

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

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-Second Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
AL TOMARE, Nello	Transcona	NDP
ASAGWARA, Uzoma	Union Station	NDP
BRAR, Diljeet	Burrows	NDP
BUSHIE, Ian	Keewatinook	NDP
CLARKE, Eileen, Hon.	Agassiz	PC
COX, Cathy	Kildonan-River East	PC
CULLEN, Cliff, Hon.	Spruce Woods	PC
DRIEDGER, Myrna, Hon.	Roblin	PC
EICHLER, Ralph	Lakeside	PC
EWASKO, Wayne, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	PC
FONTAINE, Nahanni	St. Johns	NDP
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	Brandon West	PC
ISLEIFSON, Len	Brandon East	PC
JOHNSON, Derek, Hon.	Interlake-Gimli	PC
JOHNSTON, Scott, Hon.	Assiniboia	PC
KHAN, Obby, Hon.	Fort Whyte	PC
KINEW, Wab	Fort Rouge	NDP
KLEIN, Kevin E., Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
LAGASSÉ, Bob	Dawson Trail	PC
LAGIMODIERE, Alan	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, Hon.	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, Hon.	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>	Morden-Winkler	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, March 10, 2023

The House met at 10 a.m.

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

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 morning, everybody. Please be seated.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

**Bill 25—The Workers Compensation
Amendment Act
(Wildfire Firefighters)**

Hon. Jon Reyes (Minister of Labour and Immigration): I, seconded by the Minister of Natural Resources—I move, seconded by the Minister of Natural Resources and Northern Development (Mr. Nesbitt), that Bill 25, The Workers Compensation Amendment Act (Wildfire Firefighters); Loi modifiant la Loi sur les accidents du travail (pompiers affectés aux incendies échappés), be now read for a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Reyes: Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to introduce Bill 25, The Workers Compensation Amendment Act (Wildfire Firefighters), which will include wildfire firefighters within the presumptive cancer and heart injury provisions other Manitoba firefighters are

currently eligible for under The Workers Compensation Act.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

**Bill 14—The Budget Implementation and
Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2023**

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Finance): I move, seconded by the Minister of Labour and Immigration, that Bill 14, The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2023, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Cullen: I'm pleased to introduce Bill 14, The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2023. This bill implements historic tax relief for Manitobans, along with other administrative changes. These measures provide the largest tax cut in our province's history, and continues to make Manitoba more affordable and competitive.

I urge all members of the Legislative Assembly to support this bill in order to secure these tax savings for Manitobans. Without the passage of this bill, tax changes proposed in Budget 2023 will not come to bear for Manitobans. If the budget passes by June 1st, Manitobans will see an immediate addition of approximately \$50 per month to their paycheques, starting in July.

Once again, Madam Speaker, I look forward to this bill receiving unanimous consent in this House so Manitoba families can keep more of their hard-earned money starting July.

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

Further introduction of bills?

Bill 228—The Pay Transparency Act

MLA Malaya Marcelino (Notre Dame): I move, seconded by the member for St. James (Mr. Sala), that Bill 228, The Pay Transparency Act; Loi sur la transparence salariale, be now read for a first time.

Motion presented.

MLA Marcelino: I'm pleased to introduce Bill 228, The Pay Transparency Act.

Bill 228 would be a step towards stopping gender, disability and racial discrimination in the workplace.

Bill 228 would require employers to include pay information on public job postings. It would also prevent employers from seeking pay history about employees, and it would require private sector employers with more than 100 employees to file a pay audit report that would include information broken down by gender and diversity.

Bill 228 is a step towards pay equity for all, and I look forward to unanimous support from this House.

Thank you.

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

Committee reports? Tabling of reports? Ministerial statements?

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

The Back Door Youth Centre

Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Midland): The Back Door Youth Centre in Carman was started in 1990 as a drop-in centre for area youth.

Since its humble beginnings, the Back Door has now evolved to providing six scheduled programs for about 45 students. They also serve a weekly lunch for 60-plus students. In total, the Back Door provides a drop-in centre for over 200 youth from Carman and the surrounding communities.

The Pillar of Hope Capital Project is a \$1.8-million expansion and renovation project currently under construction, consisting of a 4,096-square-foot addition and a full renovation to the adjoining existing building.

The new building will include a 40-by-60 gymnasium with a 20-foot ceiling. The entire building will be wheelchair accessible, including the washrooms. The new commercial kitchen will not only enhance food preparation, but plans are in place for programming to teach students to cook healthy meals. Staff will also have offices for program preparation.

To date, the Back Door has raised \$1.43 million in grants and donations, including a \$25,000 grant from the Province of Manitoba. The centre continues to actively fundraise to fully pay for this impressive facility.

The Back Door Youth Centre provides a safe, enjoyable place for young people to gather. The centre continues to receive widespread community support.

We wish the Back Door Youth Centre in Carman continued success and thank them for the great work they do for the young people of our area.

Madam Speaker: Members' statements?

Pay Transparency

MLA Malaya Marcelino (Notre Dame): Pay transparency has become an increasingly desired asset in the job market, as more Manitobans want open discussions about their wages while they grapple with skyrocketing costs of living and ongoing pay discrepancies.

Despite other attempts in workplace policy and in regulations, we still see gender, disability and racial discrimination in the workplace. There are gaps in who currently benefits from pay transparency regulation, depending on if they are a federally or provincially regulated employee.

One of the hidden ways in which this occurs is through unfair pay practices for marginalized people. Because it is not socially normalized for people to discuss salary or compensation openly, discriminatory pay practices are able to continue without redress.

* (10:10)

Women in Manitoba make up almost 60 per cent of all minimum wage workers. The current minimum wage is not a livable wage, and because of the high cost of living and continually rising inflation, any adjustments to the minimum wage that the government has offered are null. Knowing that the most marginalized people including women, gender-diverse peoples, single mothers are disproportionately living at minimum wage, which is already not adequate, effectively means this government is leaving them behind.

Today, I have introduced a bill which seeks to solve this problem. Bill 228 seeks to make salary or pay transparent from the outset with applications, prevents employers from seeking pay history about employees and requires large private sector employers to file a pay audit report that would include information broken down by gender and diversity.

This issue is a real and material contributor to poverty and marginalization of already marginalized communities, and correctly addressing the matter would show that we do truly care about pay equity.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Transcona Legion Ladies Auxiliary

Hon. James Teitsma (Minister of Consumer Protection and Government Services): Madam Speaker, 95 years is a long time; 95 years ago, it was 1928 and the town of Transcona was young but bustling. They had electricity, but not much of it. Indoor plumbing was uncommon. The now ancient CN 2747 steam locomotive engine resting at a park along Plessis avenue had just rolled off the production line in Transcona two years earlier. The longest serving premier in Manitoba history, John Bracken, was about one third of the way through his 19-year term in office.

One thing that wasn't so different 95 years ago than today was the flood of Ukrainian immigrants flowing into Transcona. River East Transcona is experiencing a higher per capita influx of Ukrainian immigrants fleeing Russia's unjust war than any other school division in Canada. I wouldn't be surprised if the same stat was true 95 years ago.

Yes, 95 years is a long time. Some things change and some things stay the same.

