric charging stations in Manitoba and insufficiently supporting the purchase of electric vehicles; and
- ggg) failed to mention the importance of preserving the quality of groundwater in south-eastern Manitoba; and
- hhh) failed to put forward a strategy to reduce the use of pesticides and herbicides in Manitoba; and
- iii) failed to mention any effort to support the immigration of people from Afghanistan to Manitoba to help those whose lives are threatened in their country of origin and to help address skilled shortages in Manitoba; and
- jjj) failed to put forward a plan in the Throne Speech to advance reconciliation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Okay.

So it has been moved by the honourable member for St. Boniface (Mr. Lamont), seconded by the honourable member for Tyndall Park (Ms. Lamoureux),

THAT—

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Dispense.

The motion is in order. Thank you.

The floor is open for debate. [*interjection*] Order.

Hon. Wayne Ewasko (Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning): It—I'm thankful for the opportunity this morning to get up and put a few words on the record in regards to this, again, another historic Throne Speech, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

That—right off the bat, though, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to thank the constituents of Lac du Bonnet for voting me in in the 2019 election, and I look forward to continuing to serve them as their PC candidate in the next election and as their MLA.

Also, I would like to thank, of course, my family and the support of them over, now—which has started my 12th year in this incredible, incredible position that I'm so honoured to have, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Since January of 2022, I was appointed education—the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning, and I'd like to also, at this time, thank the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) for her support and confidence in me and in working with our department to

make sure that the students of Manitoba have greater success as we continue to move forward. And not only the students, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's also the awareness and the visionary thinking to join early-childhood learning as well within the department, because we know that it is a synergy that definitely complements one another, where we've got the two departments now amalgamated.

And I'd like to do a bit of a shout-out to the entire department because of their hard work that they have done, especially over the last two and a half years, but since we formed government, I know that the Department of Education and the new Department of Education and Early Childhood Learning is putting in countless, countless hours to make—making sure that our students—that the students of Manitoba are having success, no matter where they live in this great province of ours or their cultural background or their personal experience.

I would like to talk about a couple topics in regards to the Throne Speech, of course, and—because that's what we're here debating. And, again, I would like to congratulate the new Lieutenant Governor on her appointment to the role, and I think she did an exceptional job bringing forward the throne—the 2022 Throne Speech, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And, again, I wish her all the best in her new position for the upcoming years that she serves in the role of Lieutenant Governor.

And at this time I would like to say thank you to Her Honour Janice Filmon for her years of service. She did a exemplary job in her position, making sure that she held that position with dignity and grace, and I know that she represented all Manitobans so very, very well, and I—she was always—took her role as non-partisan very, very import—very, very seriously and made sure that she was representing all Manitobans.

Mr. Dennis Smook, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

And I see that there's some members from the opposite side that are itching to get up to speak, I'm sure, positive things to the Throne Speech, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker.

So, a few things. So I know that not that long ago, a few minutes ago, the member—one of the opposition members stood up in his place and put—as usual, from the NDP side—misinformation on the record. It's unfortunate that this member would take a page out of his leader's self-serving talking points and stand up and try to make political hay over such an important issue such as early childhood education.

I know that that member—*[interjection]*—and they're asking me to name him, so I will. So, I mean, it's the MLA for St. James. And it's unfortunate that we see, in this Chamber, something that is starting to happen again, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker. And what is that, you may ask? That is those dark days of the NDP under Greg Selinger. And the NDP so-called team of 10 multiple teams on that side of the House, they're trying to distance themselves from Greg Selinger. But we know that within their caucus there's something brewing.

We know that just like what happened to Greg Selinger is starting to happen under this NDP so-called new teams. We know that the member for St. James (Mr. Sala), I do believe, and through those—because Manitoba is one sixteenth degree of separation, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, many people know and listen to many things that are going on throughout all party stripes. And I think we know that the member for St. James has his sight set on that leader chair of the NDP.

