

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

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Speaker*

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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

Monday, November 21, 2022

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Deputy Clerk (Mr. Rick Yarish): 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 and 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 afternoon, everybody. Please be seated.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 204—The Drivers and Vehicles Amendment Act (Licence Plates for MMIWG2S Awareness)

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): I wish to present the following bill 204, the drivers and vehicles amendment—*[interjection]*—oh, sorry.

I move, seconded by the member from Keewatinook, that Bill 204, The Drivers and Vehicles Amendment Act, the plates for MMIWG2S awareness, now be read a first time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: If I may, I don't believe the member for Keewatinook (Mr. Bushie) is in there—

[interjection]—I'm sorry. Thank you—*[interjection]* Okay, then we're good to go.

It has been moved by the honourable member for Point Douglas, seconded by the honourable member for Keewatinook, that Bill 204, The Drivers and Vehicles Amendment Act (Licence Plates for MMIWG2S Awareness), be now read a first time.

Mrs. Smith: I move, seconded by the member from Keewatinook, that Bill 204, The Drivers and Vehicles Amendment Act (Licence Plates for MMIWG2S Awareness), now be read a first time.

It's clear that more needs to be done to protect Indigenous women, girls and two-spirited people here in Manitoba. This bill would allow for a specialty licence plate to be purchased that has a graphic of a red hand or a red dress, and the abbreviations MMIWG2S, meaning missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and two-spirit. This licence plate would help to raise awareness, educate and possibly bring someone forward with information that could bring someone's loved one home or possibly solve a case.

The money collected will benefit the children left behind of these women and girls and two-spirited people who have been murdered or have gone missing in Manitoba.

I look forward to the unanimous support of this House and showing the MMIWG2S families that we stand in solidarity with them here in this House.

Miigwech.

MLA Uzoma Asagwara (Union Station): I move, seconded by the MLA for St. Johns, that Bill 205—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: My apologies; that's my bad.

The previous motion is in order. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? Agreed—the first reading motion for Bill 204 is in order. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

Okay, we're good to go. Now we'll move on to the honourable member for Union Station. Thanks everyone for your graciousness here.

**Bill 205—The Restricting Mandatory
Overtime for Nurses Act
(Various Acts Amended)**

MLA Uzoma Asagwara (Union Station): I move, seconded by the member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine), that Bill 205, The Restricting Mandatory Overtime for Nurses Act (Various Acts Amended), be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

MLA Asagwara: I'm proud to present to the House Bill 205, The Restricting Mandatory Overtime for Nurses Act.

Prior to the pandemic, our health system struggled due to lack of capacity, exacerbated by the government's unwillingness to address nurse vacancies. Sadly, COVID-19 has only exposed and increased challenges where these gaps exist. Staffing vacancies have led to employers relying on mandating overtime to levels that put both the employee and patient safety at risk.

Bill 205 will end the practice of using mandatory overtime to fill vacancies and vacation, and allow nurses the right to refuse overtime and not be in breach of their duty of care.

Thank you.

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

The honourable member for—the honourable Leader for the Official Opposition.

Bill 206—The Louis Riel Act

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): I move, seconded by the member for Keewatinook (Mr. Bushie), that Bill 206, The Louis Riel Act; Loi sur Louis Riel, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Kinew: Je suis très content de présenter ce projet de loi aujourd'hui, qui va reconnaître M. Riel comme le premier premier ministre du Manitoba.

Translation

I am very happy to introduce this bill today, which will recognize Mr. Riel as the first Premier of Manitoba.

English

We all recognize Mr. Riel as father of Manitoba and as a father of Confederation. However we should also recognize that he carried a political title as the

president of the legislative council of Assiniboia. Today, the Premier of Manitoba is known as the president of the Executive Council of Manitoba.

Therefore, this bill would recognize Louis Riel as the first Premier of Manitoba.

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

**Bill 207—The Criminal Property
Forfeiture Amendment Act**

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): I move, seconded by the member for St. James (Mr. Sala), that Bill 207, The Criminal Property Forfeiture Amendment Act, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

* (13:40)

Ms. Fontaine: I'm proud to introduce Bill 207 today, promoting safer and more inclusive communities by directing monies obtained by criminal forfeiture to non-profit community organizations.

Community organizations are on the front lines of the addiction crisis, mental health, harm reduction services, housing, gender-based violence, community patrol and safety and restorative justice. More often than not, this work is done with the bare minimum of financial resources and rely heavily on volunteer labour.

Bill 7 would see criminal forfeiture dollars redirected to those community agencies on the front lines and desperate for resources.

I look forward to the unanimous consent of the House on Bill 207.

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

Committee reports? Tabling of reports?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable Minister of Education, and I would advise the House the required 90 minutes prior to routine proceedings was provided in accordance with rule 26(2).

Would the honourable minister please proceed with the statement.

Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week

Hon. Wayne Ewasko (Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning): I am pleased to rise today to acknowledge that the week of November 13th to 19th had been proclaimed as bullying awareness and prevention week.

Bullying occurs in many environments like in schools, online and in workplaces. Safe Canada's statistics state that 47 per cent of Canadian parents have at least one child that has been a victim of bullying. Around one third of the population has experienced bullying as a child and around one third of teenagers have been bullied recently.

Those who deal with bullying and see its effects first-hand, such as students, teachers, parents and others in the community are instrumental in developing solutions to this problem, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The Education and Early Childhood Learning Department would like to stress that all Manitoba school divisions must provide a safe and caring school environment that fosters and maintains respectful and responsible behaviours.

In addition, school divisions are required to have policies that incorporate a continuum of supports, including positive and preventative approaches and strategies, as well as consequences corresponding to the nature, severity and frequency of the behaviours or infractions.

Policies regarding disciplinary measures are to be established and enforced at the local school division level. These policies must include the school's protocols for notifying parents or guardians of a pupil who has become subject to a discipline or behaviour-management response or intervention.

I would also like to take this opportunity to talk about Cool 2Be Kind, a campaign that our Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) and government has supported over the years. This campaign is an initiative with the Winnipeg Police Association that helps teach students in kindergarten to grade 8 the value of being kind to others and making positive choices in school and in life. Students and educators are invited to submit a Kindness project proposal for their school with the opportunity to receive funding in the amount of \$500 to see their project come to life.

I wanted to take this time to commend all those who have spoken out against bullying or taken action in any other way. I'd like to recognize the teachers for all that they do with this very important issue. It is through their efforts that we can stop bullying in our

schools and create a safe and respectful environment in our classrooms, our schools and our communities.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Nello Altomare (Transcona): National bullying awareness and prevention week aims to promote safer and healthier learning environments for all students. It is important that all students, regardless of background and identities, are able to attend school free from bullying and other forms of intimidation.

We all know of situations when a child or children have become targets of bullies. Be it verbal, online, social media or physical forms of abuse, students and their families, caregivers can experience unbelievable amounts of stress due to these occurrences.

When bullying occurs, this can lead to students missing classes as they become less confident and comfortable attending school. This is completely unacceptable, Deputy Speaker. Bullying in all of its manifestations should never be tolerated in our schools.

Deputy Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of those working within our schools to eradicate bullying. Every adult working in our schools plays an important role in ensuring students feel safe, secure and supported while attending classes.

I would also like to thank those students who go out of their way to ensure that they are doing their part as responsible citizens to ensure bullying does not take place in their learning environments. When all stakeholders—kids, families, staff, community members—work in partnership, safe, secure, supportive learning environments are the result.

Thank you, Deputy Speaker.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I ask for leave to respond to the minister's statement.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Does the member have leave to respond to the minister's statement? *[Agreed]*

Ms. Lamoureux: I rise this afternoon to speak to bullying awareness week.

Yesterday was Transgender Day of Remembrance, which annually marks the murders of hundreds of transgender people around the world.

It is important to recognize that trans and gender-variant people are among the highest percentage of persons who are bullied in schools and workplaces. In

schools, over 50 per cent of children who report being bullied are 2SLGBTQ and are four times more likely to commit suicide.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, bullying can happen in any relationship. It can occur between friends, colleagues, family members, even strangers and can take place in many different contexts including face to face, behind one's back, over social media platforms, so forth. There are even times a bully will not realize their own actions, however, will leave a person feeling withdrawn, physically ill, unable to sleep and can even have a big effect on learning and further violence.

If you're a victim, use the resources that we have here in Canada. If you're a bystander, speak up. And if you are a bully or think you may be a bully, reconsider your behaviour.

Unfortunately, bullying takes place nearly everywhere, even in these very Chambers. Every time someone intentionally spreads inaccurate information about someone else—in other words, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a rumour—this is bullying.

Every time someone puts someone else down to make themselves feel better, even in a form of heckling, this is bullying. Every time a person mumbles to their seatmate a mean comment or a personal cheap shot about another member, this is bullying.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, regularly, MLAs bash one another for the way we may speak, what we may wear, what we might post on social media and these are just a few examples. And it's not to say we can't have these conversations, but they can be done in a respectful manner.

Sticks and stones can break your bones but words can never hurt you is a myth. And as elected officials, we are leaders and, as such, we have a responsibility to set a better example.

Thank you.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable Minister of Mental Health and Community Wellness, and I would indicate to the House the required 90 minutes notice prior to routine proceedings was provided in accordance with rule 26(2).

Would the honourable minister please proceed with their statement.

Substance Use and Addictions Awareness Week

Hon. Sarah Guillemard (Minister of Mental Health and Community Wellness): I rise today to proclaim November 20th to the 26th as Manitoba's Substance Use and Addictions Awareness Week.

Each year, Manitoba Substance Use and Addictions Awareness Week provides an opportunity for Manitobans to engage in meaningful discussions and explore solutions for addressing the harms that are caused by substance use and addictions.

This year's theme, A Community of Caring, recognizes communities for their role in creating safe, healthy, respectful and supportive environments for individuals to thrive.

The impact that addictions can have on individuals, families and communities is significant. Equally significant is creating opportunities to have meaningful discussions about prevention and treatment while working together to reduce stigma and promote recovery.

That is why I'm pleased that so many Manitobans with diverse backgrounds will have the opportunity to gather and share perspectives and ideas this week: addictions workers, mental health workers, health-care professionals, researchers, policy makers, knowledge keepers, as well as individuals who have lived and are living with the impacts of substance use and their families and supporters.

* (13:50)

Our government recognizes that a strong mental health and addictions system is a key component of our health-care system.

We know there are a number of harms associated with substance use, including the onset or the worsening of mental health problems, family and interpersonal conflicts, physical health problems, overdoses and, sadly, death.

That's why in February of this year, I was proud to announce our department's five-year road map, A Pathway to Mental Health and Community Wellness, that speaks to the areas that will be prioritized over the next five years.

Key priorities for this first year include increasing capacity of mental health and addictions services and investing in core services across Manitoba. We have invested an additional \$17.1 million into mental health and addiction services just this past year.

We want everyone seeking treatment to have the opportunity to be healthy, so our government is making significant investments to increase and support up to 1,000 new publicly funded treatment spaces.

We understand that addressing the harms related to substance use and addictions cannot be done by one organization or one department alone. It requires a whole-of-government approach, working across departments, service delivery organizations and our valued community partners to ensure help is available to all who need it.

I wish to thank all of the addictions service providers across the province for your dedication and for the invaluable role that you play in Manitoba's health-care system.

Thank you, as well, to all the guests who have joined me today in the gallery: Ela Partyka from the Mental Health and Addictions in Shared Health; from Tamarack Recovery we have Lisa Cowan; from the Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg, Executive Director Damon Johnson; and from the Behavioural Health Foundation, Marla Somersall.

I believe that together we can make a difference and collectively shape a brighter future for Manitobans impacted by substance use and addictions.

In honour of the Manitoba Substance Use and Addictions Awareness Week, I encourage all Manitobans to work together to raise awareness about substance use and addictions. Together we can find paths to restore lives and reunite families.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): This week is Manitoba Substance Use and Addictions Awareness Week.

Manitoba is in an overdose crisis. Last year alone, more than 400 Manitobans lost their lives due to an overdose, and this year we are on pace to break that horrible record.

This is not just numbers; these are actual human beings that are losing their lives here in our province of Manitoba, and their families and communities are being irreversibly impacted.

It is beyond the time to address the addictions crisis here in Manitoba. Manitobans are struggling with addictions. They deserve support from this government. But the PCs' approach continues to be ideological and out of touch with the needs of Manitobans.

The most obvious example of this is supervised consumption sites.

We all know that they save lives. The PCs refuse to allow them. The member from Rossmore [*phonetic*] recently summarized the government's position in opposition to supervised consumption sites when he proposed, get people back to work, end of quote.

What the member and the entire PC caucus have been unwilling to come to grips with is this: the supply of drugs is poisoning people and taking their lives here in Manitoba. Knowledge keeper Leslie Spillett was quoted in a CBC article last week saying that this government, and I quote, has blood on their hands because of their lack of inaction.

It doesn't have to be that way. Overdose deaths are preventable, and if the right supports are put in place, if this government would just listen to those 80 front-line workers or organizations who've sent letters.

We recognize on this side of the House and are prepared to deal with this like the public health crisis it is. We will provide supervised consumption sites and accurate, up-to-date reporting, something that this government has refused to do. We will also reduce the stigma around substance use so that anyone struggling can feel confident in accessing supports and accessing anything available.

How do we know this will work? Well, recently, like I said, over 80 front-line community organizations signed an open letter calling on this government to address the opioid crisis and stop taking lives and that they're preventable. Their solutions included asking this government to provide more timely information, provide drug testing machines and establish safe consumption sites.

These are the organizations that are on the front lines dealing—and supporting people who are experiencing these struggles in their lives. They are united in their approach to this crisis, and it is critical that we listen to them and swiftly act on their advice.

The choice here is clear: the government can support Manitobans by taking action, which will save lives. Or they can simply continue down their ideological path, which, tragically, will result in further loss of life. I urge this PC government to change course of action.

Today I want to say thank you to all of those front-line workers and I want to send our support, our love. To all of those that are struggling, know that we

are advocating for them and for those families who have lost their loved ones and are struggling to keep them alive. We will continue to advocate in this House for this PC government to do the right thing and help prevent these deaths in our province.

Miigwech.

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

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is there leave for the member to speak to the minister's statement? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Gerrard: Let me first recognize those who have come during the gallery today. Thank you for being here and thank you for the work that you do each and every day on the front lines of the effort to help those who are suffering from substance use or addictions.

I speak today to call for much better action to help those with substance use and addictions.

The action needs to be both in the area of prevention and in the area of treatment. Too little is being done in Manitoba now to prevent substance use and addictions. We need to much more effectively address bullying, discrimination and harassment of children and adults, as the trauma associated with such actions can be a reason for substance use and addictions.

As an example, I have recently heard very stressing stories of children with learning disabilities being targeted. This should not be happening, but it is here in Manitoba.

We also need to address factors which may promote substance use and addictions, including, as an example, exposure to lead. The Province hasn't moved to screen children between the ages of one and three to detect lead exposure and to mitigate its effects.

Far too many in Manitoba are experiencing overdoses. Far too many have died. We need to do far better.

Too little has been done to date to ensure quick access to addictions treatment when it is needed. As an example, as I have raised previously, this is not just about the number, but it is also about the quality of the care and the help that's provided. I have raised the need to ensure that individuals who are seen in RAAM clinics can get opioid agonist therapy as soon as possible, and where it is appropriate.