One of the things that stayed the same is the Transcona Legion and their then-newly established ladies auxiliary. Yes, just over 95 years ago on January 28th, 1928, the ladies auxiliary of the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 7 in Transcona was born and they have been active in our community ever since. They generally meet monthly. So, to put that in perspective, that is 1,143 monthly meetings, although I imagine a few of them may have been cancelled during COVID. They regularly hold fundraisers, everything from meat draws to champagne breakfasts or selling some oh-so-delicious perogies. And they give back to our community in so, so many ways. They have supported so many generations of Transconians that there is not a community member that has not been touched by their generous hearts.

They are an essential part of the fabric of our community, and I am so pleased that some of them could join us today. So please join me in welcoming Celeste West, the president, Joan Sylvester and Joan Percy and in congratulating them on 95 amazing years of service in our community.

Budget 2023

Mr. Jamie Moses (St. Vital): Every day, I hear from constituents and neighbours in St. Vital who are struggling.

Members on our side of the House hear every day about Manitobans who are suffering because of the decisions from this PC government, the ones that they've made. We hear about the impacts of ever-increasing wait times in emergency rooms. Manitobans tell me about how long they've been waiting for their surgery or diagnostic tests.

St. Vital seniors, under this government, now have to travel longer for blood work because of the PC's privatization plan, and residents in southeast Winnipeg remember the closure of the QuickCare clinic. We see the crisis in staffing shortages in our health-care system and know that Manitobans deserve better.

We feel the cuts in education as classrooms get bigger and support services are harder to find. We know it's been difficult. And Manitobans are looking for hope.

Unfortunately, that was dashed with this year's budget, which failed to address childhood poverty, failed to address the climate crisis, failed to make life affordable for renters and failed to provide meaningful health care for international students and failed to provide any meaningful plan to fix our health-care system.

This budget just doesn't make up for the years of cuts to our health-care system and education. And we can't trust them not to make these same cuts again. After seven years of cuts, Manitobans cannot trust the failed Pallister-Stefanson governments.

But there's hope. With an election this year, there is hope. Manitobans know the challenges we all face because of this government's poor record. The good news is that the NDP team is ready to get to work. And I'm glad to be part of the Manitoba NDP—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Moses: —a team ready to deliver the change, fix—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Moses: —the chaos in health care and deliver for Manitobans.

Birtle Collegiate's Wellness Room

Hon. Greg Nesbitt (Minister of Natural Resources and Northern Development): A port in the storm, a compass in the lives of adolescents and youth, Birtle Collegiate has opened its doors to a student-centred Wellness Room, the first of its kind for their students in grades 5 to 12.

Our new Wellness Room at BCI is simply a quiet, calming space for students to work, study, read, breathe and take a mindful break when needed, said BCI counsellor Josie Simard, and teacher Tanis Cheasley.

Although the school had been proactive regarding the mental health and well-being of students long before COVID-19, the Wellness Room became a collaborative development that grew from the drawn-out effects that the pandemic brought. The two teachers saw a struggling student body that needed help coping.

Of course, every plan requires financing, which resulted in an application to the Teachers' Idea Fund through the Department of Education. The grant money was to be used for many things, including art sessions and supplies, training, increased guidance time and presentations.

COVID-19 restrictions made all the plans originally outlined in the grant not possible, prompting a change in direction. The grant committee agreed to allow the school to use a portion of the funds to create a space for students that could be used long-term, which not only promotes mental wellness but provides the space to practise taking care of themselves in a positive way.

The newly established Wellness Room at BCI adds even further to the work the school has done in prioritizing mental health by providing a safe space. The room is decorated with positive quotes and visual reminders of how to practise deep breathing and use different mental health tools.

Congratulations to the Birtle Collegiate for continuing the ongoing work of providing resources and education around mental health for both staff and students.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker's Statement

Madam Speaker: I would like to take a moment now to draw your attention to the Clerk's table, as we have a significant birthday to observe today. Someone who has given her heart and soul to this Assembly for several decades is deserving of some special attention on this occasion.

I would ask the House to please join me in singing Happy Birthday to our Clerk, Patricia Chaychuk.

Happy Birthday was sung.

Madam Speaker: And apparently there's treats, sugar treats and cheese and crackers and maybe some other

things in the Clerk's office if anybody wants to drop by.

* * *

Madam Speaker: And in the—in keeping with that happy spirit, I—we turn now to oral questions.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Dedicated Stroke Unit Budget 2022 Promise

MLA Uzoma Asagwara (Union Station): Madam Speaker, just like Brian Pallister, the Premier says one thing but does another when it comes to health care. In the Premier's last budget, her government promised a new stroke unit for Manitobans, and year after year this has been promised by this government and not delivered on.

We know the PC government's cuts have decimated the neurology program in Manitoba, with doctors leaving and patients waiting for tests and treatment. A new acute stroke unit is needed.

Can the government and the Premier tell the House why her government has failed to keep its promise to create a new stroke unit for Manitoba patients?

* (10:20)

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Premier): Before I get to the issue at hand, I just want to also extend a very happy birthday to the Clerk.

You have been an absolutely incredible individual who's helped us out so much in the Legislative Assembly. We want to just thank you so much for everything that you do, and happy birthday.

Madam Speaker, we also recognized—certainly, in this budget and prior to this, we've been making significant investments in health care in the province of Manitoba. In fact, 22 per cent increase over our time in office to the health cut—care budget. This last year, \$668 million more dedicated to health care in this budget—a 9.2 per cent increase. That's more investments, not less.

We certainly recognize there's more to do. That's why we're committed to doing that for Manitobans.

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

Health Sciences Centre ER Nurse Vacancy Rate

MLA Uzoma Asagwara (Union Station): Madam Speaker, you'll notice in the Premier's response, she made absolutely no mention of a new stroke unit in Manitoba, and the most recent data we have shows the depths of the crisis in our health-care system.

FIPPA documents, that I'll table, show the vacancy rate for nurses at the Health Sciences emergency room was at 35 per cent in the emergency and critical care departments. That's the situation in our biggest hospital right now, and it means workers are being run off their feet while patients are suffering. This is a crisis and it needs to be recognized as such.

Will the Premier acknowledge there's a crisis at the Health Sciences Centre emergency room?

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Premier): Well, I appreciate the questions from the members opposite, because it allows me to put some facts on the record, Madam Speaker.

The facts are, Madam Speaker, that we are investing \$200 million in our health human resources. We recognize the challenges that are faced, not just here in Manitoba, but right across this great country of ours. We recognize there's challenges with shortages of health-care providers, so we are making significant investments there.

We are also making significant investments—\$110 million last year, a—\$30 million this year in our surgical and diagnostic backlogs, Madam Speaker. We recognize there's more work to be done. We are also investing more than \$50 million, along with the Health Sciences Centre Foundation, towards more operating capacity at the Health Sciences Centre alone, which will help reduce those backlogs.

So, we are making significant investments in our health-care system, a 9.2 per cent increase in this budget alone, Madam Speaker. We will continue to deliver services for Manitobans.

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

Health System Reform Government Record

MLA Uzoma Asagwara (Union Station): Madam Speaker, the biggest challenge our health-care system faces is the fact that this government doesn't know how to run it.

The reason we're in this health-care crisis is because of the cuts ordered by Brian Pallister and implemented by the Premier as Health minister. On this side of the House, we know those cuts hurt health care, but the Premier seems oblivious. According to her, and I quote, Madam Speaker: I will say, though, the consolidation that did take place, you know, we got some pretty good results. End quote.