And so, much like when Greg Selinger put his arm around the leader of—the now-Leader of the NDP, the member for saint—for Fort Rouge put his arm around him and brought him in as the star candidate, little did Greg Selinger know that with the other arm, the Leader of the NDP, the now-Leader of the NDP, the member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Kinew), was actually bringing out the knife and right into the back, Mr. Deputy—Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, the same is starting to brew on that side.

And I do believe that the one that the member from Fort Rouge should watch out for is possibly the member for St. James because I see the same self-serving talking points, the misinformation, the non-factual information being put on the record today, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, in regards to child care, we just announced earlier this week, with the federal government and the municipalities, a partnership with our department to bring forward 1,200 new daycare spaces. These 1,200-plus seats—spaces are going to help 1,200 children.

* (12:00)

I know that the member from St. James and his multiple 10 teams over in the opposition side, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, want to—wanted to stay with the status quo, which was no child-care spaces, high rate for child-care fees and also a very long list—wait-list for child-care spaces.

We're taking a different approach. We're making child care far more affordable right now, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker. Come the springtime of 2023, we're going to have an average of \$10-a-day daycare for Manitobans.

That's three years—that's three years ahead of our agreement with the federal government. And on top of that, we've also promised, by '26-27, to bring in an additional 23,000 more daycare spaces.

So I know that the member opposite is against any type of advancement that will help families. I know that he has some form of plan written on the back of his own napkin, which he hasn't shared with his actual leader, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but we have a plan: 1,200 spaces, 17 new communities that had, in most cases, daycare deserts across the province.

Under the dark days of the NDP, there were no new spaces built. Matter of fact, they just increased those waiting lists, increased those waiting lists and made it more expensive for families to get the child care that they needed—not under our government. And you know what I contributed to, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker? It's collaboration and partnering within the sector, within our other levels of government.

That is something that the NDP never did. They never consulted. They were top-down—their top-down approach to not only other levels of government; they even tried to bully the federal government, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, when the NDP were in power. We know that Manitobans are far smarter than that, and they will—they do not want to go back to the dark days of the NDP.

When we talk about child-care wages—another thing that under 17 years of the dark days of the NDP, they never did. They never cared. The child-care sector would come to meetings with their then-minister that was responsible of child care, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, and they would say, you know what, we need to increase our wages because we need to retain, we need to recruit and we need to train up new individuals to get into the sector.

Did the NDP ever listen? No, they didn't. No, they didn't; they turned a blind ear, a deaf ear, a blind eye to all the requests of the sector. So, in July of 2022, the wage grid supplement is helping that sector retain qualified, experienced staff, and we're boosting the recruitment efforts, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker.

Another tidbit of misinformation that the member for St. James (Mr. Sala) put on the record, and other members on that side continue to repeat those self-serving talking points of their leader. Just recently, we announced a recruitment strategy which included some of those dollars that the member from St. James mentioned: \$5,000 per student, per year of post-secondary training, to upskill or to recruit brand-new ECEs in this great province of ours, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, \$5,000 per student.

Their—when that announcement happened, some of the students who were participating and were in the room at the time, they absolutely stood up and they clapped and they cheered. And there were even some tears because they know that we are here for not only the children's sake, but also to make sure that we value that sector, which is so important, so essential; to make sure that when we're moving forward with the Manitoba economy that that child-care sector is strong, is there to make sure that our parents, families who want to go to work, they have the child care that they need, they deserve and they can afford.

Another thing, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, when we talk about subsidies, I know that the member from St. James, he's against subsidies for some reason. I don't quite understand. They're doing—he's doing that flip-flop like that pickerel on the dock just like his leader does, which is interesting, because I think he's trying to distance himself from the leader, but he continues to use the same self-serving talking points of his leader.

I know, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, that the levels, in order for subsidies to occur, had been locked down, frozen under the NDP. Under the NDP there were 6,000 child-care spaces in the province of Manitoba that received some form of subsidy.