Such OAT therapy is the standard of care and needs to be available quickly when an individual with an opioid addiction is ready to start, rather than too many, as is happening now, having to wait quite some

time before being able to access the treatment. It is a fairly simple problem that the government should solve, but they have not yet done so.

It is also clear that individuals need continued support for some considerable length of time, particularly in today's world where people may have received or taken more than one substance. And various organizations, including Morberg House and Two Ten Recovery have found that a multistep, many-month program is usually needed for long-term success. It is essential that we ensure that there's provincial support for this length of time, which is so badly needed if success is to be achieved.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Merci. Miigwech.

* (14:00)

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Deputy Speaker: We have some guests with us today.

I would like to draw the attention of all members to the public gallery. We have guests from Gordon Bell High School; 20 students ages 16 through 21—you guys are welcome to stand if you'd like to—under the direction of Mark Dewar. This group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Wolseley (Ms. Naylor).

We welcome you to the Legislature.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Assiniboine Community College Nursing Program

Mr. Dennis Smook (La Vérendrye): Earlier this month, I had the opportunity to visit Providence university college located in Otterburne, Manitoba, which happens to be located in the constituency of La Vérendrye.

I was there to celebrate the opening of the rural rotating site for the practical nursing program, which is being offered by Assiniboine Community College, at Providence university college.

It was an honour to meet with many of the 20 students enrolled in this program, who come from communities in southeastern Manitoba such as Kleefeld, La Broquerie, Mitchell and New Bothwell, just to name a few.

They all had interesting stories, but the two things that were clear for many of them was that offering this program close to where many of them live made it possible for them to be able to enrol, as there were many reasons, from travel costs to the availability of

child care and to the time away from home, that all must be considered if they would have taken this course in Winnipeg.

The second thing for many of them was that they would like to find jobs close to home, in local hospitals like Ste. Anne, St. Pierre-Jolys, Steinbach and Vita, since many of them have established roots in the communities where they live.

The credits that are received from this two-year practical nursing program can be used to further their education, and with another two years of study they can become RNs.

This program is part of our government's commitment to add 400 new nursing spots. This will not only help add nurses to our health-care system, but will give rural Manitobans the opportunity to enhance their lives.

I would like to thank Assiniboine Community College, Providence university college and our provincial government for working together and offering these programs in rural areas of the province.

Thank you.

Manitoba Theatre for Young People

MLA Uzoma Asagwara (Union Station): Deputy Speaker, the Manitoba Theatre for Young People has been creating and presenting professional theatre productions for children and families since 1982. It is the second largest theatre company in Canada to produce and present work exclusively for children and youth, and the only theater doing so in Manitoba; and the largest centre for recreational theatre education for children in the country.

MTYP has grown to become one of the most respected professional theatre companies in Canada for children and youth. Located at The Forks, MTYP also plays a key role in the development and delivery of theatre-in-education programs that concentrate on using theatre as an educational tool to illustrate and express ideas about social issues.

The company also operates a theatre school where over 1,500 children and teens learn the art and craft of theatre and related disciplines, and hosts Native Youth Theatre, which offers free classes in theatre and related disciplines to Winnipeg's Indigenous youth.

I was recently at MTYP, not for a play or production but for my first in-person citizenship ceremony as the MLA for Union Station. Highlighting just how dynamic and welcoming their space is and the creative

ways they foster relationship building and memory making in our communities.

As this year marks their 40th anniversary, it's important we celebrate their hard work and dedication that they have shown in hosting and presenting 347 productions since 1982.

In celebration of MTYP's 40th birthday, they put a call out on social media and other platforms asking folks to share their own MTYP stories. You can read these stories and submit your own on their website. And, good grief, A Charlie Brown Double Bill runs on the MTYP Mainstage from December 2nd to 23rd. Make sure to get your tickets.

We're joined today by MTYP's general manager, Debra Zoerb; artistic director, Pablo Felices-Luna; and Greg Klassen, Sarah Flynn, Louise Pujó, Vern Thiessen and Suzanne Munroe.

Please join me in congratulating the Manitoba Theatre for Young people on 40 years of connecting children to the joy of theatre.

Thank you. Congratulations.

Scleroderma Awareness

Hon. Alan Lagimodiere (Minister of Indigenous Reconciliation and Northern Relations): Today I bring awareness of scleroderma, a complicated, aggressive autoimmune disease, and to acknowledge the bravery of individuals who live with scleroderma.

There is no known cause of scleroderma and no two cases will present alike, making diagnosis difficult and the need for many specialists to be involved in the diagnosis and treatment. Each person's journey living with scleroderma is unique.

Women are affected five to six times more than men.

Scleroderma refers to all types of sclerosis, both skin changes and changes to other tissues and organs of the body. Raynaud's, stiffness in hands, joint pain, fatigue, trouble sleeping are all early symptoms.

Systemic sclerosis causes the most severe outcomes.

As scleroderma progresses, it leads to an overproduction of collagen in connective tissue. Scleroderma is cruel, and since connective tissue is everywhere in the body, no organ is immune from the devastating effects of scleroderma.

Advancing stages of scleroderma result in damage to the heart and lungs, circulatory problems, high blood pressure, shortness of breath, heart failure,

kidney failure and digestive problems and malnutrition. This leads to a significant decrease in quality of life and life expectancy.

No cure is available, so symptomatic treatments are employed to help cope with daily functions and try to slow the progression.

Life-altering decisions for individuals and their families need to be made as conditions develop and evolve. Those diagnosed know the road is not easy, but choose to not let scleroderma define who they are. They should be admired for their courage to live each day doing the things they love despite the obstacles they face.

I ask my colleagues to please rise and recognize those living with scleroderma, including my wife Judy and members of Scleroderma Manitoba. Thank you for your ongoing work and your support.

I now table their names for Hansard.

Scleroderma Manitoba: Jo-Ann Lapointe McKenzie, president; Helen Goertzen, past secretary; Crystal Smith, member at large; Debbie Robitaille, member at large; Linda Cassell, support group team member; Judith Lagimodiere

Northern Manitoba in Throne Speech

Mr. Eric Redhead (Thompson): On November 15th, the government shared their Speech from the Throne in the Legislature. The speech doubled down on the poor decisions and neglect of northern communities. Unfortunately, northern Manitoba received very little attention in the Throne Speech, just as it has received very little attention over the past several years.

The provincial government has offered far too little attention and support across the board for many years, and the Throne Speech is proof of that. The Throne Speech is meant to lay out priorities of govern during the legislative session, and it is obvious that the government has no interest in prioritizing northern Manitoba families.

There is a mountain of issues affecting northern Manitoba that should have been addressed. The vacancy rate of northern highway maintenance sits at 40 per cent. The Throne Speech made no commitment to address that.

The emergency room at Thompson General Hospital is running at half vacant. The PCs have not addressed this. Our foot-care clinic closed four years ago and the Throne Speech mentioned nothing of restoring that preventative service in Thompson.

This provincial government cut support programs like Communities Economic Development Fund, which help businesses. They also cut support for communities that are dealing with mine slowdowns or shutdowns.

By this government's own admission, thousands of jobs are being lost. This slowed the development of northern communities by so much, and many are struggling just to get by while costs are skyrocketing.

Northern Manitoba has been left to struggle for so long that communities need desperate attention now to address the issues that have arisen over the past several years. Northern Manitoba deserves attention of this government, and the longer the government goes without investing significantly in the North, northern families and communities will continue to struggle to make ends meet.

Thank you.

Fall Fundraisers and Banquets

Mr. James Teitsma (Radisson): Earlier this month I attended the Alpha House fundraiser gala and I was joined by the Minister of Families (Ms. Squires) as well as the PC candidate for Kirkfield Park, Kevin Klein.

* (14:10)

Alpha House is a safe place for women that are seeking to rebuild their lives after leaving an abusive environment. They provide secure housing along with a structured program of counselling and workshops. Ultimately, their goal is to help those who come to them break the cycle of violence, build their self-confidence and move on to independent living and to flourish as examples to themselves, their children and other women.

There were two keynote speakers that evening, one of whom was a young woman who shared her own story of abuse at the hands of her partner—not just physical abuse, but emotional and financial as well. The other speaker was Kevin Klein himself, who shared his family's tragic story that resulted in the murder of his mother by her husband.

A few weeks ago, I also attended the YFC Fall Banquet. YFC believes that each young person, whatever their background, beliefs or situation, has hope, potential and purpose. They believe in them so that these young people can believe in themselves.

Tomorrow, I hope to attend the Adult & Teen Challenge fall banquet. Adult & Teen Challenge seeks

to provide individuals, families and communities freedom from life-controlling addictions. They operate a holistic model of recovery that involves body, mind and spirit of those who attend their programs.

I'm happy to support all these organizations not just by purchasing tickets to their fundraising events, but also by donating to their causes. And while it's always nice to have a meal served to you, I think it's even better to be the one doing the serving, especially when you're able to give to those in need in our city.

So I want to encourage all of my MLA colleagues on all sides of this House to take time this holiday season to help out at Salvation Army or Siloam Mission or Agape Table or at one of the other great organizations who help the hurting in our city.

Being generous with our time and talents and treasure helps us set a good example to our communities and our province.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Health-Care System Capital Spending

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Manitobans don't believe the PCs when it comes to health care. They might make announcements, but we all know that they don't get the job done.

Just take, for example, health-care infrastructure. This is the budget for hospitals and for clinics. Here are the facts: the PCs promised to spend \$294 million on health-care infrastructure, but the PCs underspent that amount by \$150 million. That's more than half.

That's what the PCs do.

Will the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) tell the House why her government refuses to spend more than half of the budget for health-care capital?

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Deputy Premier): I will say to members opposite that our commitment to the health of Manitobans has never been higher. In terms of health-care budget, we've allocated over \$1 billion more than the NDP ever did during their time in office.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we recognize that addictions and mental health are important for Manitobans. That's why we've created a separate department to deal with that. We also recognize the health of seniors is important. That's why we've created a Department of Health—of Seniors to look after seniors.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will assure Manitobans our commitment to the health of Manitobans has never been higher.

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

Mr. Kinew: Well, the commitment just is not matched by action, which leads you to under—I guess—stand, where the PCs are coming from. There's an election next year and now they want to come out with all these announcements. But let's see what actually happens when they make an announcement.

Again, I'll table the documents produced by this government. It shows that even though they announced spending of \$290 million, more than \$150 million of that never actually made it out the door. Those are investments that should be made to help Manitobans better be able to access health care in their communities—communities in the Interlake, communities in Westman, communities in the Parkland region.

Now, this is why projects get delayed or sometimes even cancelled, like what happened to CancerCare. It's because of choices made by the PCs at the Cabinet table.

Will the Premier tell the House why her government refused to spend \$150 million on health-care capital?

Mr. Cullen: Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we made commitments to over \$800 million for redevelopments for hospitals in rural Manitoba.

We've got work going on in Neepawa, work will be under way in Brandon and Portage la Prairie in the near future. We're currently—major undertaking in the emergency area around St. Boniface Hospital, that work is under way. And there's been recent upgrades at the Grace Hospital as well.

So when it comes to capital investments, we've heard what Manitobans have said and we're delivering on what Manitobans have asked us to deliver on.

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

Mr. Kinew: A commitment without action is just an announcement. And that's all the PCs ever do.

And if you need the historical context, here it is, because this is not the first year that this has taken place. Just like Brian Pallister, this Premier refuses to invest—[interjection]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: —in health-care cuts.

In 2017, for example, Mr. Pallister—whose name they can't say anymore, by the way—promised to invest \$360 million in health-care capital. *[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: What did he end up spending? Well, these documents, which I'll table today, show that he didn't even spend half.

Once again, now the Premier is trying to mislead—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew:—Manitobans. They're making announcements that they know full well they will not be following through on.

Why did the Premier cut \$150 million from health capital spending?

Mr. Cullen: Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we made another commitment in our Throne Speech just this past week of additional investments for the—for Winnipeg and area.

Let me just remind the member what we have done in the last couple of years: \$32 million for 23 beds in Steinbach's hospital; \$64 million for 24 beds, Boundary Trails; \$31 million, work under way at Selkirk Regional Health Centre; \$5 million for a new ER in Dauphin; \$11 million for beds at the Lakeshore general hospital in Ashern.

That is just some of the capital investments that we've made in Manitoba and we're going to continue to make here in Manitoba for Manitobans.

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

Personal-Care Homes Number of Beds Available

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): These announcements were made in previous throne speeches, and then nothing ever happened.

The documents that I tabled show that every single year, whether it was under Brian Pallister or whether it's under the Stefanson government, this government announces things in health care and then they just don't build them.

We saw it in personal-care homes as well. When we talk about personal-care-home beds, in 2016, they went out and promised 1,200 new beds.

Here we are, six years later. Did they build even one? No, they did not. In fact, we lost 216 beds from the personal-care-home system.

They make announcements; not only do they not fulfill them, but often they move things in the completely wrong direction.

Will the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) tell this House why she cut the number of personal-care-home beds in Manitoba?

Hon. Scott Johnston (Minister of Seniors and Long-Term Care): The Leader of the Opposition is incorrect. This government is committed to ensuring that the needs of Manitobans are met.

With personal-care-home facilities, we have initiated our seniors strategy. We have talked to stakeholders, we have talked to seniors, we have talked to all of the people who are interested in exactly—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Johnston:—supporting seniors in this province.

And you've got to plan to do this, Mr. Deputy Speaker. You can't just do it off the seat of your pants and create programs that are flawed, which the—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Johnston:—NDP did for home care. We're pursuing it—

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

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

Mr. Kinew: They broke their promise to build 1,200 beds and, in fact, cut 216 personal-care-home beds for the system. We had this argument last week, and the case was settled. Even the Minister of Health (Ms. Gordon) would not deny the fact that they cut 216 personal-care-home beds.

* (14:20)

Now, we know one of the reasons that's contributed to the loss of personal-care-home beds is the fact that they've put an arbitrary cap on the funding per bed in the long-term-care system.

All of us looked at the experience of seniors in long-term care during the pandemic and I thought we'd all agreed to do better.

Well, apparently, not this PC Cabinet, because they continue to be part of an organization that not only broke the promise of 1,200 new beds but actually reduced the number of long-term beds by more than 200 in our province.

Why did the Premier cut the number of personal-care-home beds in Manitoba?

Mr. Johnston: As I'd indicated to the House on several occasions, this government has undertaken a seniors strategy and part of that seniors strategy is to accommodate the needs of the people of Manitoba.

It is very clear that the people of Manitoba have indicated that they want support so they can age at home, and this government is going to present a seniors strategy which will accommodate that.

As well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have made a commitment that we are going to ensure that the needs of Manitobans are met with personal-care homes and the seniors strategy. When I bring it forward, I'm sure that the Leader of the Opposition will be the first one to stand up to—

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

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

Mr. Kinew: I just want to show, for the record, that after raising this issue for a couple of days now, neither the Health Minister nor the Seniors Minister can deny the fact that they broke the 1,200-bed promise and cut beds by 216.

We all know that there are investments needed. *[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: These investments are sorely needed in Lac du Bonnet—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew:—which has never seen the investment of personal-care-home beds that the PCs—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew:—have made to the Minister for Education. And he continues to try to heckle because he knows he's not going to get anywhere—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew:—raising this issue at the PC Cabinet table.

The same is true in Radisson. The same is true in Rossmere. There are investments needed, and yet things continue to move in the wrong direction.