These are the results, Madam Speaker—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

MLA Asagwara: One in three vacant positions at HSC emergency and broken promises and empty announcements for seniors and patients who need stroke care in Manitoba.

Does the Premier agree that Brian Pallister's cuts to health care hurt?

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Premier): Madam Speaker, we have made more than a 22 per cent increase into the investment into our health-care budget since we came to office in 2016. That is more dollars going towards health care in our province, not less.

It allows me, Madam Speaker, the opportunity to talk about all of the wonderful investments that we are making in our health-care system, because we want to ensure that our health-care system is there for those who need it: \$130 million to reduce the diagnostic and surgical backlog; continuing to invest \$200 million into the health human resource action plan; a \$120-million infusion into the Pharmacare program.

Now, I know members opposite want to laugh about that, Madam Speaker, but we don't think it's funny. There are Manitobans out there, seniors who—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Stefanson: —have access to this—services. We are going to make sure that our seniors have access to the Pharmacare that they need when they need it.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for St. James. The honourable member for St. James.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order.

Child-Care Services \$10-a-Day Program

Mr. Adrien Sala (St. James): Just like Brian Pallister, this Premier says one thing but does another.

Parents in child-care centres were very disappointed to learn that we will not see \$10-a-day child care in Manitoba.

The government's own documents state clearly—
[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Sala:—that parents will have to pay double—\$20 a day—for child care, nearly 20 per cent of the year. It's just one more example of how PC announcements—
[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Sala:—don't match reality.

Why is the government failing to deliver on \$10-a-day child care for Manitoba families?

Madam Speaker: I'm going to ask for everybody's co-operation, please. I'm having difficulty hearing.

There is a noise level in here that, if that carries through oral questions, I'm not going to be able to hear. And if you want me to be able to see if somebody is breaking any rules or to respond to any particular issues, I'm going to need to be able to hear.

So, I'm asking for everybody's co-operation, please.

Hon. Wayne Ewasko (Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning): Thank you for that guidance. It's unfortunate that, once again, the NDP are showing how absolutely disrespectful they are for not only the rules in the House, but also the rules outside this Chamber, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, \$10 a day for regular day child care. There are so many Manitobans that are absolutely thrilled with this announcement three years ahead of schedule. The only reason, Madam Speaker, that the member for St. James is so upset today is because they didn't do it; they couldn't do it; they had no plans; they couldn't partner with the sector.

We're following through. We're getting it done for the affordability of all Manitobans.

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

Mr. Sala: The minister can spin all he wants, but all he's doing is proving why Manitobans cannot trust this government.

The government's own documents state clearly that we do not have \$10-a-day child care in Manitoba. I'll table the documents so the minister can review them. It's just another failure for the PC government.

Manitoba parents were told one thing, but when the bill comes due, they realize it's just another broken promise from this PC government. There's a real opportunity, Madam Speaker, to actually invest in making child care more affordable by making all child care \$10 a day.

Will the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) do so today?
[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Ewasko: Madam Speaker, contrary to what the member from St. James is putting on the record today, which I hope he will stand up and apologize to the tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands of Manitobans that are benefitting from this—[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

* (10:30)

Mr. Ewasko: Madam Speaker, I need to read this to you. So, it's—I'm reading a text and a quote from a Manitoban. It says: Hi, Minister. It is blah, blah, blah. I just read the exciting news about \$10-a-day daycare and—[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Ewasko:—I just wanted to say thank you. Between child care and driving to the city, it was actually cheaper for me not to work. I am so excited to get back to work and actually be able to afford to—our child in daycare full time. Thank you so, so much.

On behalf of our government, Madam Speaker, I am proud—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Order. Order. I'm going to call members to order.

The honourable member for St. James, on a final supplementary.

Mr. Sala: We know the PCs froze child-care funding for seven years. Manitobans know that. This Premier was the minister responsible for that freeze under Brian Pallister, and the Premier even raised fees on nursery school children. It's a terrible record and it's being made worse by the fact that the government is misleading Manitobans about how much they'll have to pay for child care.

The government's own documents show—
[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Sala:—that they're not being honest, and we table those today.

Will the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) listen and actually implement \$10-a-day child care for every day of the year today?

Madam Speaker: I'm going to ask the Minister of Education, in reading from a text, he should also then table that information for the House, as he read directly from a text. But I will now recognize him to respond.

Mr. Ewasko: So, Madam Speaker, it's just unfortunate that the member opposite is standing in the House and putting absolutely disinformation on the record.

To read directly from the news release, which is public, which, you can read it—I know that literacy is difficult for over there, but—Manitoba is going above and beyond our commitment by maxing out all parent fees to a \$10-a-day for children 12 and under for regular hours of care. And we are achieving this historic goal three years in advance, Madam Speaker.

We are building—we are increasing spaces. We are increasing affordability. We are increasing retention and recruitment, Madam Speaker. We're—we've increased wages.

I've got more information. I'm hoping they stand up on another question, Madam Speaker. We can do this all day.

Home-Care Services Constituent Case Concern

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): Just like Brian Pallister, this Premier is cutting home care.

Over a month ago, we wrote to the Health Minister regarding a challenge facing 74-year-old Linda Normand, who requires home care due to a number of medical conditions. But weeks lather—later, this senior is not receiving the care that she needs. It's disrespectful to our seniors that this PC government is failing to provide adequate home care to our seniors.

When will this minister admit that the real damage done by their PC government cuts to home care for seniors, and apologize to the people of Manitoba for the damage that they've done and the care that they've failed to give to our seniors who have helped build this province?

Hon. Scott Johnston (Minister of Seniors and Long-Term Care): I would agree with the member that seniors have built this great province of Manitoba,

and that's why this government has indicated a 72 per cent increase in this department's budget and will continue to support seniors with the initiatives that I've indicated already and will continue to bring forward as far as initiatives to fulfill the needs of seniors.

In regards to the home-care situation, yes, there is challenges in regards to staffing, and this government is addressing and finding solutions to that. That's why we brought forward the self- and family-care investment of \$12.6 million, and other initiatives that are coming forward, Madam Speaker.

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

Mrs. Smith: Our health-care system is in a crisis because of Brian Pallister and this Premier, and we continue to hear story after story from seniors and their families on their struggles to access home care.

Linda Normand has repeatedly expressed her concerns to the home-care program. Her visits frequently are cancelled on short notice, sometimes resulting in stretches of several days with no care whatsoever. But this Premier ignored her request for help.

When will this minister acknowledge that the PCs' 20 per cent vacancy rate in home-care staff is leaving seniors abandoned, alone and without the care that they need?

Mr. Johnston: Again, this government is about finding solutions, and we will continue to find solutions to the challenges faced. That's why the investment that this government has put into the Seniors and Long-Term Care Department of an increase of 72 per cent is so significant.

Through information that my colleague in Health has provided, since January the 1st, there's been 50 new home-care workers that have been employed in the province of Manitoba. There's 150 that are targeted for the end of June, and another 150 that are targeted for the fall.

Madam Chair, we're on it.

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

Mrs. Smith: This minister is worse than the last one, and is looking for excuses to cover up the problems that their cuts have caused.

But even after—[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Smith: –Linda–[*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Smith: Even after Linda finally was forced to make a complaint, things have not improved. She is still not getting the care that she needs. That's a terrible way to treat our seniors here in this province.