What have we done with the great partnerships of the sector and the federal government? We have increased the amount of subsidized spaces by 300 per cent. We've gone from 6,000—[interjection] Thank you. Thank you to my colleagues for applauding, and I know that even some on the NDP side were applauding as well. And I appreciate that because I know that they know that the member for St. James and his leader are absolutely incorrect when they talk about subsidies are a bad thing. We think, on this side of the House, that they're a good thing. We've increased the subsidized spaces from 6,000 to 18,000 subsidized spaces. That means that more people are receiving even more affordable child care than under the NDP ever saw.

And it's unfortunate that the member from St. James refuses to do any homework. He just comes in here and just puts misinformation on the record, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker. He should actually do his homework because the federal minister, Minister Gould, consistently and constantly applauds the efforts and the great work that Manitoba is doing on behalf of our families here in Manitoba, making sure that they've got affordable child care and making sure that we are moving forward to increase those spaces.

This is something that the NDP have never, ever done. They didn't want to do it. They turned their backs on families, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker. And I know it's good to hear that there are some of the members on the NDP side that are agreeing with me. And so I appreciate that coming from their bench, which is a little abnormal considering, you know, just today, I wanted, as the Education Minister, education and early childhood education minister, I wanted to bring forward a ministerial statement on bullying awareness, bullying prevention and Bullying Awareness Week this week, and it got denied.

The leave got denied by—I wasn't going to name, but I'm going to name—the member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine). The House leader of the NDP had denied it, unfortunately, which is too bad, but that's not really a surprise, because, again, we see, on that side of the House, on the NDP side of the House, they've got 10 different teams built within their small caucus. And if they think that they're coming over and they're measuring the drapes, I have some news for them, is that Manitobans are not going to forget the 17 years of inaction, of poor service on education, on early-childhood education over those 17 years of the dark days.

Manitobans are not going to forget that. And we're going to help them and continue to make sure that they do not forget because families cannot afford anything that the NDP are bringing forward. And, like I said, just like the Selinger government, it's starting to percolate with the member from Fort Rouge as Leader of the NDP. [interjection]

* (12:10)

So it's interesting, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, and it sounds like that, you know, the member from St. Johns wants to continue from her seat doing some bullying. So I do have the right, as an elected official, to use my time in this great Chamber of ours to speak and to put words on the record, and when she wants to have time, she will get an opportunity. So I don't want her taking up any more of my time.

But I do want to say that there are other great initiatives that we have brought forward as a government and that are definitely helping with families, definitely helping with staff and students in our education, but not only staff and students within the education world, but we're talking all across this great province.

We've increased the food and nutrition to the council of—the Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba. Under the NDP, nothing. Back in 2006, \$1.2 million for food and nutrition. We more than doubled it, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, to \$2.5 million. Under the NDP, nothing, nada, zilch. To take a word from their former minister, Ron Lemieux, nada, zilch [*inaudible*] and called municipalities howling coyotes.

Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, I have so much more good news to bring forward. I have so little time. I am going to now allow one of—some of my other colleagues to bring great words in regards to this great Throne Speech brought in by our great Premier, the member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson).

Thank you, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker.

An Honourable Member: Leave.

Mr. Ewasko: I'd like to ask leave for some more time, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): The honourable Minister of Education asked for leave for some more time.

What is the will of the House?

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Some Honourable Members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): No. Leave is denied.

Ms. Lisa Naylor (Wolseley): I am always grateful and humbled to speak on behalf of Wolseley constituents and all Manitobans in this Chamber, especially to respond to the government Throne Speech.

Manitobans know this is the same PC Party as it was under Brian Pallister. The Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) was Brian Pallister's Health minister and Deputy Premier. She implemented his cuts and caused this crisis in health care. Now she's trying to use the crisis to push through private health care.

Manitobans simply don't trust the PC government to deliver on their Throne Speech pledges, given their terrible record of deep cuts and broken promises.

Since taking office, the PCs have made deep cuts to health care, to education and to other services that Manitobans care about. They've cut supports for community organizations that deliver services to vulnerable Manitobans and keep our communities safe and they've made life more expensive for the average Manitoban by hiking hydro rates, raising taxes on renters, attacking workers, increasing the price of milk and cutting services that people rely on.

At the same time, they've made their rich friends richer by giving them millions of dollars in property tax rebates and lucrative government contracts.