Why did the Premier cut the number of personal-care-home beds by more than 200 in Manitoba?

Mr. Johnston: I would correct the member.

We—this government has initiated over 500 new care beds in the province of Manitoba, and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I had indicated, that's only the beginning.

And I'm—again, I remind—I'll be reminding the Leader of the Opposition, when we present our seniors strategy and we bring forward further support for the people of Manitoba, I'll be looking for him to stand up and support us.

Health-Care System Privatization Concerns

MLA Uzoma Asagwara (Union Station): Deputy Speaker, Manitobans want public health care that works for Manitobans.

Brian Pallister cut health care, and so did the current Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) when she was minister of Health.

The college of nurses reports hundreds less registered nurses in our province. As a result, this government has already deeply expanded private health, spending \$40 million per year on private, for-profit agencies. It's the wrong approach and one that erodes our public health system. *[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

MLA Asagwara: Will the minister reconsider and abandon their plans for private health in Manitoba?

Hon. Audrey Gordon (Minister of Health): I can see that the member for Union Station is continuing the narrative that their leader has set for fake news and fear mongering, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But I'm going to table, for the member's review, an article—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Ms. Gordon:—out today: Use of private clinics is not the end of public health care. And in that article, it states, once again, as I've said before, that the members opposite rely on fear mongering.

But here in the article, it says: That is not exactly what she said. Stefanson said the Province plans to build more capacity in the system in part—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Ms. Gordon: –by using–*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Ms. Gordon: –more private providers–*[interjection]*

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

Order. Can you pause the clocks, please.

And—okay, you cannot—a member cannot refer to an—a sitting member of this Chamber, including the Premier, by their last name, including if they're quoting from another source.

So, that was the point that I wanted to get clarity on. And that rule, apparently, does include if you're quoting from another source. So, friendly reminder to all parties.

The honourable member for Union Station—and if we can restart the clock, that would be great as well. *[interjection]*

Order, please. I've given the floor to the honourable member for Union Station. I believe the time was within seconds of finishing, if it—not already over, so we'll proceed as I previously announced.

MLA Asagwara: Deputy Speaker, the current Premier sat on Treasury Board as she cut and privatized out-patient physiotherapy and occupational therapy. She also contracted out medical aviation, an approach that means slower planes and less reliable service.

That's what the PC approach means. Their reliance on private health has not made things better. In fact, things have gotten much worse under their watch. A new approach is needed.

Will the minister abandon their plans for private health in Manitoba?

Ms. Gordon: I'll just finish this one sentence in the quote: The NDP, when it was in government, used the same blend of private and public health care; it's not new.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, our government is committed to strengthening the public health system. That is why I'm so pleased that our government announced \$200 million—the largest single investment in our public health system in the province's history—to bring online 2,000 additional health professionals.

That is bolstering the public health system. That is strengthening the health system right here in Manitoba.

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

MLA Asagwara: Manitobans do not believe a single word that comes out of that minister's mouth when it comes to their health care. *[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

MLA Asagwara: And why is that? It's because—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

MLA Asagwara: –wait times are at a record high at emergency rooms. It's because Manitobans cannot get timely access to primary care in their communities.

Manitoba has lost hundreds of registered nurses because of the PCs' cuts. Meanwhile, this government is spending \$40 million per year on private, for-profit agencies. Simply put: their approach has meant things have gotten worse, not better.

Will the minister change paths and abandon their plan for private health and invest in public health care in Manitoba, and will she do so today?

Ms. Gordon: We're still digging out of the dark days of the NDP, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I would like to ask the member for Union Station: Has the member asked the NDP why they didn't do what they needed to do in 17 years to help internationally educated nurses to gain licensure in this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker?

They're asking us what we are doing to help nurses. Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Ms. Sigua was an— is an internationally educated nurse who received her education in the Philippines. In 2013, under the dark days of the NDP, she applied to the CRNM for registration. What did the NDP do? They sent her packing.

That is why—

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

PC Party Candidate for Kirkfield Park Concerns Regarding Peter Nygård Connection

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): Kevin Klein is the PC candidate for Kirkfield Park.

Klein has stated he worked for Peter Nygård in 2012 and 2014. And he says he stopped working for

Nygård after that. Those are the statements that Klein has made to the public.

* (14:30)

But new information 'shows' that Klein worked as a public relations executive for Nygård in 2015. That's according to new court documents I table today.

Will the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) tell the House why her candidate in Kirkfield Park has not been honest with Manitobans about his time with Peter Nygård?

Hon. Jeff Wharton (Minister of Environment, Climate and Parks): Certainly, working with Mr. Klein in Kirkfield Park has been an ultimate joy, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We know that Kevin is getting out to every single door in Kirkfield Park. We're there to help Mr. Klein.

And I can tell the members opposite that it's going to be a really chilly night come election day in Kirkfield Park for the NDP.

Ms. Fontaine: New information is coming out about Kevin Klein's relationship with Peter Nygård. Not only did Klein work with Nygård in 2015, he is listed as an investor, as a private sector partner, with Peter Nygård in 2016.

I'll table the documents for the Premier to examine. Klein has been lying to Manitobans about when he worked for Peter Nygård.

Does the Premier think it's okay for Kevin Klein to mislead Manitobans about when he worked with Peter Nygård? *[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Wharton: Certainly, if the member from St. Johns wants to learn a little bit more about misleading, she can look to her left, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and ask that question of her leader.

We know that Mr. Klein is continuing to work out in Kirkfield Park, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We know there's a host of volunteers—as a matter of fact, I'm looking forward to getting out there again on Wednesday with my wife to knock on those doors in Kirkfield Park.

We know the work it takes to serve Manitobans. We're going to get that work right.

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

Ms. Fontaine: Kevin Klein wants to be the MLA for Kirkfield Park, and voters are being asked—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Order.

Ms. Fontaine: Voters are being asked to judge Klein on his statements.

Klein said he stopped working for Nygård in 2014, but court documents show he worked as a public relations executive for Nygård in 2015. Klein is 'listin' as a private sector partner in 2016. That means Klein was not only an employee but also an investor with Peter Nygård. Those are the facts.

Will the Premier tell the House if she thinks—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Ms. Fontaine: —it's okay for her candidate to lie to Manitobans in seeking a job to be the MLA for Kirkfield Park?

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

Mr. Wharton: Certainly, we know Mr. Klein's record when it comes to serving Manitobans as a city counsellor.

We know that his goals and values are very shared with this side of the House, Mr. Deputy Speaker, unlike members opposite. We know that he's focused on affordability. He's focused on crime. He's a great volunteer in his community and will make the next MLA for Kirkfield Park.

He will continue to carry the message that our government is working for Manitobans, not the NDP.

Manitoba Municipalities Operating Funding

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): Mr. Speaker, over the past several years, a lot of things have changed. We've had two failed PC premiers, we've experienced a global pandemic and we've seen a major cost-of-living crisis.

However, one thing has remained the same: for the seventh straight budget, the PCs have frozen funding for municipalities across this province. That is a cut.

These cuts have made it harder for municipalities to deliver on the services and programming that their residents and their ratepayers rely on.

So, will the minister simply do the right thing and—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wiebe: –commit to ending the funding freeze to municipalities today?

Hon. Derek Johnson (Acting Minister of Municipal Relations): My first opportunity to rise on behalf of the Minister for Municipal Relations.

I want to thank all of the elected officials that put their name forward in this last election. Whether you're acclaimed or you went through the voting process, it's your service that you do to the grassroots for Manitobans that we appreciate on this side of the House.

And I want to thank them all for their hard work.

Mr. Wiebe: For seven budgets in a row, the PCs have frozen operating funding for Manitoba's municipalities. That is a fact.

This freeze means that municipalities have to tackle those 2022 issues with—such as high inflation and the COVID-19 pandemic—with 2016 dollars. Municipalities have been forced to cut services and cut back in many ways.

The PCs—they could make things right by ending the operating funding freeze.

Will the minister simply commit to working with municipalities and ending the freeze today?

Mr. Johnson: As you're well aware, we had our Throne Speech the other day, and I want to give a personal thanks to Kam Blight and Denys Volkov that attended here, and their words of encouragement and satisfaction from the Throne Speech.

That never, ever happened with an NDP government. They were displeased with them. Forced amalgamation, you name it, the NDP fought municipalities all the way. And it's nice to see support from our leadership, from AMM in this Chamber at the Throne Speech.

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

Mr. Wiebe: I would encourage the minister to spend some time with municipalities over the next couple of days at their convention, because what he'll hear is that municipalities across—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wiebe: –this province are united on one thing, and that is that the PC government needs to end the operating funding freeze.

Municipalities have been calling for an end to this freeze over the past seven budgets, and yet this minister and others have refused to listen. Municipalities are dealing with 2022 issues with 2016 dollars. It's time for the PCs to do the right thing and start to listen to Manitoba municipalities.

Will the minister simply commit to sitting down, working with municipalities at ending the municipal funding freeze today?

Mr. Johnson: Yes, what the member forgets to recall in this House: his party—his party—called the municipal leaders of this province howling coyotes after their forced amalgamation. They have zero respect for AMM and the members of their board.

On this side of the House, we respect the AMM. We thank them for all their hard work. They appreciate the unprecedented investments through Building Sustainable Communities. Just this past year, this spring, we had \$15-million investment in potholes from the years of underfunding from the NDP government. *[interjection]*

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

Safe Consumption Sites Government Position

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): Just yesterday, the Minister of Mental Health and Community Wellness advocated for Alberta's approach to addictions treatment, which has managed to cut overdose deaths by almost half.

Yet, one key detail the minister failed to mention is that Alberta's approach included safe consumption sites—five of them, in fact. Calgary, Alberta, Grand Prairie, Lethbridge and Red Deer all have safe consumption sites. The minister knows this.

So, will the minister—why—can the minister tell us today why she's trying to deliberately mislead Manitobans about safe consumption sites?

* (14:40)

Hon. Sarah Guillemard (Minister of Mental Health and Community Wellness): If the member opposite had actually written—or read the reports that are recently released by Alberta, they have stated a number of unintended consequences for these opened consumption sites. And two have closed so far. I don't know what the others are going to face in future, but they have decided to move towards a recovery-oriented system of care.

We are learning from the mistakes of other jurisdictions. We are going to invest with what we know works and saves lives.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I'm going to ask the clerks to stop the clock, please.

I need to caution the member who used language that insinuated there was a deliberate intent to mislead, and that is actually unparliamentary, and so I'm—I need to caution the member on that particular point.

The member does have the floor, and if we could restart the clocks, that would be great.

The honourable member for Point Douglas.

Mrs. Smith: The minister can justify or can't justify her position on safe consumption sites.

On one hand, she's advocating against them, despite 80 front-line organizations calling on her government. These are organizations that are working on the front lines supporting and know exactly what's needed to save lives, but yet they won't listen.

The minister is ignoring key facts that have made Alberta's approach successful and has allowed them to nearly cut overdose deaths in half.

Can the minister explain why she refuses to admit that safe consumption sites will save lives, and invest here in Manitoba?

Mrs. Guillemard: It's not surprising that the member opposite can't even apologize for unparliamentary language used in this House, considering some of the comments that she also made during a ministerial statement, when she claims that blood is on the hands of governments.

I'm wondering how much accountability she will take personally for the 17 years that the NDP government did not open a RAAM clinic, neither did they open any supervised consumption sites. How much blood is on the NDP's hands?

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

Mrs. Smith: The minister is taking an ideological approach to safe consumption sites.

Eighty front-line organizations—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Smith: —have called on this minister to invest in safe consumption sites. They save lives. They're proven. Alberta is even doing it. *[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Smith: And this minister says that she's looking to Alberta, so why doesn't this minister want to support safe consumption sites?

We're on track to beat last year's overdose deaths in this province. These are preventable deaths, yet this minister refuses to do anything.

Will the minister finally listen to the experts and open a safe consumption site here in Manitoba and help save lives?

Mrs. Guillemard: And the only people who are talking about ideology are the members opposite.

Our government has made every decision based in data. I would encourage the member opposite to read the 2022—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Guillemard: —Lancet commission report—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Guillemard: —where they state that the research on supervised drug consumption sites is methodologically weak, and there is no evidence that accessing a site lowers an individual's risk of fatal overdose—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Guillemard: —over time or that sites lower community overdose rates. Those are the numbers and that's the data we're seeing in Alberta and other jurisdictions. Even BC is now announcing they're investing in treatment and recovery.

Thank you. *[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Sick Leave for Manitoba's Workforce Request for Expanded Coverage

Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface): We're hearing from nurses that HSC and St. Boniface are overflowing with cases of COVID, RSV and the flu. People are missing work in droves, either caring for themselves or a loved one.

We need to make sure masks are being worn by people who work with at-risk and vulnerable folks, child-care centres, seniors' residences, hospitals and clinics; and we also need adequate paid provincial sick leave so people can pay their bills when they can't work.

Two years ago, we were the only party that held up a sick pay bill the NDP and PCs want fast-tracked because the coverage was terrible and the Province was putting in nothing. They still are.

If this government is going to let COVID spread unchecked, as they seem to want to do, they need to step up to make sure that sick Manitobans can pay their bills.

Will the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) expand sick day coverage with extra days in compensation for workers?

Hon. Reg Helwer (Minister of Labour, Consumer Protection and Government Services): We were the first province—among the first provinces that introduced sick days that people could take leave, and worked with the health sector to make sure that that was available to them as well as the other public sectors in Manitoba.

We're there for our front-line staff. And I know the minister's been working hard with them to make sure that we have all the proper supports in place, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Long-Term Pandemic Costs for Business Sector Requests for Supports for Small Operators

Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface): Still on the topic of economic supports, we're also hearing that many long—local, long-time Manitoba businesses are struggling badly or folding because they're still carrying pandemic costs. KUB Bakery's just closed, or is closing, and then so did Quest Musique. These are local institutions that have served our community and supported employees' families for decades.

We're hearing from other businesses that the situation is worse now than it was during the pandemic, and the western lumber retail association told us that independents in Manitoba are being scooped up by equity companies from outside the province. That's not going to work for our long-term future.

We need targeted relief for independently owned Manitoba businesses. What new measures this—is this government planning to introduce to ensure that independent Manitoba businesses stay afloat and stay Manitoban?

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Economic Development, Investment and Trade): Our government is committed to supporting Manitoba's small businesses. We were there to support them to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars through the—COVID. We recognize there's still business challenges out there related to supply chain and other issues, and we're going to continue to support the small-business sector.

I do point to a recent report from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business looking at the average debt of small businesses by province. According to this report, Manitoba small businesses had the lowest debt, in terms of comparing them to other jurisdictions. We think that's partially because of the support that we provided to small business.

Children with Learning Disabilities Arrowsmith Program for Students

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Deputy Speaker, as Maggie Macintosh has so eloquently described, Manitoba schools are failing children with learning disabilities. Far too many—for too many, there is not access to effective learning approaches, and these children are falling through the cracks.

To add to this, too many elementary students are failing to meet Manitoba's reading goals by age three—by grade 3. One approach which has been widely and successfully used for children with learning disabilities is the Arrowsmith, as I table.

When will the Minister of Education act to ensure that the Arrowsmith Program is publicly available to Manitoba students with learning disabilities who need it?

Hon. Wayne Ewasko (Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning): I'd like to thank the member from River Heights for the question in regards to talking about—speaking about any type of advancements or increasing literacy and numeracy rates here in this great province of ours.