When will this minister ensure that home-care staff have the support and resources required to 'adequally' provide care for our seniors here in our province?

Mr. Johnston: Again, I concur with the member that this—thus—that seniors need support from home care, and that's exactly what this government is focusing on delivering.

Again, 12.6 investment into—\$12.6 million investment—into self and family care as well as delivering, in the near future, a further modernization of home care for the province of—for the seniors in the province of Manitoba.

We're continuing to fulfill our obligations, Madam Speaker.

Speed Limit on Highway 59 Request to Reduce

Mr. Ian Bushie (Keewatinook): Road safety is something that all Manitobans care about. We know that slower speed limits can reduce collisions with pedestrians and save lives.

Currently, Highway 59 runs directly through Brokenhead Ojibway Nation, yet the speed limit is 80 kilometres per hour. The community has been advocating for the Province to take action to reduce the speed limit on Highway 59 through the community to 59 kilometres an hour—to 50 kilometres an hour to increase safety.

Will the minister listen to their concerns, and decrease the speed limit through the community today?

Hon. Doyle Pivniuk (Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure): I just want to say to the member from Keewatinook that we have—actually have met with the First Nations community; we know the importance when it comes to road safety, especially in communities, and cities and towns, and especially First Nations communities.

We are talking with the First Nations community. Chief Bluesky—we've actually had a meeting with

him. My staff has had meetings with them, and discussing this matter. The thing is, we have to make sure it's a corridor that—major corridor that goes through that community. We want to make sure that we have the right solution.

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

Mr. Bushie: I once again had discussion with Chief Bluesky 45 minutes ago, and the concern still remains. Highway 59 runs directly through Brokenhead Ojibway Nation, with homes and schools on either side of the highway.

Pedestrians, including children, often cross the highway, yet the speed limit is still 80 kilometres per hour. Many of Manitoba's communities have highways that run through them, yet the speed limit drops down to 50 kilometres or less in those communities. Brokenhead Ojibway Nation wants the same approach for their community.

Will the minister commit to reducing the speed on Highway 59 within the Brokenhead Ojibway Nation?

Mr. Pivniuk: You know, again, road safety is No. 1 issue when it—No. 1 priority when it comes to Manitoba Transportation and Infrastructure. Our staff are working 'diligently' to make sure that we review the situation and—Brokenhead First Nation community.

* (10:40)

We know that there's a school that children—to cross. We made sure that we actually had a digital sign to make sure that traffic slows down at an 80-kilometre zone. And this is very important and we're going to continue reviewing this matter and will continue working with the First Nation community.

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

Mr. Bushie: Putting up another sign that, again, says 80 when it's already 80 does not help.

Every year, dozens of Manitobans die on our roads, including many pedestrians. We know that the slower the speed of the vehicle, the greater the chance of survival for those involved in that crash. That's exactly why Brokenhead Ojibway Nation wants to see a reduction to Highway 59 speed limit within their community.

Will the minister commit to improving road safety and reduce Highway 59 speed limit to 50 kilometres an hour or less through the Brokenhead Ojibway Nation?

Mr. Piwniuk: Madam Speaker, I just want to say, too, that when it came to meeting with Chief Bluesky and his council, I also met with—the Minister of Economic Development also met at the same time, and he actually represents that riding and he knows the importance of the care when it comes to making sure that—the safety.

But we're looking at—because we're reviewing with the First Nation community, we're looking at a long-term solution there, Madam Speaker. We're investing in our highways. We invested over \$1.5 billion in the last three years. We actually came up with a budget over—a five-year budget now, for the first time in Manitoba history. We came out with a five-year budget and we're going to be investing in our highways and this community as a long-term solution.

Manitoba Student Aid Difficulties Accessing Program

Mr. Jamie Moses (St. Vital): Despite months of complaints and repeated questioning from this side of the House, there are still persistent issues with Manitoba Student Aid. Long wait—call wait times, a lack of consistent case workers and long waits for information are just a sample of what we hear from constituents.

Students shouldn't have to sit on hold for hours just to speak with someone to get the aid that they need and that they deserve.

Will the minister finally commit to taking action to fixing the problems with Manitoba Student Aid?

Hon. Sarah Guillemard (Minister of Advanced Education and Training): I appreciate the question coming from the member opposite.

There has been a transition period time over the last number of months as we amalgamate with the federal student aid program, to make it a seamless transition for students getting access to student aid both from the federal and provincial governments.

There have been some glitches and hiccups that our 'department' has been addressing for students. In addition to that, in this year's budget, we are increasing the amount of our student aid to help more students achieve their post-secondary education.

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

Constituent Case Concern

Mr. Moses: I recently heard from a mother whose son is having issues with Manitoba Student Aid.

Her son is a—has several clinically diagnosed disabilities, including ADHD, anxiety and high-functioning autism. Yet, after submitting the necessary paperwork to have this disability status acknowledged, Manitoba Student Aid rejected it, as they do not accept psychological 'assessments' older than seven years. The cost to be reassessed was quoted at \$3,500, which Manitoba Student Aid does not cover.

Can the minister explain why Manitoba Student Aid is forcing applicants to pay for expensive psychological assessments?

Mrs. Guillemard: Our student aid program is set up specifically to help students with their costs of living as they're seeking their post-secondary education.

This specific case I am happy to take back to the department and look at more details. This is not the appropriate place to debate specific casework, on the floor, but I am happy to look at those details and I know that our government is committed to supporting all Manitobans who are seeking post-secondary education opportunities.

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

Manitoba Student Aid Program Grants for Students with Disabilities

Mr. Jamie Moses (St. Vital): Manitoba Student Aid clients can also apply for Canada Student Grant for Students with Permanent Disabilities. These grants are dispersed by provinces and are fully reimbursed by the federal government.

Manitoba 'applicant'—application says that applicants can receive \$8,000. Yet, in 2019 the federal government increased the grant to \$20,000.

Now, other provinces, such as Alberta and BC, offer the full twenty-five—\$20,000 grant.

So, can the minister explain why, in Manitoba, it's only offering \$8,000 and not the full grant amount?

Hon. Sarah Guillemard (Minister of Advanced Education and Training): Again, I appreciate the opportunity to be able to stand and share some very good news with the member opposite.

We have the lowest tuition fees for students in western Canada. We are—other jurisdictions in other provinces have to offer other incentives to attract students, Madam Speaker. We keep our tuition fees low. We keep our student aid levels appropriate for those who are seeking that extra support, and our bursary programs have had an injection of more

money in this year's budget to help more Manitoba students afford their education.

We attract students because of our low rates and the affordability of our post-secondary institutions.

Home Security Rebate Program Request to Implement

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): My question is to the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson).

Madam Speaker, residents in northeast Winnipeg repeatedly tell me of their top concern is community safety. We know that the root causes of crime are complex and there's no quick fix.

However, there are measures the province could take today to help reduce crime. Specifically, the province could implement a home security rebate program.

Will they do this today?

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order.

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Families): I appreciate the member's question about public safety, and we understand that addressing some of the root causes is paramount.