This Throne Speech won't fix the PC's poor record and it doesn't deliver on the things that Manitobans care about. The Throne Speech fails to reverse the PC cuts to health care and education, fails to take strong action to fight climate change, fails to adequately invest in Manitoba's infrastructure, fails to address the cost-of-living crisis, fails to stop attacking Manitoba workers, fails to address the root causes of poverty and crime and fails to address the addictions crisis.

The Throne Speech leaves out many important things, such as committing to implement a reconciliation strategy, improvements for adult education, a hydro freeze, fails to increase the minimum wage to a living wage and commitments to stop cutting funding for education.

Mr. Andrew Micklefield, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

There's so many things lacking in the 2022 Throne Speech, but I'll try to keep my focus on the top priorities of Wolseley constituents today. And just a reminder that, in their first term, this government closed the urgent care at Misericordia hospital. This has caused so much devastation and strain in our community. This—in West Broadway, where almost every resident walks or uses public transit, these residents are now expected to go find urgent care more than 10 kilometres away.

When residents end up at a closer ER instead, it isn't necessarily the appropriate level of service, which just puts more strain on the system. And some just never get the medical care they need.

We've lost so many nurses and front-line health-care staff who are tired of being disrespected and overworked by the PC government. We have 2,400 vacant nursing positions, and we need 350 doctors—359 doctors just to meet the national per capita average.

The PC's plan, which no Manitobans trust them to deliver on, will fail hundreds of—sorry, will fall hundreds of positions short of filling vacancies and bringing us up to the national per capita average. The PCs failed to present a plan to fill widespread staff vacancies in home care so that seniors and vulnerable people don't have access to quality care.

Rather than supporting Manitoba's public health-care system, the PCs are now looking to send even more money to for-profit private health-care corporations. Private health care is not the solution we need to fix the mess the PCs created. The PCs have starved the public health-care system that Manitobans rely on.

Investments in K-to-12 education help prepare Manitobans' children for the future, and the PC government's cuts to education hurts Manitoba students. Regardless of the words that we heard from the member on the other side, who just spoke, over the last three years the Province's core operating funding for education was cut by \$36 million. FIPPA documents also showed a nearly \$3-million cut for teachers.

Since taking office, the Province's contribution to the costs of public education have plummeted. In 2016, the Province paid for 62.4 per cent of operating costs. In '21-22, that's fallen to 56.4 per cent. The Winnipeg School Division had to cut close to \$5 million to balance their budget after last year's cuts, including cuts to nutrition programs, therapy programs and all-day kindergarten.

At the same—on top of cutting education and refusing to hire more teachers or EAs, they wasted \$1.5 million on consultants and advertising to promote bill 64, a bill that failed because almost every Manitoban was against it.

Even most of the PCs knew it was a bad bill. The previous Education Minister was clapping wildly when the current Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) announced the elimination of bill 64.

To make matters worse, Premier Stevenson [*phonetic*]—Stefanson has launched an education funding model review, and just like everything else under this government, their reviews always lead to cuts. This review will cost taxpayers—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I'm obligated just to remind the member that you should—one should refer to members of this House by their title or constituency, not their last name.

Ms. Naylor: Thank you for that correction, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

To make matters worse, the Premier has launched an education funding model review, and just like everything else under this government, this—these reviews always lead to cuts. This review will cost taxpayers 344,000 jobs—sorry, \$344,000, and how many jobs will be lost? The Province is also spending a further \$250,000 on outside consultants to evaluate the K-to-12 curriculum.

And now we're going to talk a little bit about community safety. Manitobans do care about community safety, and most of us also care about each other and our neighbours. While the online chats in my community are full of complaints about bike thefts and garage break-ins, they are equally full of compassionate, trauma-informed concerns for folks who need a warm and safe place to sleep, for folks who are trading bike parts to sustain their addictions or to feed themselves and their families.