As the member knows, and all members throughout the—this House, we embarked on a K-to-12 commission—the first one on education, Mr. Deputy Speaker, since 1959; far long overdue.

Unfortunately, unlike the NDP, for 17 years of the dark days, we've come forward with a plan, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a living, breathing document: the K-to-12 action plan, which we have partnered with our education partners all across this great province—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable minister's time has expired. *[interjection]*

The honourable—[*interjection*]

Time has expired. That means the time has expired.

Mining and Mineral Exploration Permitting and Regulatory Improvements

Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River): Natural Resources Canada's reported exploration expenditure intentions for 2022 at \$154.6 million, an increase of 28 per cent over last year.

Can the Minister of Natural Resources and Northern Development explain what this government has done to ensure our government is prepared for this unprecedented level of investment in mining exploration in the province of Manitoba?

Hon. Greg Nesbitt (Minister of Natural Resources and Northern Development): I'd like to thank the honourable member from Swan River for that great question.

* (14:50)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, our Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) has signified that our government is focusing on the enormous opportunities we have in the mining sector here in Manitoba, which is why, last week, our government invested an additional \$5 million to support mineral exploration and mining in Manitoba. This additional financial investment will reduce application backlogs and further enhance timely decisions on permit applications.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, while the NDP and their leader have committed to leaving our resources in the ground, our government has a plan that will benefit all Manitobans moving forward. Under this government and our Premier, we will continue to collaborate with industry and First Nations to develop Manitoba as a top destination—

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

Education System Funding Concerns

Mr. Nello Altomare (Transcona): When it comes to our classrooms, our kids are not getting what they need.

Over the last three years, the Province's core operating funding—or the day-to-day school operations—has been cut by \$36 million. The Province's share of education has fallen from 62.4 per cent to 56.4 per cent.

That means hard choices for schools and less support for our kids.

Will the minister change his approach and stop making cuts to education?

Hon. Wayne Ewasko (Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning): Mr. Deputy Speaker, in school year of '22-23, which is—we are within right now, we have increased funding by more than \$460 million.

Mr. Altomare: The Throne Speech was a missed opportunity. It should have communicated not more cuts to education. Instead, it's more of the same.

The Province's share of the cost of education continues to drop. Brandon was forced to cut 10 teaching positions. They even cut speech language pathology—[*interjection*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Altomare: —psychology and reading recovery. Seven Oaks had to cut 28 educators.

I'll ask again: When will the minister stop the cuts to our schools?

Mr. Ewasko: I appreciate the question from the member from Transcona, because it gives me an opportunity to stand up and put some factual information on the record.

Unfortunately, the member continues to go along the veins of fear mongering all over this great province of ours, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So, if the member would take an actual look at the FRAME report, it actually shows that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when it takes into consideration some of the transfers that we have made over the last couple years, the funding to our public education is over 75 per cent coming from the government.

There's more good news to come, Mr. Deputy Speaker. On top of the \$460 million—

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

Mr. Altomare: The Winnipeg School Division was forced to cut programs such as all-day kindergarten. Seven Oaks announced a cut to 28 educators; Brandon, 11. The result is less supports for students in class.

We need a different approach, focused on what kids need in the classroom.

Will the minister finally change your approach and commit to stop making these cuts that are harming our kids in their classrooms?

Mr. Ewasko: Again, the member stands up in his place, and instead of apologizing, doubles down on the misinformation, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So, this year—Seven Oaks School Division has received 9.7 per cent increase over the last two years, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Brandon School Division received 12.1 per cent funding over the last two years. And River East Transcona has received 12.2 per cent increase over the last two years.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know, and the—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Ewasko:—member knows, that these school divisions are hiring. They're got signs and they've got postings all over the place.

So that counter—his fear mongering is counter-intuitive to the success—

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

Well, the time for oral questions has ended.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: We'll have another one tomorrow.

PETITIONS

Disability Services

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

Currently, adults with specific or non-specific disabilities, or a combination of disabilities, such as ADHD, autism, dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia, auditory or language processing disorders and/or non-verbal learning disabilities, will be denied access to services under the Province of Manitoba's community living and disability services, if their IQ is above 80.

People with these or other borderline cognitive functioning issues also have extremely low adaptive skills and are not able to live independently without supports.

Recently, it's become widely recognized that access to CLDS should not be based solely on IQ, which

is only a measure of a person's ability to answer questions verbally or in writing in relation to mathematics, science or material which is read.

Very often, persons with specific or non-specific disabilities or a combination of those disabilities have specific needs related to their executive function for support when they are adults or are transitioning to adulthood, which are not necessarily connected to their IQ.

Executive function is the learned ability to do the normal activities of life, including being organized, being able to plan and to carry out plans and adapt to changing conditions.

Those who have major defects in executive function have a learning disability requiring assistance under CLDS to be able to make a contribution to society and to be self-sustaining.

Provision of CLDS services to individuals with specific or non-specific disabilities or a combination of those disabilities or executive function disability, would free them from being dependent on Employment and Income Assistance and have the potential to make an important change in the person's life.

Newfoundland and Labrador have now recognized that access to services should be based on the nature of the disability and the person's need, rather than on IQ.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to change the requirements for accessing community living and disability services so that these requirements are based on the needs of individuals with specific or non-specific disabilities, including executive function or a combination of disabilities, rather than solely on the basis of their IQ.

Signed by Christine Zimmerman, Andrea McCrea, Chris Zapototsky and many others.

Hearing Aids

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): I present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) 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 some sounds louder, helping people hear better when it's quiet and when it's noisy.

(2) 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 can also experience unemployment, social isolation and struggles with mental health.

(3) 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.

(4) A global commission on the state of the research for dementia care and prevention released an update 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.

(5) Hearing aids are therefore essential to the 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.

* (15:00)

(6) 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.

(7) The cost of hearing aids can be prohibitive to many Manitobans, depending on the 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.

(8) Manitoba residents under the age of 18 who require a hearing aid, as prescribed by an 'otolargologist' 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.

(9) 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.

(10) 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.

(11) Alberta offers subsidies to all seniors 65 and over and low-income adults age 18 to 64 once every five years.

(12) 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 whom the purchase would cause financial hardship.

(13) Manitobans over age 18 are only eligible for support for hearing aids if they are 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:

(1) To urge the provincial government to consider hearing loss as a medical treatment under Manitoba Health. And,

(2) 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.

This petition has been signed by many Manitobans.

Thank you.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Are there any other petitions?

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Acting Government House Leader): Would you resume debate on the Throne Speech?

THRONE SPEECH (Fourth Day of Debate)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Okay, it has been announced by the honourable Acting Government House Leader that debate on the Throne Speech will resume.

So we will resume the adjourned debate on the proposed motion of the honourable member for Borderland (Mr. Guenter), and amendments thereto, standing in the name of the member for Wolseley, who has three minutes remaining.

Ms. Lisa Naylor (Wolseley): On Friday, I was speaking about new data from the Canadian Institute for Health Information that shows that the pandemic has taken a significant toll on the mental health of children and youth, with hospitalizations for children aged 10 to 17 with eating disorders increasing by nearly 60 per cent since March 2020. Manitoba's services for children and youth mental health cannot keep up with this increase.

There was nothing in the Throne Speech about children and youth mental health or about eating disorders. More prevention and early intervention services are required locally in the urban community, but especially in rural and northern Manitoba.

And finally, in my last couple of minutes, I want to speak about what was missing from the Throne Speech about climate.

The PCs' climate plan is and has been embarrassing. Six years in office and the most notable thing they've done regarding climate change is fight the carbon levy and let our CO₂ emissions increase by 10 per cent. That was just between 2016 and 2020.

There was only one reference to Manitoba's GHG emissions in the entire Throne Speech, and it provided no details on how the PCs plan to reduce Manitoba's emissions.

The PC government refuses to show leadership. Instead, they blame the federal government and released a plan that doesn't include any meaningful targets, timetables or any plans to meet the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's objectives. They didn't even follow their own plan or legislation on climate change.

The climate and green plan implementation act states that the minister is to reduce—produce a report annually. There was no report released for three years until we raised a matter of privilege in this House and they were compelled to release it.

Instead of working with and for Manitobans to fight climate change, the PC government has spent millions of taxpayer dollars and two years of fighting with the federal government in court.

When the PC government lost that fight, within his written decision Justice Mosley questioned the

effectiveness of Manitoba's plan. The PCs have done little and flip-flopped when it comes to climate action. This creates uncertainty for Manitobans and wastes precious time that we could be spending fighting climate change.

The minister also refuses to release his parks privatization plan. We asked for that again last week. They're probably intending to keep it hidden until after Manitobans go to the polls next year.

Mr. Brad Michaleski, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

For all these reasons and more, the PCs continue to disappoint Manitobans. To turn this around, I urge the government to adopt all amendments introduced by the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Kinew) last week.

Thank you.

Hon. Jeff Wharton (Minister of Environment, Climate and Parks): Certainly a privilege and an honour to stand up in the House today to talk about our government's Throne Speech and some highlights from that Throne Speech, put it on the record. Of course, we just heard members opposite, some fiction. Well, it's time to put facts on the record, Acting Deputy Speaker.

First and foremost, though, I just wanted to ensure that I put on the record how thankful I am to serve the constituents of Red River North, which include the municipalities of East St. Paul and St. Clements. Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, certainly, truly an honour to continue to advocate for their concerns, the municipalities' concerns and the constituents' concerns on a regular basis, and we'll continue to do that, as it's truly an honour.

Our Throne Speech, Acting Deputy Speaker, our government has committed to ensuring that we make communities safer, help families make ends meet, strengthen the health-care system and address diagnostic backlogs, make Manitoba more competitive, build stronger communities, invest environmental protection and conservation, and advance reconciliation. And that's exactly what our government has been doing and will continue to do as we move forward through '23.

A couple of areas I'd like to touch on and get on the record, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, again, is helping make communities safer. Our government will work collaboratively with all police agencies along all levels of government to ensure communities are safe and resources are made available. We will

continue to focus our efforts on underlying issues such as homelessness, addictions and mental health, by providing increased support to front-line law enforcement officers.

For the first time in more than two decades, our government properly addressed the funding and modernization of our shelters, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, with a recent announcement of \$15 million.

Violence against women and girls, and missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls continue to be a priority for this government and we plan to update the gender-based violence framework in the coming months.

We recently announced more than \$3.2 million to invest in the intensive bail supervision and high-risk warrant units to ensure that the most violent criminals do not remain on our streets.

Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, helping families make ends meet—a real focus for our government—aims to make Manitoba more affordable for families, despite the rising cost of living.

We introduced new taxation measures and an \$87-million family affordability package to help dampen the impact on all Manitobans and Manitoba families. Families with children under the age of 18 with a household income of \$175,000 will receive a cheque for \$250 for the first child and another \$200 for each additional child in the home.

Eligible seniors will receive \$300 senior affordability cheque, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker.

We'll be raising the minimum wage in Manitoba to \$15 an hour.

* (15:10)

In 2023, the education property tax rebate will provide further assistance, as it will include an—and an increase for residential and farm property to 50 per cent from 37.5 in 2022. This increase—the average rebate from \$581 in 2022 to \$774 in fiscal 2023.

In 2023—pardon me. Manitoba Public Insurance has also, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, issued rebates which average \$700 over the past two years, and more announcements to come in the weeks ahead.

Strengthening our health care. We are solution focused, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, and open to new ideas and innovation as we work with front-line health-care workers to make significant and long-lasting changes for the betterment of our health-care system. We continue to call on the Canadian federal

government to restore our fair share of health-care funding, so that this may be put towards building a stronger health-care system for all Manitobans.

We have committed to recruiting, training and retaining nurses and health-care professionals in this province with an aggressive \$200 million multi-year health human 'resources'-resources initiative. We continue to address the surgical and diagnostic backlogs and the surgical and diagnostic backlogs task force continues to make noticeable progress through innovation and ideas.

We continue to further investment in health-care facilities as we recognize the critical importance that modern health-care facilities have on the system and the ability to provide the best possible care to all Manitobans.

Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, mental health and addictions are another primary concern for our government, as we work to provide increased support and services for those who are struggling with addictions. Plans for the additional 1,000 addictions treatment spaces and more support for suicide prevention in Manitoba are already in the works. We will build on our existing five-year road map for mental health, as we complete and implement a provincially co-ordinated strategy for suicide prevention focused on youth and at-risk communities.

Turning to education, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, our government understands the importance of affordable—affordability, access, high-quality early child education, especially in rural areas in Manitoba. A recent investment of \$70 million will fund up to 17 new facilities and create more than 1,200 new day-care spaces.

We are focused on strengthening the sector as we encourage more individuals to pursue a career in early years education by supporting increased wages in the new year. We're on track to deliver \$1.6 billion in four-year funding guarantee agreement, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker. Our government will be creating a teacher registry and an independent body to improve teacher transparency and accountability in K-to-12 schools.

We will continue to strengthen our collaboration with post-secondary institutions, and continue to foster strategies which aim to address labour shortages right here in Manitoba.

Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, we are also launching a new income-support program to address the

unique needs of people with severe and prolonged disabilities.

And, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker: Environment, Climate and Parks. Had the pleasure of working in this department and I certainly appreciate the Premier's (Mrs. Stefanson) confidence in the abilities that we have in the department, and again, working with her and the rest of our colleagues to ensure our parks are sustainable, our climate and environmental issues are addressed, and that's exactly what this government is doing.

To secure Manitoba's water future in advance, our environmental, economic and community priorities, our action plan based on our water strategy announcement just last week, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, recently, again, will be—framework will be set to roll out in the spring of 2023. In the coming months, our government will be announcing a long-term strategic capital investment plan in our provincial parks.

This builds off our other great initiatives our government has done to strengthen our provincially owned parks system. Provincial parks' new registration system, that the NDP left to lag for 17 years, will be replaced. This dysfunctional system essentially, Mr. Deputy Speaker, will be gone, with a new system that'll help the experience while booking your families for the summer in yurts, campsites throughout this great province as we, again, embark on improving and enhancing those services available to Manitobans and Manitoba families; investing \$1.1 million this year to support 64 park enhancement projects across the province, through the parks endowment fund; partnering with Trails Manitoba to invest nearly \$1 million this year to support recreational trail projects across our great province.

A trail strategy and action plan to enhance and support a high-quality network of accessible trails will be announced very soon.

We will continue to make significant investments to achieve our environmental goals such as: \$167-million investment in the second phase of the upgrade at the North End treatment plant, which should have done, Mr.—which should have been done, Acting Deputy Speaker, 15 years ago. We are getting it done.

We continue to pursue further emissions reductions across all sectors of the economy and we will do our share to help Canada meet its international obligations. A comprehensive provincial adaptation strategy

will reduce the impact of extreme climate events such as floods, droughts, wildfires and more.

And working with stakeholders, we will modernize the waste diversion and recycling framework to divert more materials from our landfills and create new business and job opportunities within that circular economy.

Manitobans, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, have great opportunity and under the leadership of Premier—our Premier and our government and our colleagues, we will get the job done.

I appreciate the opportunity to put some facts on the record and, again, I'd like to thank the fine folks at Red River North for allowing me the opportunity to advocate for them and help move Manitoba forward.

Thank you.

Mr. Nello Altomare (Transcona): Thank you, Assistant Deputy Speaker, for the opportunity to put some words on record regarding the Throne Speech of the Fifth session of the 42nd Manitoba Legislature.