And that is why our government recently invested over \$58 million in this year's budget on a homelessness strategy to ensure that everybody has a place to call home. That is why we're creating new opportunities. That is why we're partnering with Mental Health and Community Wellness—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Squires: —to ensure the people coming into housing have those wraparound supports, so that they can receive the services and the supports that they need. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Squires: And I appreciate that the members opposite don't want to listen. They never addressed the problem of dealing with complex issues and homelessness when they were in office. They never did anything to address this.

Our government is taking action so that we can get better results for all.

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

Mr. Maloway: My question is actually to the Premier.

Madam Speaker, Manitobans want to feel safe in their homes. Home security devices, such as cameras, not only make people safer, but they also deter burglaries and theft. Yet these devices can be costly.

Other jurisdictions have taken a proactive approach and provided rebates for home security devices. We should be doing the same here in Manitoba.

Will the Premier commit to implementing a home security rebate program today?

Ms. Squires: Of course, we want all Manitobans to feel safe in their home, and that is why our government is making historic investments in a justice plan. That is why our government is making historic investments in also ensuring that everybody has a home.

Under the NDP, a lot of people didn't have a home. And under the NDP, they failed to address the root causes of homelessness, and they failed to address the—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Squires: —challenges that many people were facing.

And so, that is why our government is committing more into social housing. That is why we've committed to building 700 new units of social and affordable housing this year, so that people can—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Squires: —feel safe in their homes and they can also have a home to live in.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Maloway: My final question is to the Premier, and I was hoping to get an answer to this question today.

* (10:50)

We know that Manitobans are concerned about safety in their communities. They want actions to address the root causes of crime over the long term. But they also want short-term actions such as implementing a home security rebate program. This program would help Manitoba invest in home security devices like cameras, that would reduce crime by deterring burglaries and theft.

Will the PCs commit to implementing a home security rebate program today? *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Hon. Jeff Wharton (Acting Minister of Justice and Attorney General): We know that assaults and homicides in the city of Winnipeg and the—Manitoba, Madam Speaker, are on the rise. We are taking action. Our government is taking action.

And clearly, with the federal changes to the Criminal Code we know that getting folks out on bail early that should still be incarcerated, Madam Speaker, is wrong. And that's why the Minister of Justice (Mr. Goertzen) is working hard with his colleagues across Canada to ensure that these repeat offenders stay off the streets of Manitoba.

And, Madam Speaker, one more thing. We're also investing in \$3 million in integrated violent offender apprehension unit; \$4.1 million and 10 new prosecutors for gang violence and organized crime; \$54 million for overall violent crime strategy.

And, Madam Speaker, the member from St. Johns—the member for St. Johns (MLA Fontaine), and I quote—the House—to stop altogether giving CPF funds for policing institutions—that's the wrong approach.

We'll get it right.

Physician Shortage in Manitoba Recruitment and Retention Funding

Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface): On November 24th, 2022, Doctors Manitoba released a report stating that physician shortages in Manitoba had hit an all-time high.

This is what Dr. Candace Bradshaw said then: Without a big change, the physician shortage is projected to get even worse in the short term, with 43 per cent physicians planning of retiring, leaving Manitoba or reducing their clinical hours, with three quarters of them leaving because they're fed up with the way the system is run.

Keeping the people we have here should be our top priority, but there's no new money to do that in the budget. Yesterday, Dr. Bradshaw criticized the government, saying: Physician and recruitment and retention funding was cut by \$1.6 million in 2017, and it has never recovered.

Can the 'pleen'—Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) explain this historic oversight as to why we're not keeping doctors here in Manitoba?

Hon. Audrey Gordon (Minister of Health): I'm pleased—our government is pleased to be working collaboratively with Doctors Manitoba to ensure our

physicians stay in the province, and that we're able to recruit and train new physicians, Madam Speaker.

That is why we have increased the number of seats for physician training to 80, Madam Speaker; 40 undergraduate physician seats, 10 international medical graduate seats, 30 two-year post-grad medical seats for internationally educated medical students.

And I'm not sure if the member for St. Boniface has seen the news release today from the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Manitoba, to enable internationally educated doctors to work in Manitoba sooner.

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

Mr. Lamont: I have read the news release, because there's nothing to actually keep those doctors here. We have one of the worst physician shortages in Canada.

This is what Dr. Bradshaw said yesterday, quote: We had 20 recommendations in our rural health summit last September; only four of those have been acted on. The fact that recommendations were made four months ago and promises were made four months ago in November, and I still sit here with holes in a checklist that should be checked by now, is not acceptable, Dr. Bradshaw said, as I table.

We're down 400 doctors. Why does this budget spend more on out-of-province doctors than we are on attracting and keeping the ones we have?

Ms. Gordon: These are the facts: in terms of retention of physicians, we've extended primary-care patient hours for family and pediatric clinics, and I was pleased to make that announcement standing side by side with Doctors Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, \$450,000 for physician mental health supports through the peer support program, \$5 million for new emergency-care vectors to virtually support patient transfers and we continue to partner with Doctors Manitoba to reduce physician administrative burden by establishing a joint task force. And I have—will have more to say on that next week.

But, Madam Speaker, we are working with Doctors Manitoba to get the job done.

Home-Care Services Federal Funding Agreement

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): About five hours ago, the Manitoba Nurses Union announced that they heard hundreds of home-care visits have been cancelled between now and Monday.

This is completely unacceptable and further highlights the crisis happening right now in our province. This government signed a home-care agreement six years ago with the federal government.

So where is this money? Why haven't the home-care workers seen it, and what is this Health Minister going to do to address it immediately?

Hon. Scott Johnston (Minister of Seniors and Long-Term Care): As I've indicated a number of times in the House, our government is fully aware of the demands and the needs of home care. And we continue to fulfill our obligations to ensure that we are finding solutions. And we will continue to do that, Madam Speaker.

And as per the information that the member has brought forward, the Minister of Health (Ms. Gordon) and myself will certainly deliberate over that.

Community Celebrations Program Announcement of Fund Recipients

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): Manitoba's arts, culture and sports sectors make essential contributions to individual, community health and well-being, and contribute to jobs and to Manitoba's economy. Celebrations, festivals, fall suppers, and similar community-based events offer a unique opportunity for Manitobans to come together to celebrate their culture, heritage and community.

I understand the Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage recently announced the first recipients of this fund to support these events.

Can the minister speak more on this milestone?

Hon. Obby Khan (Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage): Thank you to my colleague from Portage la Prairie for that great question.

Madam Speaker, our government is proud to support community organizations through the Arts, Culture and Sport Community Fund, allowing them to innovate and respond to emerging community needs. Earlier this week, I was honoured to announce the Manitoba government is awarding \$323,000 to 67 community celebration events.

Our first intake, I was proud to announce 59 community events for \$260,000. I would like to congratulate all of the grant—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Khan: —recipients for their hard work and dedication in staging such successful events. I will try my best to attend all the events.

I encourage all Manitobans to get out and enjoy community celebrations together, just like our government supports.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Burrows. *[interjection]* Order.

Education System Funding Seven Oaks School Division

Mr. Diljeet Brar (Burrows): Madam Speaker, parents, educators and Burrows residents are concerned about this PC government's continuous cuts to education in our province. Schools across the province have been grappling with budgetary restraints for years under the PC government, which have forced them to cut staff and trim programs.

Once again, Seven Oaks School Division is faced with another significant provincial funding shortfall this year, and as many as 50 staff positions may be cut. Students in our province deserve the supports they need to succeed in the classroom.