Our community wants to feel safe, but we actually want everyone to be safe. And that starts with addressing root causes of crime, not with an increase in surveillance cameras and more money going to police services. The PCs claim safety has become worse over the past few years, but let's be clear that this happened while they were in power. It all happened under their watch and because of their cuts. They cut services year after year that built safer communities. They cut Neighbourhoods Alive!, a program introduced by the NDP government in 2000 that created jobs and built capacity in Manitoba's poorest neighbourhoods.

The PCs cut the Manitoba Integrated Organized Crime Task Force and the Manitoba warrant task force in 2017. When the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) was Justice minister, she eliminated the Restorative Resolutions program that provided alternatives to incarceration for offenders.

* (12:20)

Since 2016, the PCs have cut 47 positions from Community Safety. Budget '21-22 cut funding to Community Safety by \$2.6 million. These are cuts for crime prevention, community correct—Family Resolution Service and more, and the new PC's new—and the PC's new initiatives are actually old initiatives. They announced funding for Brandon detention centre at a cost of \$8.9 million, yet this centre was first announced two years ago at a cost of \$4.4 million. The

PC's failure to deliver on their own promises are simply costing taxpayers more money.

Rather than cutting services that Manitobans rely on and putting forward band-aid solutions that don't solve the issue, the Manitoba NDP will tackle the root causes of crime such as poverty, addictions and homelessness. Innovative actions need to be taken to ensure that Manitobans feel safe in their communities at the same time that the root causes of crime are being addressed.

The PCs could've decided to invest in adult education, something else that helps people lift themselves out of poverty and to be able to train for skilled jobs. But this government repealed The Adult Literacy Act, which has only made outcomes worse. They could've taken actions to address the epidemic of missing and murdered women, girls and two-spirit people, and failed to—but they failed to do that, to offer any concrete supports to help prevent domestic violence and those fleeing domestic violence.

Manitobans want a government that will commit to addressing community safety by addressing homelessness. Yet the PCs have no plan to end homelessness and address housing issues. In fact, since they took office they made it harder for people to access affordable housing. From 2016 to 2021, the PCs sold off 1,700 social housing units while failing to build a single housing unit. The wait-list for social housing, as of February 2022, was 5,904.

They increased taxes on renters. In 2019-20, the PCs approved 100 per cent of above-guideline rent increase requests, resulting in some renters paying 30 to 50 per cent more, and many of these rent increases took place in my constituency. You did this to my constituents.

Unlike the PCs, the Manitoba NDP has a working plan to end chronic homelessness within two terms when we form government. This plan is being based off the Houston model, which uses a Housing First approach to help people get off the street and into homes of their own.

The Houston model also provides people with wraparound services after they're housed. In only 10 years Houston reduced homelessness by 63 per cent. We would follow the Houston model and make additional investments to repair and increase housing stock, invest in addictions and mental health wrap-around supports as well as building on programs like Rent Assist.

There is an addictions crisis in Manitoba, and that crisis is so visible in my community. Manitoba currently is on pace to break last year's horrible record of 407 fatal overdoses. And we know that most people dying are not actually dying from overdoses so much as they're using toxic drugs, and don't have access to drug testing. It's visible in my community how much property crime in fact is fuelled by those struggling with addictions and without access to food, housing or supports.

The PCs think more surveillance via cameras will address this. What? The P-'shees' should be doing everything they can to address the addictions crisis. Experts have repeatedly called for the PCs to treat the addictions crisis like the public health emergency that it is.

A group of over 80 front-line community organizations sent an open letter to all members of the PC caucus. They've suggested actions such as timely reporting on the overdoses in Manitoba, opening safe consumption sites and providing drug testing. Yet the PCs have failed to deliver on any of these evidence-based requests.

Here in the Legislature, the Minister for Mental Health demonstrated her profound lack of understanding about harm reduction by saying that treatment for those who wanted to get off drugs was the only form of harm reduction she was prepared to support. On social media she went further, saying that her government is providing every harm reduction service with the exception of, quote, providing drugs and encouraging their use.

It's clear the minister thinks harm reduction experts and the health-care providers who would staff harm reduction sites are nothing more than that guy who brought drugs to a party in high school and tried to convince the younger kids to give them a try.