I don't say that lightly, Assistant Deputy Speaker, because I do want to thank the constituents of Transcona and the constituency of Transcona for allowing me to be their representative here inside this august Chamber. It's not something that we—all MLAs—take lightly. It is something that is very serious. This is—we are their voice here and I continue to be privileged to do that.

I want to thank the constituents, as well. They've been very supportive these past number of years. And I do believe that we, as a constituency office as well, have been responding to the needs of our constituents and providing the service that they—services that they require whenever they're dealing with the levels of government. And that's something that we take very seriously.

These past couple of months, certainly, half of this year has seen kind of a return, Assistant Deputy Speaker, to some very important community events that my constituency was known for, not the least of which is the restoration of the 2747 steam engine taking place by the Transcona Museum, that is right now working on building a shelter for that particular steam engine.

That was put in place on the corner of Kildare and Plessis there in 1960. And one of the really kind of cool things about that is that my dad was actually involved in moving that engine to that place where it

rests right now. So, being kind of involved in helping the museum establish a shelter for that is indeed an honour; and we're certainly going to support that a hundred per cent.

I also would be remiss if I didn't mention the work of the Transcona Legion in getting us back and doing some things together but in a safe way as well, because you'll notice that when we do get together we are taking the necessary precautions. For example, if we're ill, we're not attending. We're wearing masks if we're in large communal settings that are indoors.

I do want to thank the Legion and the members for doing things like No Stone Left Alone that was taken care of by one of the members in early November of this year; and also back to a regular Remembrance Day ceremony that included community, one that was well attended and one that was greatly appreciated by my 'constits'.

Now, as you know, Assistant Deputy Speaker, Transcona is unique; very much a small town within a big city and still maintains a lot of that mentality, where people know each other and care about each other. And we have many multigenerational families that have been living there for four generations and, as a matter of fact, they continue to live, work, raise their families and want to maintain those same roots.

* (15:20)

I will say, though, Assistant Deputy Speaker, is that this part of Winnipeg, the northeast and Transcona has taken it—taken a lot of hits since 2016, since this government was elected. And, you know, there are a number of really key government services that have been cut and have disappeared. This, despite the fact that we're one of the fastest growing areas of the city.

And we have had significant cuts to, for example, the ER at Concordia Hospital, which is acutely felt on a daily basis. This was done before capacity was even increased at the other ERs. Why would anybody engage in that type of management of these really precious resources without increasing capacity in other areas? That is one question that we receive on a daily basis. The result, of course, is even before the pandemic, wait times that were putting a lot of stress on the community's health care.

But one of the biggest things that certainly, we've been impacted in northeast Winnipeg, Assistant Deputy Speaker, is personal-care-home space. We do know that northeast Winnipeg and Transcona has the lowest per-capita PCH space in the city. As a matter

of fact, a former premier stood in front of one of our PCHs in 2016 and announced 1,200 PCH beds.

And what have we had? As a matter of fact, we had a plan ready to go, ready to go, and then the WRHA in 2016 said with our plan—said, you know, you need to take it back, redo it so that it reflects more of a pod-model approach. Our community did that, went back, brought it forward. What happened? One of the first things cut.

So, at this point, Assistant Deputy Speaker, in Transcona, many families don't have the opportunity to have their loved one age in place. That is something that we've been working for and advocating for since before 10 years. And we have gotten to a point where we have a plan ready to go, but it is not being acted upon. And this is something that is really, really quite—you—hit the community quite hard, especially when it comes to their loved ones and where they want to have them age.

So here, we have another decision that was made before and there was a cut to the IV clinic out of ACCESS Transcona. That IV clinic was serving residents in the northeast in a very efficient manner. So what happens now is that even when you're trying to get service of this particular IV clinic that was in ACCESS Transcona, what ends up happening is that if you don't have the necessary supplies, you have to travel from further.

What it results in is delay in treatment. And what, then, can subsequently happen is that they begin to then miss their appointments and have them re-scheduled. And these are the type of things that have really impacted.

So we have still yet to see that IV clinic at ACCESS Transcona reinstated. And what that does, when that clinic, hopefully, will get reinstated, it results in more efficient care, Deputy Speaker. And these are the type of things that our residents, our constituents are waiting for.

But what was particularly difficult to really understand, Assistant Deputy Speaker, was the removal of CancerCare from Concordia Hospital; an absolute gem of a facility, and one that really had world-class treatment, care close to home for the residents of northeast Winnipeg.

It was—what was really unique about that Concordia Hospital clinic was proximity, not only in the neighbourhood but also the physical act of actually getting into your chair there at chemotherapy. What was unique about Concordia, Assistant Deputy Speaker, is

that you can walk from the parking thing—which was literally right across from the treatment centre—without having to go through larger distances like you do at St. Boniface and at the McDermot station. You know, and what that does is, of course, it reduces stress.

And so these are some of the things that, when these decisions are made, these are the day-to-day impacts it has on the residents of northeast Winnipeg. And that is something that, you know, we saw as an absolute jewel, one that really served our community well and we would like to see reinstated.

We also continue to hear regarding child-care space in northeast Winnipeg and in Transcona, and the lack of that space. I know many of us receive communication regarding this. We know that we have many, many of our constituents that have children that age out of these wait-lists that don't have access to high-quality licensed child care in the community. And this is something that we have to have an actual plan that results in some capital expansion in fastest growing area of the city, right in the northeast, with zero plan to deal with how we're going to knock down those wait-lists that are now hundreds deep at certain child-care facilities in the constituency of Transcona.

And the good thing about these licensed facilities, Assistant Deputy Speaker, is that they provide high-quality licensed care, one that has—that is staffed by people that know what they're doing, especially when it comes to early childhood education.

So what we've witnessed in our part of the city is a steady decrease and decline in some of these very important areas in the health-care sector and the education sector and in the child-care sector, Assistant Deputy Speaker.

And what we're seeing is, right now, you know, a particular strategy that's in place where you start a fire, you watch the flames lick the house, you cover your ears when people start to scream, Assistant Deputy Speaker, and then you wait until the house is almost reduced to ashes. You then bring a bucket of water and say you're doing more than ever. Call a press conference. Gloat that you're doing more than you've ever done before and hope that people forget that you're the people that caused the chaos in the first place.

And so what we have is we have this carrying on right now to the point where we get—we don't even know what we're going to get from this government when it comes to announcements. Because there

doesn't seem to be any kind of co-ordination or strategy that's going to deal with the real issues that are affecting communities.

In our constituency, of course, it's health care, it's education and it's child care.

Adult education is another area where this current government has failed to invest and take actions that, as a matter of fact, have kind of held back progress, Assistant Deputy Speaker. Their repeal of The Adult Literacy Act has actively made outcomes worse at a time when employers are actively seeking skilled employees to fill many, many positions. And this is an area that is really an opportunity that we need to take because we know that we're in a labour crisis right now where employers are looking for skilled employees. And we have people that are ready to go when it comes to lining up for adult education, and people are demanding it more than ever. It's time that we have a strategy for this.

The other piece that's unique about Transcona, Assistant Deputy Speaker, is that we also have a world-class transportation facility by the name of New Flyer Industries, where its products can be found in cities throughout North America. San Francisco Bayr [*phonetic*] area, they're also in places like Houston, Texas. They're in eastern Canada. And you'll—beginning to see—at least in my area—you see some of these buses being test driven throughout the—throughout our neighbourhood.

And this is a technology that helps in the fight against climate change. And—but when we look at this government's climate plan, we see something that is really quite lacking. Six years in office, and the most notable thing, Assistant Deputy Speaker, is that when it comes to climate change, is that they fought the carbon tax.

And there was only one reference to greenhouse gases, Assistant Deputy Speaker, in the entire Throne Speech. And it provides no details on how the PCs plan to reduce Manitoban's greenhouse gas emissions.

* (15:30)

We also seen a refusal of any kind of leadership on this file and they blame the federal government for whatever things come to these targets. And—but we have yet to see any kind of timetable or any kind of intergovernmental co-operation when it comes to climate change with Manitoba and the federal government. It's time that we see that and time that that happens now because we are missing an opportunity.

So, instead of working with and for Manitobans to fight climate changes, government has spent millions of taxpayer money on federal court lawsuit to try and strike down the carbon tax.

And now after two years, the PCs' loss, with, you know, the Justice Mosley himself questioning the effectiveness of the plan that was put forward and this lack of action on climate change, creates uncertainty for Manitobans and wastes precious time that could have been spent putting forward meaningful climate change mitigation strategies, Assistant Deputy Speaker.

Deputy Speaker, as I begin to approach the end of my time and comments regarding the government's Throne Speech, I would like to reflect on the news last Friday of the out-migration the province of Manitoba has experienced in the past year.

And I want to take a moment to speak directly to all the young Manitobans who are considering making a choice to leave our beautiful province. We know that this PC government has made it difficult to live in Manitoba with the minimum wage that isn't a living wage and raising the cost of your tuition. The PCs have trampled on opportunities this province once had and was once known as the Manitoba advantage.

The Manitoba NDP will make it our core priority to undo the PC attacks on young people and build our province so young people will want to stay here instead of move away.

Ten thousand people moving out of Manitoba is unacceptable, Assistant Deputy Speaker. We have to do our very best to keep our citizens right here in Manitoba, making this province the great province that it is. And we will support post-secondaries by providing funding ability so that young people can get a world-class education right here in Manitoba.

There is also that unique union skills training centres that every young person who wants or even wants to learn a trade or be part of a trade can take advantage of. We know we have the carpenters union, right at the foot of the Nairn Overpass, has a wonderful training facility that can use ever more support to keep and help train our own tradespeople right here in this province.

And, finally, we will support a public health-care system and end the PC march to privatization. And we'll make sure our public schools have the modern curriculum that prepares our children for the future.

And with those few words, Assistant Deputy Speaker, again, I'd like to thank the constituents of

Transcona for allowing me this opportunity and platform to speak here. It is indeed a privilege and one that every member I know in this House takes seriously.

Thank you for the time.

Mr. Shannon Martin (McPhillips): It's always a pleasure, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to be part of the democratic process. I echo some comments made by my colleague, the member for Transcona (Mr. Altomare), who did indicate, yes, indeed, it is a privilege for all of us as individuals to represent our constituencies. In my case, I want to thank the good people from McPhillips for sending me here to be their representative in this House of democracy.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, and while we in the—here in this House seem to be, on occasion, we get tied up in, for lack of a better word, nonsense and mudslinging and unnecessary rhetoric, that's all well and good but it does make us more aware, again and echoing the last member's words, that privilege.

Earlier this year, Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to travel to Poland and Ukraine and I think now as I think back to my experiences meeting with the NGOs, the non-government organizations, that were helping refugees and meeting with refugees themselves, again, the privilege that we have here, that the most challenging part of our day is simply mudslinging and standing up to speak, as opposed to where currently millions of Ukrainians are without power as missiles land near a crucial nuclear generating station. And obviously, in these winter months, that lack of power is even more significant.

I'm also left wondering as I depart, Mr. Deputy Speaker—as I departed Ukraine, I'm often left wondering about a young woman, Illeana, I met, who was actually travelling from Poland, at the border when I was crossing over into Ukraine, and she was also travelling and crossing over into Ukraine, with two young children in tow. And so I struck up a conversation and, fortunately, I had a friend and colleague with me, Marian, who was multilingual, so he was able to provide the translation services.

But this young woman explained to us, you know, the reason she was travelling back to Ukraine, back to the, you know, obviously, a war-impacted country, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with her two children in tow, was to visit her husband and the father of her children, because we're—as many of us are aware, men between the ages, I think, of 18 and 60—my numbers might be slightly off—are not allowed to leave Ukraine; they're necessary, obviously, for the fight against the Russian

aggressors. And, I, as I said, I'm often—often wonder, my mind wonders—wanders to Illeana and her two young children and wonder how they are doing and, more importantly, how her husband is doing with the war effort.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we've all thanked—we thank our—obviously, we all have thanked and spoken about our constituencies and, more importantly, we have thanked our families. We have—many of our members have shared very personal stories of their families' involvement in their lives and their political lives and their lives as a whole. My friend and colleague, the member for Selkirk (Mr. Lagimodiere), in his member's statement earlier, obviously shared a very poignant situation with his own family life. And it's those conversations, and I think, to my colleague, the member for The Pas-Kinny-Tooynak [*phonetic*], who has also shared a number of very personal stories in—to deal with her family and the situation when it comes to mental health services.

And I think the sharing of these stories between MLAs is important because it allows us to see each other as individuals and as humans on this same journey, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And while we—obviously, we will always have our political differences, I have no doubt, and I don't think any member in this House has any doubt that at the end of the day, we all want and want to achieve that same thing, you know: a quality education, good employment, safety, clean drinking water. These are necessities, and these are requirements and these are needs that we all want for our families and communities; and oftentimes, the differences that we gauge in this House are differences in—essentially, in the path that we get there, but I have no doubt that we all want to follow that path.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there's a lot in this Throne Speech. The key that struck we—myself that I'm going to touch base on primarily is that—in the efforts that our government is making in relation to mental health. Mental health, and I've spoken about it on a number of occasions, is an issue near and dear to myself during the last, actually, during the last year. I've had two individuals, two friends of mine, around my age, who have succumbed to their mental health in terms of ending their lives, which is the final solution. And, unfortunately, is a solution that some people make that determination that life, for their loved ones, for their family, for their co-workers, the people around them, that their lives would simply be better off if you weren't a part of it.

And it's always a tragedy when an individual makes that choice. And it is not for lack of caring; it is not for lack of the resources. In some instances, it simply is an issue of mental health, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And it's always a challenge. And it's a challenge for anyone who deals with it, and I have no doubt that there's members in all sides of this House—and, again, many of them have shared those stories of their own challenges. But, again, as we've all noted, if I come into this Chamber, and I have a cast on my arm, you can clearly see, you know, what is wrong and the injury. However, many of us and many Manitobans have, for lack of better terminology, internal injuries in terms of mental health.

And we need to look at—and the reason why I'm very proud of my colleague, the minister, and the record \$58-million investment that the minister's department has put in to improve mental health services is because of the connectivity of mental health services when it comes to Manitoba as a whole, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We need to take a look at, you know, how mental health services impact the education system.

* (15:40)

There was a time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, back in the day, we'd refer to children as simply problem children in class, you know, the troublemakers, for lack of a better terminology; the ones that may end up in detention and that. And now, years later, we realize that there are opportunities and there need to be more opportunities to ensure that those individuals and those students have the mental health services available to them so that they can achieve their educational potential, as well as ensuring that the resources they see—they need are appropriate for them, for their educational journey.

But also that the services are there to support the educators that surround them, because we cannot expect our educators and our teachers to fulfill that role, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is a role, and—while many teachers do indeed provide and do a tremendous role in terms of intervening and being part of their students' lives, we, as a government, have done and continue to need to do more when it comes to providing those mental health services for our students.

And we talked about the economy and the correlation to mental health services. I had the opportunity in a previous life, Mr. Speaker, to work for a non-profit that helped people with disabilities find employment. Some of those individuals, there was physical

disabilities, but there was also individuals with mental health disabilities.

In large number—I believe the number's about one in six Manitobans, Mr. Deputy Speaker—have a mental health issue, self-identify as having a mental health issue and a disability. But that is not to say that they cannot be part of our economy. We've heard many people talk, obviously, about the labour shortage, we see it first-hand, and that.