Will the minister finally put an end to their cuts, and fully fund Education today?

Hon. Wayne Ewasko (Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning): Madam Speaker, I'm not quite sure if I have enough time left on the clock, but I'm going to try my best to try to get all the information I have to share in regards to the member's question.

It's very interesting that the member from Burrows stood up to ask an Education question, because obviously his leader doesn't have the faith in the current Education critic, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, Seven Oaks School Division funding has increased \$3.3 million this year. That's a 3.8 per cent increase—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Ewasko: —that's within the \$100-million increase that we've provided to the K-to-12 system this year, Madam Speaker. That's a 6.1 per cent increase for all of all of your students.

Madam Speaker, I just had a great meeting yesterday—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

* (11:00)

The honourable member for Burrows, on a supplementary question.

Mr. Brar: Madam Speaker, Manitobans do not trust this minister or the members opposite.

I attended a public budget meeting on February 27th, and Seven Oaks School Division showed funding is not keeping pace with enrolment and inflation. Families in Burrows are frustrated with this government's cuts to education. They know that cuts mean less one-on-one time for their children, less programming and staff burnout.

Students are finally recovering from having their schooling disrupted due to the pandemic. Now, more than ever, our students need more support to catch up. This is not the time to take resources and programs away from kids—

Madam Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Mr. Ewasko: Madam Speaker, I'm not quite sure if I missed the news release on their critic shuffles, but I would like to congratulate and welcome all the students in the gallery joining us today.

It gives me, Madam Speaker, an opportunity to put some truth on the record. The member, who's the new critic for Education, I guess, put some false information on the record.

Since 2016-17, Madam Speaker, we have increased Seven Oaks School Division by 26.5 per cent increase in their funding. According to the Canada inflation calculator, inflation since 2016 is 21 per cent.

We're funding education above inflation. We will continue to work hard on behalf of all these great students in the gallery, Madam Speaker, and they—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

The time for oral questions has expired.

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

Point of Order

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): I do wish to rise on a point of order and one that I do believe will be fairly straightforward for yourself to rule on.

This is very clear in the rules. The sessional order that is governing our House clearly states that, quote, members participating in a sitting of the House or a committee proceeding may use electronic devices in silent mode. During oral questions, such devices should be kept below the desk or table and out of the camera's view. End quote.

Clearly, during question period, the Minister of Education held up his phone and read a quote. Now, I did hear that you are—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order. Order.

We need to hear the point of order.

Mr. Wiebe: I'm surprised the members don't respect the rules in the House but, certainly, I think it's important that we have a clear ruling on this.

And why I do think it's important, Madam Speaker, is that while I understand that you have indicated to the member that he should table that tweet or text or document or whatever, I do think that there is—
[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wiebe: —a larger question that does need to be answered here, and that is how those texts are actually tabled in the House and what personal information may be shared.

And if the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko) wants to bring a quote from a constituent or from a stakeholder into this House, he needs to be clear that that information about that person needs to be shared as well with the House. I'm not sure if he had permission to do so, and I think that's very concerning.

And if he did have permission, then I guess the question is: will the additional information, contact information, et cetera, be tabled as well?

So, while I understand, again, that it's a very straightforward ruling—that the minister is, obviously, out of order and has broken the rules of this House—what I think is more concerning is that he has brought a text message into this House that may not have the relevant information that he has been given permission to share.

So, again, I think it's an easy ruling on one side, but I do think there's more that needs to be looked into, and I hope that the Speaker will take this request for a point of order seriously.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: The honourable Minister of Education, on that same point of order.

Mr. Ewasko: Yes. Thank you, Madam Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to stand up and to put a few words on the record in regard to the point of order brought forward by the member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe).

And, as you know, and as all members in this House know, that over my, I guess, 11 and a half years being in this wonderful building and having the privilege and honour of serving the constituents—the Lac du Bonnet constituency, I more than follow the rules, Madam Speaker.

On today's occasion, I did want to share, because the line of questioning was absolutely total misinformation being put on the record by the member for St. James (Mr. Sala), and so I felt that it was an opportunity to share some words that I had received from a constituent, Madam Speaker.

I have no problem tabling the document that I—and I will endeavour to do that once the House rises today—because, in fact, Madam Speaker, that line of questioning that was happening on the fact of \$10-a-day daycare is changing lives here in Manitoba, and we just want to make sure that we're sharing those good-news stories.

Because I know for a fact that there's thousands of Manitobans that are benefitting from that \$10-a-day, regular day daycare—

Madam Speaker: Order. Order. Order.

The member is getting into debate now, and not speaking to the point of order. He may have made his point already—*[interjection]*

Order. Order. *[interjection]* No, I know.

The minister has concluded his comments?

An Honourable Member: Almost.

Madam Speaker: Oh. The honourable Minister of Education, just to conclude his rebuttal to the point of order.

Mr. Ewasko: Absolutely, Madam Speaker. And, as usual, as I've had the pleasure of being in this House for 11 and a half years now, I appreciate your guidance, and I will definitely be tabling the good-news message that I received from a constituent on our \$10-a-day daycare for regular days.

So thank you, Madam Speaker, for that.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for River Heights on that same point of order.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, I want to say a few words on this point of order.

I think it is important that there be clarification on the use of electronic materials—iPhones, smartphones, et cetera.

You know, there was—during this question period, when one of the members was asking a question, there was somebody sitting beside them, and their phone was buzzing. And you could hear—over the speaker, you could hear the buzzing. And so, there are other things that need to be looked at in terms of making sure that the electronics are not interrupting.

I'm pleased that the member will table that document. But, you know, there is a potential other solution that a member who misuses the rules in this fashion could be asked to table their iPhone or phone for an hour.

Madam Speaker: I think I've got enough information to rule on this, but I thank members that want to add their points. But we do have rules on the use of electronics in the Chamber and those rules are clearly outlined in the documents that the members have.

I would indicate that this is a point of order in that electronic devices should not be visible on camera during oral questions.

The issue of tabling the text is going to be dealt with between the minister and the table officers in terms of the format that it is tabled in, so that part is addressed.

And electronics should be used in silent mode in the House.

So, I think that should address all the concerns that members brought to mind, and I thank members for addressing the issue.

Point of Order

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Concordia, on another point of order?

Mr. Wiebe: Likewise, this should be a fairly straightforward point of order, and one—an easy one for you to rule on.

During question period, the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) clearly held a document that appeared to be maybe election material, maybe some sort of pamphlet, something that was created by a marketing firm somewhere in the backrooms of the Tory caucus.

I believe that, if—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wiebe: —we are reading from and quoting from a document that is being clearly read from—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wiebe: I think—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wiebe: I think it's very clear, Madam Speaker, that the rules state that that document should be tabled.

The Minister for Education has done the right thing by tabling the document. He should—the Premier should do the same and table that document for the House.

Madam Speaker: Well, the honourable First Minister.

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Premier): Well, Madam Speaker, it must be Friday, because I'm not sure about this.

But I—just to respond to the member from Concordia, I would be more than pleased to table our brochure on historic help for Manitobans—

* (11:10)

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mrs. Stefanson: I would make several copies of it—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Oh, it's taking everybody a long time to notice that I am standing. So, I will ask for everybody's co-operation, please.