We know the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) did some vast research on this issue, quoting the failure of California's safe consumption sites multiple times, before being informed that California has never had a safe consumption site.

It's clear that the Minister of Health has also—of Mental Health has also not done her homework. She visited downtown east-side Vancouver a week or two ago and took photos of folks living on the street without their permission. Then she told the media that jurisdictions that have formalized supervised consumption sites are not seeing reductions in drug use or overdose death.

This is, frankly, a bizarre conclusion, and begs the question, did the minister speak to anyone working in this sites? Did she actually tour a site, or just do her own self-directed tour without context or education?

I could have connected the minister with my friend, Ruth, who has cooked thousands of meals for women and children at the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre, or my cousin, Laura, who's been an addictions social worker on East Hastings for years.

She even could have asked for a meeting with Dr. Gabor Maté, who was visiting Winnipeg this week. Dr. Maté practiced family medicine in east Vancouver for 20 years, worked in harm reduction centres and was the staff physician at the Portland Hotel, a resident and resource centre on East Hastings, for a dozen years. An Order of Canada recipient, Dr. Maté is one of the country's leading experts on addiction, trauma and harm reduction. The minister would have likely learned something.

She also could have talked to the Vancouver Coastal Health, who would have told her that supervised consumption sites are beneficial for the community and for residents. They help prevent people from transmitting infectious diseases. They encourage marginalized people to access health-care services, including primary care and addiction treatment. They bring stability to the community by improving public order and reducing the number of injections taking place on the street.

She could have read the peer-reviewed research produced by Vancouver Coastal Health.

Frankly, the Minister of Mental Health could have done her poverty-objection photo tour here at home. There are plenty of tent communities throughout the city. She could visit one of dozens of shelters, a-bus shelters that act as home and unsupervised consumption site to many.

If she wanted to observe folks using injectable drugs sitting on the sidewalk, I invite her just to leave her comfortable neighbourhood and come downtown. She could walk a few blocks, right from this building into my constituency, where I have seen that pain up close.

When my neighbours are struggling in this way, I don't take their picture. I do offer them water. I point them to a service that offers a meal. I can provide a sharps container for safe discarding of needles, or

point them to services that will provide them with clean needles.

But what I cannot do without the help of this government is to make sure that constituents can test their drugs for safe supply. And I can't direct them to a safe place to use, where they will be protected from overdose. Where they can talk to a nurse or a social worker and begin to address their trauma and health-care needs even before they make a decision—if they ever do—to stop using drugs.

All of the PCs arguments against opening up a safe consumption site have been debunked by public health experts.

According to the Winnipeg Free Press reporter Tom Brodbeck on November 4, 2022: What's left is pure ideology. They twist themselves into pretzels to justify their position, sometimes using falsehood or misleading comments to confuse the issue. But in the end, they're simply ideologically opposed to safe consumption sites, even in the face of strong evidence that they work. That's dangerous, especially at a time when fatal overdoses are reaching record levels in Manitoba. Instead of taking a public health approach to a problem by applying proven strategies, the Tories are allowing ideological beliefs to guide decisions. *[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Ms. Naylor: That will cost lives.

Addictions aren't the only area in mental health that this government is failing. The Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth, Sherry Gott, was not impressed with this government's plan to address mental health and addictions, saying at a medium scrum two days ago: It's pretty disappointing. We didn't hear anything to expand services for children and youth in areas of mental health and addictions.

Every member of this House supported my bill, bill 228, the eating disorders awareness day act, and allowed it to pass last spring. Yet here we are a few months later and not a single word on increasing eating disorder prevention or treatment programs. Not a single word on supporting the mental health of children and youth.

In Canada, throughout the pandemic, hospitalizations and visits to emergency departments due to eating disorders have surged among young people in Canada. New data from the Canadian institute of health information shows that the pandemic—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The time being 12:30 p.m., this House—when the matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Wolseley (Ms. Naylor) will have three minutes remaining.

The time being 12:30 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until Monday at 1:30 in the afternoon.

Happy weekend. Go Blue.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, November 18, 2022

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