But we need to ensure that individuals that are experiencing mental health issues and that, that is part and parcel of that need to provide them with those services, so that they can become that holistic individual, so that they can, you know, if need be, return to work. And a lot of us find, a lot of individuals find fulfillment in the work that they do, Mr. Speaker. And I know a lot of us in the House find fulfillment in the work that we do.

In terms of health care, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we've seen, you know, obviously, record investments in health care. We—seen the inclusion of mental health services within the health-care system. But again, we need to look at, again, that correlation in the linkages between ensuring appropriate and expanded mental health services and, obviously, the necessity and that path to proper general well-being of health.

Obviously, take, for example, 'pershon' who is going through, say, a depression, Mr. Speaker, may, as a result, stop taking care of themselves, may stop taking, you know, maybe their other medications that they need to maintain other aspects of their health and may find themselves suddenly relying on the health-care system. Where, if they had those services, if they had the appropriate counselling services and those mental health services, they may have not gotten to that stage.

And the other comment, obviously, when it comes to the issue of mental health, obviously, is the issue of justice. We see and we all saw the news this weekend: the Colorado Springs LGBTQ nightclub shooting. I believe, at last reports, I think there was five persons killed and 25 injured. My comment is not to excuse, obviously, the horrendous actions of the individual that perpetuated this crime, but to indicate that hate itself is borne out of a mental health issue, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and perhaps, if this individual had had the services available, that tragedy might not have happened.

Closer to home, we see just—again, just today it's being reported in the news at Sioux Valley Dakota

First Nation, a young woman was murdered and an individual has been charged with first-degree murder, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Obviously, there'll be issues tied to, obviously, the issue of colonialism and the impact that that had on the individual that 'perpetuated' the crime, but we also need to look, again, at those mental health services that may or may not have been available and will need to be available—be made available to individuals that continue on, within that community, to heal from this event, to understand why this event at Sioux Valley Dakota First Nation occurred and, more importantly, how do they, as a community, help address that.

And part of that, Mr. Speaker, is when we rise in the House and we talk about mental health and we talk about services available, I think it's incumbent upon us as individuals to recognize—and it's a bit of a cliché when we say, you know, there is no one single path, and there really isn't; there are any number of paths towards improved mental health outcomes, Mr. Deputy Speaker. There's obviously—in Manitoba, we predominantly see, you know, the westernized view when it comes to mental health, but that is not the only path forward.

We are very blessed as a province to have a significant number of newcomers, as well as the original inhabitants, who bring with them their own perspectives and their own solutions when it comes to addressing mental health issues within their communities. Because there are—and there is, I think, a necessity on all of us to take a look at some unique approaches, approaches that may not generally fit with our own world view, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but that may fit and be more appropriate to the situation at hand.

And these are the things that I think we collectively need to look at, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But in conclusion, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I just simply want to encourage all of us as legislators to do our jobs when it comes to—obviously, for an opposition, obviously your role is to hold the government accountable, and for our government, our role, obviously, is to ensure that the blueprint that we're putting forward today, the blueprint, the Throne Speech that my Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) has brought forward to this House, is fulfilled.

That the commitments that we're making to Manitoba on the issues of improving safety within communities; on the issues we're talking about, ensuring safety in the classrooms and a teacher—some

teacher accountability, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We cannot allow simply titles of individuals—and previously, we had it with the—you know, individuals would, you know—and not to obviously slander all religious figures, but there was a time where the title priest simply granted you immunity from any consequences.

And, obviously, those times have changed, and we've seen some of the results of that blindness that we have to authority. And the same goes with teachers and that—and this is not to suggest that it's an epidemic, but to suggest that we need to focus on individual and not title when it comes to protecting our children.

But as a government, we need to ensure that we're following through, that we're working with teachers and students and parents to make sure that this happens in an expedited manner and in a manner that does exactly what it sets out to do: protect the children while providing those necessary educational outcomes, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And so, to my colleagues, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to thank everyone for their continued support, for their support and involvement, obviously, in this democratic process. I know it's never an easy thing, that we all have our good days and our bad days; but I have no doubt that, thanks to the Throne Speech that's being put forward and debated today, that brighter days will continue here in Manitoba.

And with those brief comments, I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I begin by thanking the people of River Heights who have supported me and who have allowed me to represent them for quite a number of years.

In my discussion of the Throne Speech, I will begin with the need to advance reconciliation. Of the seven themes in the Throne Speech which are listed on page 3, the very last is Advancing Reconciliation. It should not be last; it should be at the top of the list.

As well, each of the other themes has a dedicated section within the Throne Speech. But following the discussion of the sixth theme, Helping Build Stronger Communities, the section on advancing reconciliation is completely missing.

Is it missing because the PC government is not really concerned about reconciliation? Perhaps. But certainly, somewhere in the process of writing the Throne Speech, this section went missing. Discussion of reconciliation is a serious matter, and the Premier

(Mrs. Stefanson) should have had the respect to include a full section on it in the Throne Speech.

Advancing reconciliation should be and must be a top issue in Manitoba today, and not the last one. Too often, our province has suffered because the current government failed to adequately consider talking to and working with First Nation, Métis or Inuit people.

* (15:50)

The Province needs to start by returning the money taken from the children who were in the care of Child and Family Services. It's more than \$300 million taken by NDP and PC governments from the most vulnerable children in our society, and it wasn't even mentioned in the Throne Speech.

A good example of the needless delay of a vital project was the PC government's handling of the outlet from Lake Manitoba to Lake St. Martin so that water from Lake Manitoba can flow on to Lake Winnipeg when a major 'throd'—flood is threatened on Lake Manitoba.

Because the PCs failed to work adequately with First Nations community, the project has suffered much extra delay. As Bill Gallagher emphasized in a recent talk at a mining convention in Winnipeg, partnering with First Nation, Métis and Inuit people is essential if we're to develop Manitoba's mining resources.

Mr. Andrew Micklefield, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

And this approach applies so much more in other areas of Manitoba, as the Lake Manitoba to Lake St. Martin channel demonstrates. Building the channel has been delayed because the province submitted inaccurate and incomplete information, and also because the province failed to adequately consult with four affected First Nations.

We should have had, in the Throne Speech, an assessment of where we stand with regard to the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the commission of missing and murdered women—Indigenous women and girls.

We should also have had progress on clarifying the consultation process and a vision for the future of a better partnership with Indigenous people, including a commitment to addressing the many years of flooding on Peguis, the need for a 'perment' bridge for year-round access to Norway House and improved road maintenance and snow clearing, for example, on Provincial Road 513 to Dauphin River.

Health care: in the past several years, physicians and other health-care professionals and patients have described aspects of health care in Manitoba as failing, a disgrace, chaotic, an unbelievable mess, a dysfunctional shambling beast and in a state of dysfunction never before seen in most of our lifetimes. Health care remains a major issue, with daily concerns being raised to me and many other MLAs about long waits and care which should be much better.

The response of the PCs has been to admit they can't run an excellent public sector health-care system and to call for more privatization of health care in Manitoba. This PC approach is a direct result of the failure of PCs to manage health care in Manitoba well, from human resources to preventive health care to maintenance of hospital facilities, and much more.

There has been a failure in accountability, a failure to get wait times as short as they should be, a failure to adequately address mental health care, a failure to adequately support addictions treatment, a failure to support home care and a failure to support seniors. Manitoba Liberals have called on numerous occasions for accountability to be a fundamental principle in the delivery of health care in our province. Neither NDP nor PCs have supported our efforts.

Today, we're seeing a lot of burnout, nurses leaving, mandatory overtime causing a lot of anguish and problems and unnecessary interference with family life. The government needs to apologize. They have mismanaged things very badly, and in order to get things back on track, it needs to start with an apology and a recognition of all the bad mistakes that have been made.

Home care is critical, and yet it's not getting the attention it needs.

Seniors are important, but we don't have a seniors' advocate. We should have one.

Prevention is a very important part of the provision of health care, yet NDP and PC governments have largely failed when it comes to prevention; particularly, as an example, the prevention of diabetes. The number of people with diabetes keeps increasing at a rate which is far too fast.

Prevention of lung cancer by decreasing the exposure of Manitobans to the radioactive gas radon has been sadly neglected for too many years by NDP and PC governments. Too many people are dying from lung cancer and too many non-smokers are dying as a result of radon exposure. And yet, the province has not

acted vigorously to create better awareness and to support mitigation efforts in the one-quarter of Manitoba homes which have high radon levels.

Exposure to lead remains a big problem in our province. It can cause learning and behavioural problems in children and may lead to various mental health issues in adults. Yet, we are still not screening children age one to three, as we need to do and is being done in many other jurisdictions.

This government has failed to respect nurses by—and should have acted sooner to prevent and provide coverage for burnout. The government has failed to develop a coherent and comprehensive strategy to address the excess overtime of nursing staff. The government has failed to address—strengthen hospital capacity, which has resulted in a critical shortage of bed space and excessive wait times for patients.

The government has failed to sufficiently address the dire need to strengthen the recruitment of health-care professionals, including physicians and nurses. The government has failed to develop a comprehensive retention plan and to ensure equitable health-care delivery in rural and northern communities. The government has failed to reinstate full and proper health-care coverage for international students. And it should have recognized the disproportionate impact of inflation on living costs for students.

The government should be pushing the federal government to fund health care on an equitable basis, which would give Manitoba more money.

The government has failed to recognize hearing loss is in critical and we should be supporting hearing aids.

Government has failed to ensure that full and universal coverage is available for individuals accessing opioid agonist treatment, the standard of care. And they failed to ensure that people without appropriate health-care coverage are able to access timely treatment for opioid addictions. There is much that is short of what it should be.

Climate change: the Throne Speech is deficient in attention to climate change. Our province relies primarily on hydroelectric power to produce electricity. Today, as a province, we collectively spend between 4 and 5 billion dollars annually to purchase gasoline and diesel fuel from out of province to power motor vehicles here. One of the fundamentals of growing a provincial economy is to replace imports from other jurisdictions with products made in Manitoba. We

should be moving aggressively to replace these imports with made-in-Manitoba renewable electricity. To other provinces which predominantly use hydro-electric power are doing this.

In the second quarter of this year, British Columbia had more than 16 per cent of new vehicles as electric vehicles. Quebec had more than 12 per cent, but Manitoba had only 2.2 per cent. We are far behind where we should be. The provincial government needs to be in the lead with ensuring there are many more electrical vehicle charging stations in our province, that the purchase of electric vehicles is supported and that we're making major progress in moving our fleet of vehicles in this direction.

Biodiversity and ecological corridors: the Throne Speech makes no mention of biodiversity, its importance and how the government is going to address this important issue. I would have expected, for example, a mention of ecological corridors. Manitoba Liberals have been working with others to look at the stewardship of the wildlife corridor along the Little Saskatchewan River as it runs from Riding Mountain National Park to the Assiniboine River. We need to emphasize such ecological corridors. The federal government has announced its support for this effort and to have and maintain ecological corridors. It's time the province steps up.

Talking of the environment, the PCs say that water is our most valuable resource and every drop counts. And yet, they've failed to stop one of the most urgent threats to the groundwater in southeastern Manitoba. The development of sand mines going down into the aquifers and the potential pollution of the aquifers, which have some of the best water in our province.

On energy efficiency, I note Manitoba ranks near the bottom of all provinces on energy efficiency on a recent energy-Efficiency Canada scorecard.

Crime: the violent crime severity index has gone up under the PCs. Crime has got worse, because the PCs are doing a poor job. Under the PCs, the violent crime severity index has increased from 126 in 2015 all the way up to 160 in the latest figures from 2021. This is a big increase, which shows that the actions of the PCs to date have increased rather than decreased crime.

* (16:00)

It must be noted that the figure for Manitoba is 73 per cent higher than in the rest of Canada.

Similarly, under the PCs, the homicide rate has increased from 3.5 for 100,000 population to 4.4 per 100,000 population in 2021; a big and substantial increase. The latest numbers for Winnipeg are even worse, at 5.4 per 100,000.

For comparison, the homicide rate in Canada as a whole was just over 2 per 100,000. The rate for Manitoba is more than twice for that of Canada, and for Winnipeg, it is more than two and a half times the rate for Canada.

These are not acceptable numbers. The PCs are doing an awful job.

The approach in the Throne Speech could've been taken from the throne speech in the 1990s or the early 2000s. The headline in the Free Press after this Throne Speech was that the PCs have adopted an archaic approach to crime. It's true; the results of the increased crime under the PCs show how ineffectual they are in addressing crime. Tom Brodbeck says, the Tories pay lip service to those root causes, but they show little understanding of them. We should've seen much better than this in the Throne Speech.

For those experiencing homelessness, there's a failure of the promise-Province to read the report on those experiencing homelessness in Winnipeg. More than half of those experiencing homeless have been in the care of Child and Family Services. The CFS system needs to be overhauled so it is no longer a pathway to homelessness. This is terrible. And worse, it's not even mentioned in the Throne Speech.

It is also mentioned in the recent report that the most common age that people first experienced homelessness was age 18. The government needs to much better address the transition to adulthood. I've pointed out to the government not only the gaps in transition for those in CFS care, but the gaps for many with ADHD, autism and learning disabilities. This needs to be addressed.

To prevent homelessness among our seniors, the government needs to do much better in addressing housing for seniors. For starters, the government should be working with people at Lions Place to make sure that it's looked after by a non-profit organization which is experienced in looking after seniors. Why has this government failed to act? It is perplexing, and it is putting the lives and futures of seniors at risk.

Affordability: Manitoba has become less affordable. We see this in the dramatic increase in the use of food banks in Manitoba. At Winnipeg Harvest, there has been a 98 per cent increase in food bank use from

2019 to October 2022. This is a mark of shame on a provincial PC government. They have failed miserably to address this major problem.

There's been an adequate—an inadequate response to poverty in Manitoba. There have been tax breaks for those who are well off, but little for those on low incomes.

In the economy, there are many small businesses who are suffering, who are on a critical knife edge of whether they will survive or not. And yet, the government has stood back and let things happen without supporting small business at this very critical juncture, at this very critical point of time. We have seen prominent businesses fail, and I'm being told that there will be many more if there's no provincial action.

On immigration: while the government has been very supportive of refugees from Ukraine, they've dropped the ball with regard to refugees from Afghanistan. To date, the provincial government has been of little help in supporting those trying to escape from a terrible situation in Afghanistan and to come to Manitoba. There are many with critical skills which we badly need here. We should be doing more.

In education: there is excellent article in today's Free Press. Maggie Macintosh points out that the evidence shows that too many Manitoba children are missing out on effective reading instruction and are therefore becoming ineffective at reading, such a basic and important skill. Indeed, a number of Manitoba elementary students who fail to meet Manitobans' reading goals by grade 3 is far too high.

In particular, children with learning disabilities are suffering because they are not receiving the supports they need. I raised this in question period earlier today. Action is needed to help those with learning disabilities. We recently held a forum in River Heights which brought together experts, those with reading disabilities and learning disabilities and their family members. It's abundantly clear that change is needed to better support children and adults with learning disabilities, and yet, this is not mentioned in the Throne Speech.

In agriculture: we hear from the government that it is going to increase insurance coverage. That tells me that the risk for people in agriculture is going up. But the government could be acting to decrease risk. As an example, it's well known that tile drainage decreases risk. Ontario has a far higher proportion of its agricultural land in tile drainage, and that's partly

because they've recognized that it decreases risk and increases yields.