We have seated in the public gallery, from Henry—oh, to that point of order, I think that has been dealt with. That was a public document, I believe. But the First Minister has, indeed, tabled documents for the member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe), so it is not a point of order.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: So, then, moving to introductions, we have seated in the public gallery, from Henry G. Izatt Middle School, 60 grade 9 students under the direction of Lisa Hobbes, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Khan).

We welcome you to the Manitoba Legislature.

PETITIONS

Madam Speaker: Moving forward, then, to petitions. Are there any petitions?

Community Living 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 and 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, CLDS, 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 has 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—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Gerrard: —Employment and Income Assistance and to 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 needs, 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 Temple Duncan, Salem Roby, Mais Livingston and many, many other Manitobans.

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

Security System Incentive Program

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

The background of the petition is as follows:

(1) Cities across Canada and the United States, including Chicago; Washington, DC; Salinas, California; and Orillia, Ontario, are offering home security rebate programs that enhance public safety and allow for more efficient use of their policing resources.

(2) Home security surveillance systems protect homes and businesses by potentially deterring burglaries, reducing homeowners' and businesses' insurance costs.

(3) Whole neighbourhoods benefit when more homes and businesses have these security systems.

(4) A 2022 Angus Reid Institute poll found that 70 per cent of Winnipeggers surveyed believed crime had increased over the last five years, the highest percentage found among cities in Canada.

(5) The same survey reported half of Winnipeggers polled do not feel safe walking alone at night, and almost 20 per cent of them said they were a victim of a police-reported crime in the last two years.

(6) Although the public understands that what the criminologists and community advocates point to as the main drivers of crime, namely the larger issues of lack of food, addictions and poverty, they support

rebate programs like this as they help the most vulnerable in our community by removing financial barriers to personal protection.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to work with municipalities to establish a province-wide tax rebate or other incentive program to encourage residents and businesses to purchase approved home and business security protection systems.

This petition is signed by many Manitobans.

Madam Speaker: Any further petitions?

If not, orders of the day, government business.

ORDERS OF THE DAY GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Derek Johnson (Acting Government House Leader): Can we resume debate on the budget please, Madam Speaker.

BUDGET DEBATE (Fourth Day of Debate)

Madam Speaker: Resuming debate on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Cullen), and the amendment and subamendment thereto, standing in the name of the honourable member for Burrows, who has one minute remaining.

Mr. Diljeet Brar (Burrows): Madam Speaker, I have 60 seconds and 60,000 reasons to say this: that this is the last budget from this PC government. It's on record. It's on record; it's in the Hansard that many times they have called our members as ministers. And it's on record that many times they have called us NDP government—it's on record—rather than saying official opposition.

Their Health Minister has already started practising how to ask questions in the Chamber. Why is that, Madam Speaker? It's because they have accepted the fact that this is their last budget. I wish them good luck; I wish them good luck on their new critic portfolios later this year.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Jeff Wharton (Minister of Economic Development, Investment and Trade): Again, it gives me great pleasure to rise in the House today to talk about a historic budget for Manitobans, Madam Speaker.

But before we get into the exciting news of the budget, I'd also like to take the opportunity to thank all the great constituents of Red River North, Madam Speaker. We continue to work hard every day for all Manitobans, in particular in my job on behalf of the constituents of Red River North, I look forward to getting up every single day and working hard for each and every one of them, to ensure that we bring them what they need in order to move forward.

* (11:20)

Madam Speaker, on that front I would like to talk a little bit about—more about this historic investment to help better service our seniors, our single families; to historic tax changes that will help Manitobans make ends meet. Again, this budget is about doing everything possible for Manitobans at a time when they need it most.

Mr. Andrew Micklefield, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

Madam Speaker—Acting Speaker, and welcome to the Chair—Acting Speaker, in a report last year—Deputy Speaker, an 'apport' last year, the Parliamentary Budget Officer estimated the average Manitoban household lost over \$300 due to carbon tax.

Madam Speaker, we recognize that challenge for Manitoba families and that's why our government is stepping up and certainly supporting Manitoba families during this really difficult time. To offset that federal tax, our Carbon Tax Relief Fund is providing single people with \$225, and couples with \$375 in direct benefits.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we know and we've heard from Manitobans, we're out listening to Manitobans and we know how difficult the times are, and we'll continue—we're a government that continues to listen. This historical investment also will put over \$200 million back in the pockets of all Manitobans.

After we reduced payments charged by Manitoba Hydro, they adjusted their general rate application to the Public Utilities Board—2 per cent, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in each of the next two years.

We know that members opposite, in their time in power, Manitoba Hydro rates averaged anywhere from 3 to 5 per cent year over year over year, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We know that that's not sustainable for Manitoba families, particularly in these very difficult times with inflation running high, interest rates rising and again, the costs of everyday needs and requirements, like groceries, for Manitoba families, and we're—our government is definitely stepping up.

Some of the ways we're helping direct impact to Manitoba families and individuals, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is, again, working on the basic personal amount. Again, that number has not moved from about \$10,500 for many years. We've indexed it to help, but we recognize we needed to do more. We know that we're way behind our jurisdictions to the west and to the east. We know that we needed to step up, and now's the time for sure.

So, we're raising that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to \$15,000. That's \$15,000. That's almost—that's \$4,500 more before you start to pay provincial tax right here in Manitoba. These measures will remove another 31,600 low-income taxpayers from our tax roll in 2023.

And, again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the only way this will happen is if the opposition gets on board and supports Budget 2023. I highly doubt the opposition will want to leave \$4,500 on the table for Manitoba families.

We're also talking about reductions in the personal income tax.

So, what we're doing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, again, is we're raising—or increasing—the threshold, so before you actually start paying taxes, to \$47,000 and \$100,000 in 2024. Changes to the—both the PIT and the BPA amounts to \$1,250 in savings for the average two family—or two-income family.

Let's talk a little bit about the education property tax. Increasing the rebate from thirty-seven, five to 50 per cent savings to the average homeowner will turn into \$774 for every family, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Payroll tax, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I know the member from Transcona doesn't want to hear all this good news, but I'm sure he's going to hang around for my time. I've got about 15 minutes left—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wharton: I know he wants to hear all the good things we're doing—*[interjection]*

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

Mr. Wharton: Education property tax, again, is a huge component, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Not only are we giving tax money back to Manitobans' families when they need it most, we're actually increasing education. We know that the Education Minister's been working hard with stakeholders to ensure that we're funding education at historic levels, and our government will continue to do that.

Another area that we've heard, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is minimum wage. Increasing to \$15.30 will help being—is being offered to employees. One hundred and ninety million to reduce payments made by Manitoba Hydro. Again, this is a big issue, too, saving hydro ratepayers \$4 billion over the next 20 years.

Minimum wage will also—we're doing a program, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that will allow businesses to help mitigate some of those challenges with the increase of minimum wage. We're offering up to \$10,400 for the first six months, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to help businesses—small and medium businesses across Winnipeg and Manitoba. That equates to approximately \$520 per employee up to 20 employees. We recognize the challenges, again, still coming out of the pandemic and starting to see the economy turn around. We don't want to slow that. We want to continue that rapid growth.

We talked a lot about safer streets, as well, and we know that, as I mentioned earlier in question period, that violent crime is at a high, and we're acting on it, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We've heard from Manitobans. And again, violent crime strategy, we're investing \$51.8 million over two years and \$34.6 million this year alone.