There should have been a mention of the importance of working with farmers on climate change to reduce nitrous oxide and methane production, and to help us address the warming climate.

Looking at the Throne Speech as a whole, it is not good enough for Manitoba and for Manitobans. It should have been much better.

The PCs have been in government for six and a half years. Their track record is poor. We have a health-care system which is in big trouble, with major staff shortages, with problems in accessing quickly emergency services. On crime, we have rising crime rates over the last six years. On climate change, we have little progress and we lag far behind where we should be. On reconciliation, the government is not taking some of the basic steps that it should be.

This Throne Speech should have been far better than it was. It's too bad. We will not support it. We don't believe this reaches a standard Throne Speech which is worthy of Manitobans, and we will vote against it.

Thank you. Merci. Miigwech.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: My speaking order indicates the virtual member, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen) would be next. Is that incorrect? I do not see a signal from the minister—no. Okay, that's fine.

It is the government's turn. I will recognize the honourable Minister for Mental Health and Community Wellness.

Hon. Sarah Guillemard (Minister of Mental Health and Community Wellness): I'm happy to rise and share a few words on the record about the Throne Speech that was presented by our leader and the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) of this province.

It's always an interesting time when Throne Speech are presented, that we get a glimpse into the next steps that the government is taking. And that's after a whole year of learning of the areas that are needed to be invested in, the areas that need to be addressed or even expanded on.

And, certainly, that's what this Throne Speech has done, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is a—reflective of a listening government that wants to help Manitobans and to take action and to get the job done. And these are key components and messages that our Premier has shared with the Cabinet and caucus: that we will

continue to listen; we will continue to take action; we will continue to get the job done.

* (16:10)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I did want to spend a little bit of time commenting on—there's been a lot of shared views within media outlets based on, you know, opposition interpretation of various comments made in the Throne Speech. And I found it interesting that one issue that the members opposite really take issue with is looking at how we can address how to reduce crime within our downtown areas to provide safety for the community, the very community that the members opposite claim to care about and want them to feel safe but, clearly, none of their actions led to that safety.

So what I found interesting, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that, you know, when our government focuses and mentions that we will be increasing law enforcement officers to help us to create a safety net within the downtown and other areas of the city to provide the responses that Manitobans have been asking us to provide, to provide the responses in a moment of crisis or a moment of need, and it's decried by members opposite that they feel that that is not a place to invest money and not a place to increase the services that we have to provide safety for Manitobans.

Now, we can go down the ideological roots and, you know, try to unpack as to why they would have such a large outcry for one—that one particular area, but I would suggest that the members opposite maybe read over BC's new plan.

And I will make note that BC is actually a government run by an NDP party. Premier Eby, he's the new premier and I'll say congratulations to him. He was newly sworn in on Friday, and on Sunday he released an interesting plan. It's called the Safer Communities Action Plan. And I'll just note that the Throne Speech was presented on November 15th of 2022, and the Safer Communities Action Plan was then presented on November 20th, about five days after the release of our Throne Speech plan.

And within the Safer Communities Action Plan, one of the bullets and main focuses is entitled: Everyone deserves to feel safe in their community.

And underneath this title—and we agree with that statement, absolutely—underneath that particular title, there are some bullet points or some sentences, and one of them says, in order to get the safe community they're going to step up enforcement in order to keep people who commit repeat violent crimes off of the streets. And in that same sentence, it says, they're

going to be strengthening and investing in intervention services to provide support and treatment they need.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the members opposite literally lit their hair on fire when they heard that we were increasing law enforcement officers to help and address the root causes of some of the crime that is happening.

Now, I'm not sure what kind of experience members opposite have within substance use disorders and addictions realms. Now, not all people who are on substances or intoxicated have violent tendencies. In fact, many of them do not. They are not capable, really, of doing violent crimes, but there are a subset who absolutely are more prone to violence, and that makes the community less safe.

And I'm not talking about, you know, the people that the members want to really hone in on, those visitors to downtown, although they can be threatening to them as well, or the people coming to work downtown—they certainly can pose a threat.

The most significant threat is to the other people, the other vulnerable population, who are unhoused and living on the streets. They are the recipients of these violent tendencies. So, BC recognizes this. BC now has a plan to move forward that—to take repeat violent criminals off of the streets but also to ensure that they are treated for, whether it's just addictions issues or if it's a co-occurring mental health issue. And that's their approach.

So I'm now wondering that this may not be an ideological argument that members opposite are trying to stage here, but rather just an uneducated stance. And so, I would encourage them to do some more reading.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we announced in our Throne Speech, as well, 1,000 new publicly funded treatment spaces. This is an incredible announcement recognizing the need that those who seek treatment can and should have those services available to them. And we need to invest in the truth that there is hope for every single person who has a substance-use disorder, that they have the ability, and we will give them the tools, to recover, to no longer be dependent on substances and to restore their relationship with family.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I can't tell how heart-wrenching it is to meet with families and individuals who are dependent on substances, who lament the loss of family, of friends, of their special community, that

they would love to have that restored, but they realize that it's the substances and the addictions that they're dealing with that really prevent that.

And many of these people who are dealing with substance-use disorder started off with having struggles with mental health and were not able to access the services they needed to address the root causes and turned to self-medicating so that they didn't have to be in pain anymore. And this is such a huge component of what we need to be discussing. When we're talking about people who have substance-use disorders, they've been in pain and they are trying to medicate themselves out of pain.

There is a better way, and we need to prove it by the investments that we are making in treatment and recovery. We need to believe on their behalf that they can once again get back to health and restore those relationships that they absolutely would love to be reconnected to.

With those few words on the record, I want to thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I want to thank my colleagues for sharing from their perspective—some very personal perspectives from their lives and their experiences here and in the community. My most cherished times in this House is not only sharing from my own personal, lived experience in various aspects but also hearing from members opposite, and of all parties, some of the lessons that they've learned through adversity and through struggles and then the hope that they can offer to those who might find themselves in dark times—that the dark times absolutely do present themselves, but there is hope and there is light.

Just one day at a time. Keep holding on. And there is help available to you, and we would love for you to reach the level of health that we all are entitled to and deserve.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Ian Bushie (Keewatinook): I also would like to begin by thanking my constituents and my family for their support in a rather difficult few years being in this position.

And it's difficult for a number of different reasons. Obviously, the pandemic is a big part of that, but it's also been difficult because of just the constituency itself—the geographic makeup of the constituency and the divide that's in this constituency.

A lot of my constituents never really felt a part of the provincial process, and more so—and I think a lot of that is a little bit of a misconception in the fact that,

you know, maybe because they reside in a First Nation community on-reserve, so federal responsibility is something that's been regularly kind of ingrained in the communities. So they never really felt a part of the provincial process, but they are.

And, in looking at the Throne Speech now and a couple different budgets, a few different Throne Speeches, I can see where those concerns legitimately come from, because that provincial process does not include them.

* (16:20)

So this Throne Speech does not include Indigenous communities to the degree that it has to. And that's just really unfortunate. The government, time and time again, across all departments, say they're going to take an all-of-government approach to Indigenous issues. And it's clearly not the case because it's clearly just a silo that they go in.

And all issues in regards to First Nation, Indigenous communities are referred to one department, when really, they encompass everything. So, in looking—when I was listening to the Throne Speech, I had to take a double take: say, did I hear that right, or did I not hear that? And the one thing I clearly did not hear is the concerns of Indigenous communities in there.

In fact, it was very disheartening—is the first reference to Indigenous reconciliation was in the same paragraph where the Throne Speech acknowledged the predecessor, Brian Pallister. So, is that the thought process, then? Is that the thinking, then, that this Throne Speech really had towards Indigenous people was that thought process of the predecessor Brian Pallister?

And I know members opposite don't want to hear that name said over and over, but the impacts are here today. Those impacts are being felt across Manitoba, across Indigenous communities every single day. So, when we talked—and you hear many, many times, and I just said it a little while ago, about the all-of-government approach—then, really do that. I heard talk about conservation, you know, and it was more about enforcement, you know.

Night hunting, illegal hunting, kind of giving them more tools to enforce, rather than—to work collaboratively with people, collaboratively with First Nation communities. And that's really what conservation should be trying to do. And instead, taking it upon enforcement, knowing that most First Nation

Indigenous communities don't have that financial ability to fight that. But again, taking the fact that, and using that against the communities is shameful.

So, in regards to the conservation component in First Nation communities, Indigenous communities in the Throne Speech—that was not there. There was also no mention of fishing. There was also no mention about commercial fishing, hunting partnerships and those kind of things that need to exist if you really want to have a reconciliation approach to First Nation communities.

And that didn't exist there. Instead, it's about catering to somebody else, catering to something else. And trying to now enforce and punish Indigenous communities for making a living, for hunting, fishing for sustenance. And that's just very unfortunate.

Another reference in there that was missing in there, the government talked a large part about health, health care. But again, no reference to First Nation and Indigenous communities in regards to health care. They will not use the word crisis when it comes to health care. They will not use the word crisis when it comes to First Nation communities. And that is clearly what is happening, it's clearly what is existing today.

I was fortunate enough to be able to take part in discussions with leadership and community members in Island Lake communities. And they're going through a crisis; they're going through a health crisis. They're going through a mental health, addictions, a suicide crisis. And what do they ask for, what have they been asking for for a long, long time now? They've been asking for a hospital facility that can help, kind of head off a lot of these concerns, to be proactive.

Fifteen thousand people live in that area. Where in Manitoba, let alone Canada, do you have a population of 15,000 people and no health-care facility? Island Lake. That's where that is. And why is that? Because this government looks at it as federal responsibility. But yet, members in those communities have a Manitoba health card, so there is an absolute responsibility from this government to play a role in health care for First Nation communities, because they are Manitobans.

And that was glaringly, again, missing out of this Throne Speech. There was so many things that this Throne Speech could've taken on and could've addressed, and at least give some kind of inspiration that they're working towards something positive, but didn't

do that. Health care is one, conservation is one, infrastructure is another.

Again, no mention of the channel project. No mention of the \$60-million cost overrun on the channel project. No mention and no—even a hint of the fact that a lot of that is due because they did not consult with First Nation communities, and instead now try and put the blame off to somebody else.

But again, another thing: Brian Pallister—maybe that's what they're trying to not-trying to avoid, that conversation to say, hey, he said he was going to get that done. And there's only one person missing out of that group now, is him.

So, was he just doing it all on his own? I don't think so. There's a number of members opposite, members of Cabinet, that were all part of those discussions also. And somehow, now, they're trying to drop off all these items, drop off all these issues that need to be addressed, and instead try and deflect that to a failed premier in Brian Pallister.

And we all know how he was. We all know the rhetoric; we all know the racist comments. But at the same time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Throne Speech is still—has Brian Pallister's print all over it, because that hasn't changed.

And again, I cite the fact that page 3 of that Throne Speech refers to my predecessor and then goes on to say this is the mandate that was laid out by the predecessor and the mandate that they're still continuing on today. So, that is clearly still Brian Pallister's agenda.

So, as much as the members opposite want to try and get away from that narrative and not talk about that past, it's not the past anymore; that's still their present and it's still something they're dealing with today.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when this Throne Speech had so much opportunity to reach out, to have those engagements with communities, to really, kind of, for Indigenous people, put forth a real sense of reconciliation; but instead took it as an opportunity to ignore it or fight against it. There is a number of different things and a number of different issues that go across all of government, across every ministerial department, but again have been avoided.

And instead, trying to create almost a division, like there's a second tier: well, we're going to have a general Manitoba discussion here, then we'll have a First Nation/Indigenous discussion over here. Well, it

also intertwines with each other, and that's something this government avoids on a regular basis. And they need to have those discussions, they need to have those interactions and have that inclusion of everybody.

Don't be fooled when this government says that's federal responsibility, because that's not the case. Like I said, Manitobans and health, they have—First Nations communities, they all have a Manitoba health card, so they are Manitobans, so there is absolute responsibility here. But they're also part of society here in Manitoba and, again, being ignored, being pushed off as second, third-class, fourth-class citizens because of where you live and where you reside. And this pandemic really kind of exasperated a lot of that and you've seen a lot of those gaps existed that this government didn't try close, tried to make bigger.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we raise all these issues, and First Nation communities raise these issues, then all of a sudden it looks like, oh, they're troublemakers, they're trying to stir up a bunch of issues, call Ottawa. Here, I'm going to write a letter for you to Ottawa, and that's the extent this government thinks they can do. And that's not it. When there is a suicide crisis in northern Manitoba, this government just writes a letter to Ottawa and says, this is what we're going to do.

Well, why not just be a part of the solution? Don't create a delay, don't create the problem to be bigger, don't kick it down the road to somebody else; actually be part of the solution. Look past those barriers, look past that boundary, look past that reserve line and really, let's work towards a solution that benefits us all. Because it's something that, overall, will benefit everybody. Because if you head off issues now, you deal with situations now, that helps you down the road.

Preventative. That's something this government has not done for a long time: be preventative. Instead, it's always being reactive. Being reactive to situation that arise of the day. Being reactive to a crisis, even though they will never acknowledge the word crisis. Never acknowledge the word 'crisis' when it comes to a pandemic, the addictions crisis, the health-care crisis, crisis in the hospitals. Will never be acknowledged, but it is.

* (16:30)

And you're not just putting your head in the sand and just trying to avoid that. Let's hit it head on. And the Throne Speech had a chance to do that.

And a lot of things that this government says as a way to kind of deflect and get themselves out of it, they say, well, did you not know there was a worldwide pandemic on? We all did. But did you? Did you know there was a worldwide pandemic on? Because you use it as an excuse when you were short-funding things. When you were cutting things, that was the excuse. When you were failing, that was your excuse.

But then, when you want to take advantage of it, you say, oh great, we're coming out of this in a positive way. Well no, you ultimately did less for less and you see that. You see that in hospitals, you see that in the schools.

And Mr. Deputy Speaker, when it comes to the schools in our communities, there's these big investments and big announcements that are being made, but they're not actually making it there. They're not actually making it to the bedside, to the classroom, to the community, to the road. They're not making it there, because it is just an announcement. And time and time again, it just—there's these grand announcements, but you know what, you're just making up for a cut you did, and at the end of the day, it's net less—it's a net loss.

So if you say, we're going to announce, you know, X number of dollars for something but you cut way more than that previously, I don't know. You think Manitobans are going to be fooled by that and they're not. Manitobans are smart, Manitobans can see what's going on.

And Manitobans were very disappointed in this Throne Speech because it had an opportunity to deal with so many things. Instead, this government just had that specific tunnel vision; we're going to deal with one issue; we're going to deal with two issues. There's so many issues in Manitoba. We need to deal with them all.

Crime is not the only issue. Health is not the only issues. Education not the only issue. Indigenous not the only issue. But you need to be able to deal with them all in a truly all-of-government approach. And that's something that's not existed here because of just dealing in those silos, dealing in those little departments, to say that's not my responsibility, that's this person's responsibility.

They do that within themselves, let alone doing that out to pawn it off to municipal governments, federal government. They're not dealing with it themselves because they're not problem solvers in that way. They don't want to be problem solvers in that way,

because that means they're going to have to take responsibility.

And this Throne Speech failed to take responsibility. It failed to address the needs of Manitobans. It just came to be the base; the PC Party base says, this is the narrative we have to have and that's what we're going to do. And again, tunnel vision. And tunnel vision is not what's needed here in Manitoba. We need to open up to all of Manitoba so everybody can benefit and everybody can be better off.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Hon. Scott Johnston (Minister of Seniors and Long-Term Care): Thank you—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Johnston: Obviously a crowd favourite, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Thank you.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as Minister of Seniors and Long-Term Care, it is my pleasure to be here today to address the Throne Speech. I am so proud to be part of a government as we continue to stand in the best interests of Manitobans. Our government has always and will continue to recognize the challenges Manitobans face and will continue to address these challenges.

I would like to take this opportunity here today to recognize and express my deepest appreciation for the constituents of Assiniboia for continuing to give me the opportunity to represent them in this Manitoba Legislature, such a place of honour.

Mr. Speaker, since being elected to the constituency of Assiniboia, I have been humbled and honoured to represent this wonderful riding. And I'm very fortunate; I'm one of the few elected representatives to this Legislature who's been able to represent two outstanding constituencies.

I was first elected in 2016 to the constituency of Assiniboia and that's the constituency where I grew up as a child. And I know that the current member from St. James is also, too, certainly someone who is part of the community. He lives just down the street from the house I grew up in and where my mom continues to live, and I see him and his children on a regular basis.

So, although we don't agree with each other philosophically, I do wish him well in representing such a great constituency.

I've been fortunate. I have raised two children with my wife in Assiniboia, and I'm certainly pleased

to be part of that constituency which, due to the boundary change, I was fortunate enough to be given the nomination from my—the people of—constituency of the PC association and very fortunate to be elected to represent that area.

My mother, in fact, still resides in our family home in St. James-Assiniboia and certainly, it's an area that's near and dear to our hearts.

Since coming into office, Premier Heather Stefanson and our government have continued to support the people—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

I'd just remind the honourable minister of my earlier comment about referring to any member by their surname, which is not allowed by the rules. One must refer to the member by their portfolio or their constituency, and I'm sure it's an honest mistake, as it's not the first time today. But it is my duty to inform the minister that that's incorrect.

Mr. Johnston: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I do appreciate your guidance. And I should know better after being in the House for as long as I have, so I do apologize.

Our government has created the Department of Seniors and Long-Term Care, which further commits to seniors and the caregivers of this province. And it was really an honour to be appointed by the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) to this new and very important portfolio.

Our Premier recognized that health care needed to be expanded and, as minister, I'm thrilled to be able to address the priorities given to implement seniors' initiatives such as the Stevenson review, which was brought forward by the Premier when she was minister of Health.

As a government, we are proud to say that we will be implementing all 17 recommendations of the Stevenson review. The majority of these recommendations have been completed; however, we are continuing to work towards implementing all 17. And some of those 17 recommendations—important recommendations—has been to increase the ratio of staffing for our seniors, which we continue to proceed with on an ongoing basis.

Mr. Speaker, our government has committed to establishing a seniors strategy which will enhance the lives of Manitobans. I'm sure that members of the House have heard me say many occasions that we are working diligently to establish the seniors strategy,

and I'm very much looking forward to presenting that to the House.

I know the member—or, the Leader of the Opposition is very keen on supporting a number of initiatives that we will be bringing forward. So I look forward to the support of the opposition when we work together to satisfy the needs of seniors in Manitoba.

As minister, I have certainly been very fortunate to meet and discuss with many stakeholders to help address the needs and concerns that seniors have.

* (16:40)

They are such passionate people, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I know that all people who have agendas working towards the good people of Manitoba are passionate but, you know, I'm always humbled and impressed by how passionate these organizations and these people are to enhance the lives of seniors. It's frankly encouraging and motivating.

On top of this, we have reached out through Engage Manitoba and reached over 10,000—had 10,000 responses to the questionnaires that we had put forward to Manitobans on how to enhance seniors' lives, and those responses are being put together as we speak in the development of the seniors strategy.

And I was fortunate to be able to visit many communities in Manitoba, Selkirk and Dauphin and Brandon, Steinbach and others, just to name a few.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize and—or, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd like to recognize and commend the member from Portage la Prairie. The member from Portage la Prairie stepped in and was very, very helpful to me when I wasn't able to travel due to an injury I sustained which didn't allow me to fly. And the member from Portage la Prairie really walked in there for me and dealt with and engaged with the people of northern Manitoba, and I wanted to thank him publicly.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Throne Speech has made it clear that seniors are definitely top of mind. It has recognized the need to enhance care for seniors, and this government will continue to do that through commentary in the Throne Speech. Our government is committed to seniors of Manitoba and is committed to improving long-term-care needs, which was identified in the Throne Speech.

As Minister of Seniors and Long-Term Care, I recognize that the baby boom population is significantly increasing in age, and we need to be responsive

to this. We need to be proactive, not reactive, and that's ultimately what the seniors strategy is going to accomplish. We have good people working tremendously hard to address the future of this demographic scenario.

I'm also pleased with the major health initiatives that have been prominent in the Throne Speech. The \$200-million investment in recruitment, training and retention is a major commitment towards the needs of Manitobans, and as well, certainly, the seniors will be—have an advantage because of that initiative.

Over the past several months, my department of long-term care and seniors, in collaboration with other departments across the government, has come forward with a number of initiatives that have impacted the lives of seniors in Manitoba, Deputy Speaker, to strengthen our health care and to help make their ends meet.

In April, just two months after our department was created, we committed \$15 million in the initial funding to support and implement the 17 recommendations of the Stevenson review, including infectious controls, housekeeping and health-care aides. This initiative was funded and provided to strengthen health care, to enhance the capacity of long-term-care facilities across this province.

And, in addition, Mr. Deputy Speaker, funding: this government provided another \$16 million to expand staffing and training in personal-care homes to fulfill further recommendations of the Stevenson report. And I would point out that the opposition—the opposition NDP and the opposition Liberals—voted against this.

But we continue to meet the challenges. In spite of fear mongering, we intend to meet the challenges.

Mr. Speaker, that is a total of \$31 million that we've invested to strengthen health care in our personal-care homes.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we've worked jointly with the Health Department, investing much further support by implementing the cochlear implant external sound replacements. We've worked with the Department of Health and invested \$1.3 million, working with the Alzheimer Society to expand the First Link program; \$3.4 million to invest tuition support for uncertified health care, to enhance their skills and to provide needed help to the service industry of seniors.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's been my pleasure to speak on behalf of the Throne Speech and to indicate the initiatives that I am taking, as minister, to fuller

support—fully—more fully support the seniors of Manitoba. And, again, I look forward to bringing forward our seniors strategy with all of the initiatives that we've heard from Manitobans that we can do.

And I have listened to the opposition, and I think that there's a number of initiatives that we're bringing forward where we're in sync. So, I look forward to their support as we bring forward.

So, I fully support this Throne Speech and I'm proud of our government to implement it.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Jamie Moses (St. Vital): I'm really happy to have this opportunity to speak to the Throne Speech; I think Throne Speech that kind of disappointed a lot of Manitobans who hoped, certainly, for a better, brighter vision of what Manitoba could be.

Certainly, that wasn't on display with this Throne Speech, but I know that a lot of folks on our side who are excited about bringing forward a more positive, more hopeful, more ambitious vision for what Manitoba could be. And I know that those are the things that we are striving to do, because that's, frankly, what we are hearing from Manitobans, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But before I go into my specific comments on the Throne Speech, I'd like to take a minute, since this is the first chance I've had to speak since the last municipal election here that we've had, to thank and congratulate the good people of St. Vital, of southeast Winnipeg, of all Winnipeg, of all the municipalities across the province, who participated in municipal elections by either just voting themselves, being engaged, volunteering or even putting their names on the ballot themselves.

Obviously, as us being elected officials, we know the challenge of running and being on the ballot as part of the democracy, and so I want to thank all those people for do that—doing that, that hard work, to represent their values and try to represent their community in a larger way.

And I also want to congratulate those people, specifically in southeast Winnipeg, who won, and of course, that's city councillor, Brian Mayes; so, congratulations to him for—on his re-election.

And congratulations, as well, to many of the school trustees in the Louis Riel School Division, and that includes: Cindy Turner and Francine Champagne of Louis Riel School Division, in Ward 1; in Ward 2, Irene Nordheim and Chris Sigurdson, congratulations

to them; Ward 3, Sandy Nemeth, Darlene Gerrior, Ryan Palmquist, congratulations; as well as Ward 4, Chipalo Simunyola and Pamela Kowaluk [*phonetic*]. Congratulations to all of those school trustees who were elected and are now working in our school division to make sure that we can serve and deliver on the goal of educating all of the young people in our communities.

And so, with that, you know, I think it's important to recognize, you know, the contributions that those folks are making, especially, you know, with school trustees, you know, given the history of that role and that discussion around that role the past few years, specifically with bill 64 introduced by this government, a bill that was obviously disastrous.

Obviously, well—many, many long descriptions about the follies of bill 64, and I think a lot of Manitobans heard those problems with it and spoke up, raised their voices and clearly described why that bill needed to be removed and, you know, it was ultimately, you know, abandoned. The failed plan was abandoned by this government.

* (16:50)

So, you know, since the school trustee role was threatened in that bill, I just wanted to take a minute there to specifically congratulate school trustees who are now putting their name forward.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd like to move on to the Throne Speech and think about, you know, on a broader sense, the purpose of having a Throne Speech. The purpose of the Throne Speech is clearly to lay out a government's vision for Manitoba for the future.

And when we looked at the Throne Speech, we looked at the words, the text, the messages the government's trying to send through this Throne Speech, we're left pretty disappointed, pretty confused about what the goal and the objective of this government is.

Quite frankly, we see the challenges. People of Manitoba see the challenges; we're paying attention. We're paying attention to the world and the challenges around us.

And those challenges start with a crumbling and a crisis in our health-care system. Those challenges extend to affordability crisis, where people are struggling to pay for their grocery bills and struggling to pay to move around our province, where there's a gas bill. And, you know, a crisis that people are facing in terms of mental health challenges, and trying to access those services.

And people are trying to—also facing a crisis when it comes to affordability around education, post-secondary education, and being able to access those services to enhance their own lives, and educate themselves and better their own future. It's a struggle to be able to afford and access those things in Manitoba.

When we look at all those challenges, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and not even including the challenges that we've faced—we've seen obvious as a result of the pandemic, such as the challenges around personal-home cares; challenges around accessing critical health services at a time—in a timely fashion; accessing surgical—surgeries that might be critical to your quality of life. All challenges that were exacerbated as a course throughout the pandemic.

Those challenges that we all see and we all are clearly aware of don't have solutions for them in this Throne Speech. The government doesn't offer those type of solutions for the problems Manitobans are facing.

And all of those challenges that Manitobans are facing doesn't even mention the fact that we're in a critical climate crisis. A climate crisis that impacts us all, regardless of our political ideology, regardless of where we fit on the political spectrum; the climate crisis impacts us all. And is there anything in this Throne Speech that will adequately address that major crisis, or any of the other crises I've mentioned? Not really, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Manitobans are left wanting more. And, quite frankly, they're asking themselves, has this government learned anything over the past seven years? Have they learned anything from their time in government, to bring forward a more thoughtful, a more appropriate, a more effective Throne Speech this year? I think the answer is quite clearly no.

We're seeing in this Throne Speech approaches that perhaps might've worked in the—not even the 2000s, maybe not even the '90s, maybe in the 1980s, where they're looking for a policing-forward approach as a way to tackle homelessness and mental health crises. And it's right here in the Throne Speech.

It says, the government will continue to tackle the underlying issues of homelessness, addictions and mental health by providing increased supports for front-line law enforcement officers, through technology, specialized training and increased police presence and supports for more officers.

That's how they're going to tackle the issue of homelessness, addiction and mental health. That's

their plan; by more police, more police officers, increase a police presence with technology—so I'm assuming that's some sort of a camera system where they can watch what's happening throughout the province. That's their plan for dealing with homelessness, addiction and mental health.

That is just out of this world. It's out of this world. You know, I could ask, you know, high school students, I could ask elementary students about how you would deal with people who don't have houses, don't have a place to stay. I could ask them about, you know, how to deal with challenges of mental health. I could ask them about how you deal with challenges around addiction. And I bet you they could come up with a dozen better answers than more police. Because that's not a solution to that problem. It's not a solution to that problem. Police play an important role, but it's not necessarily the solution for mental health, addictions and homelessness.

And so, for the government to propose that as their solution to these problems is ridiculous and, quite frankly, it's insulting to the intelligence of Manitobans who know that's not the right approach. It's an approach that maybe you could have sold to Manitobans maybe 40, 50 years ago. But in—today, in 2022, after this government has been in power for seven years, they obviously haven't learned any lessons and are put forwarding—putting forward this awful and atrocious plan.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we look at these issues, we look to see, you know, what can we be doing? What can we be doing to address homelessness?

And people often say, well, you know, what would we do, what is our plan? Well, we've addressed our plan: we're going to work with partners, we're going to work with agencies to find houses for the homeless people, for people who are challenged when it comes to finding housing in Manitoba here. We've outlined our plan to address this, to reduce and eliminate chronic homelessness in Manitoba.

We've clearly laid out our plan. We know it's effective because it's been done in other jurisdictions. We know it can work here, too, if we work together and bring these solution-focused people around the table and actually work to solve this problem. None of that involves more policing and increased police presence, as was offered up in this Throne Speech.

So, we're serious about these issues, we're serious about our solutions to these issues and we know that

we can do it. We look forward to continuing to communicate these plans and these—how we're going to be able to solve these critical issues with more Manitobans in the coming weeks and months as we get closer and closer to the election, whether it is in October of 2023 or whether it's sooner.

And so, I will move on to a few other areas where, in this Throne Speech, it's been clear that this government has failed. And I'd like to begin, Mr. Deputy Speaker, by addressing a critical issue which I think doesn't get as much light shined on it as other issues, and that is the challenges that people face at getting adult education and adult literacy programs.

You know, this past June, I was very fortunate to attend the graduation ceremony for the St. Vital Adult Learning Centre, where I was really lucky to witness and just get a chance to chat with those graduates, hear some of their experiences and actually present a scholarship to one of those individuals. She was, you know, a very wonderful young woman who graduated from the St. Vital Adult Learning Centre and, obviously, you know, overcame some challenges in her life and is very, very proud, and I think the whole community is proud of her accomplishment in her graduation.

And that's a success story, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Unquestionably, it's a success story that, you know, we all experienced. But we need more of those. We need more 'suxtess'—success stories just like that.

Now, that young woman is planning to use the scholarship funds to further her education this year, which I know she has already began in this past September. And through that process, she is going to

now put herself in a better position through her education, through her improving her chances to get—you know, get a good-paying job right here in Manitoba.

And that's exactly what we want. We want to move people from a situation where they, you know, are looking to improve themselves to where they've already done it, they've already been able to access that and they've now achieved—passed a goal and are looking to achieve even more.

That happens because this person had the drive, had the intelligence, had the skill, had the know-how and the want to do this. They just needed a—perhaps a little help with some supports that the St. Vital Adult Learning Centre was able to provide through some of their wraparound supports.

Now, why can't we do this more? Why can't we do this more, where we address some of the challenges that people face in getting more education to improve their lives and their families' lives? And this is exactly what we need to be doing when it comes to adult learning and adult education in our province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is well documented by, you know, renowned expert Jim Silver, who—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for St. James—sorry, for St. Vital (Mr. Moses), will have seven minutes remaining.

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

Have a good evening, everybody.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, November 21, 2022

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