Homeless strategy, another wonderful investment: \$51.1 million to support families. Downtown Community Safety Partnership, an investment of \$3.6 million aimed at building a safer and more inviting downtown Winnipeg for everyone.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, \$1.5 million in child and youth mental health services; \$100,000 in support ongoing operations with the Winnipeg Bear Clan Patrol Inc., a great organization. I've met with the organization on a number of occasions, and the great work that they continue to do and our government will continue to support for many years to come.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, \$600,000 for flexible-length community residential withdrawal-management beds in Brandon alone—not only Winnipeg, not only areas around Winnipeg, but also other communities like Brandon, Portage, Steinbach; in the North, Flin Flon, Thompson, The Pas. We recognize we're an entire province. We're investing in our entire province.

Healing health care, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Budget 2023 includes \$7.9 billion in historic investments to our health-care system, providing \$668 million more—not less, like the NDP will accuse us of. It's quite clear; it's in the budget.

As a matter of fact, we're pleased that the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) was able to table the—a copy of that for the members opposite today. It's more apparent that they haven't read it yet, so certainly, by the Premier tabling it, I'm sure particularly the member from Concordia will have a read and really get on board with Budget 2023.

And again, really proud of the investments we're making in our seniors strategy, and again, I commend the Seniors Minister for all the work he's done in implementing that strategy and we know we're committed to making Manitobans the ideal place to age with our \$15.9 million in our seniors strategy initiatives.

Congratulations to that minister for doing that great work and also creating a new hearing aid program, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We know as we get a little bit older, and I'm guilty of that—I'm actually getting older, too, as well. Sometimes I have selective hearing from the members opposite, but certainly my hearing is not as good as it was maybe, perhaps, 20 years ago. And certainly glad those investments are here for generations of seniors to come.

I wanted to switch gears a little bit and talk a little bit about the opportunity I have to serve in the new department—my department, pardon me—to me, new—Economic Development, Investment and Trade. I wanted to highlight some of the areas that we're doing in this department to help economic growth in Manitoba.

And one thing the members opposite are devoid of is understanding what economic growth is and what it does, and the outcomes of good, strong economic growth. And it's quite clear that they don't understand, so I'm going to try to give them some examples today of what economic growth does and what Budget 2023 will do to continue building our economy, not only in Winnipeg and in southern Manitoba, but particularly in the North, and I'll touch on that a little bit later in some of my closing comments.

Again, Budget 2023 doubles the funds dedicated to venture capital to \$100 million. We're having an exciting announcement next week, Mr. Deputy Speaker, about those initial and—initial investment of \$50 million and an additional \$50 million. We understand that capital has been an issue in Winnipeg and Manitoba for a number of years. We recognize that. We've been hearing that from the business sector, and we're acting on that by investing an additional, incremental \$50 million.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, \$15 million to the Communities Economic Development Fund, CEDF, another great initiative that we recognize is going to help grow that economy; \$20 million to support economic development investment attraction; investing more than \$35 million in loans and guarantees—an increase of \$27 million year over year; \$15 million to fund support in the Indigenous economic development opportunities related to Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin outlet channel project, which will be used to support economic development opportunities for 39 Indigenous groups.

* (11:30)

Increased investments in mining activities, expanding opportunities for northern and Indigenous communities, Budget 2023 invests to speed up the permitting process, and that's exactly what we're doing. I had the opportunity to be in Toronto this weekend, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and speak with a number of potential investors and current investors in the mining sector right here in Manitoba. And the excitement and the buzz that was created around Manitoba was just unbelievable. I can't describe how excited the industry is and how excited we are to invite the mining sector back to Manitoba where it belongs, where we used to lead North America, particularly, but parts of the world in mining.

Going to highlight some of the investments that some of our investment—our companies are making. Vale announced a \$150-million investment to extend current mining activities in Thompson area by—in—by—over the next 10 years, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That's jobs for Thompson and surrounding area.

Snow Lake Lithium announced that they are—they have raised over \$27 million in their initial public offering to support their lithium exploration near Snow Lake. Again, jobs for the North.

Alamos Gold, Mr. Deputy Speaker, continues to pursue their project near Lynn Lake. As a matter of fact, we know that the estimated impact will be over \$500 million invested and 500 net new jobs. Where? Oh, I see the member isn't here from Flin Flon.

In the North, Mr. Deputy Speaker—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

I'm obliged by the rules to remind all members that we cannot reflect on the presence or absence of any member of this House. I believe the minister just did that. I'd just request he rescind those comments.

An Honourable Member: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for that correction.

Certainly a great news—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Apology accepted. I'm obliged to acknowledge the minister has the floor. Please go ahead.

Mr. Wharton: Again, another great mining investment—a new mining investment and a new heir, PADCOM has completed Manitoba's first potash development near Harrowby, in the municipality of Russell-Binscarth. Mr. Deputy Speaker, an update on that, we are going to start—see activity in that mine very, very soon. Stay tuned.

Tanco continues, Canada's only operational lithium producer, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The company has announced 'significant' expansion plans and is investing in the potential develop of lithium hydroxide plant to produce material suitable for electric vehicles and battery market.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we know how important it is to get these precious minerals out of the ground and into use, and also focus on value added right here in Manitoba. That's building factories, that's developing the minerals here in Manitoba, not shipping them overseas. It's a matter of value added, which will create more jobs, not only for all of southern Manitoba, but for the North, as well. So many exciting mining projects coming on board.

And again, the Manitoba Mineral Development Fund has announced that it'll provide \$10 million over the next three years to support the mining sector, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Budget 2023 is also continuing the commitment of the—again, the \$10-million fund, but expects—by the way, Mr. Deputy Speaker, hang on to your hat, Manitoba expects to have 114,000 new jobs openings over the next five years. Three in five of these jobs will require some form of university training. Budget 2023 will invest—again, here it is—\$65 million more into post-secondary institutions and cap university tuitions—tuition increases to 2.75 per cent.

And Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know that my colleagues—many of my colleagues want to get up and speak to the budget, so I will close with some good news. Right here locally, in the west end of Winnipeg, and I'll just provide some information for the House, and I'll read it off of this text that I received.

The West End BIZ is celebrating new businesses—

An Honourable Member: Paper.

Mr. Wharton: —in the area this week.

It's not on my phone; it is in paper.

And the organization says the number of people setting up shops in the neighbourhood hit a seven-year high in 2022, despite lingering effects of the pandemic. New businesses highlights 56 new businesses that opened in west end last year, with the goal of attracting more Winnipeggers through their doors.

Back in 2015, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we had 855 businesses in the zone. This year, 2023, we now have 870 at West End BIZ, said the executive director. That's a quote from the executive director of West End BIZ, and that's good news. That's a sign that we're not only growing in the North, we're growing right here in Winnipeg. We know the importance of that.

Budget 2023 will deliver on many fronts, including economic development right here in the province of Manitoba.

Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I just want to ask the minister if he was quoting from private correspondence.

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: No, okay.

Reminder to all members that when one does quote from correspondence that is private, that one is obliged to table said correspondence that is quoted.

Are there any further speakers?

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): I begin by thanking the residents of River Heights who provided input into the direction Manitoba should be going this year and in the coming years. They have been very helpful and supportive of me, and I want to thank them.

Let me move on to several general comments on the budget. First of all, with the windfall that the government received in new revenue this year, the government has missed a major opportunity to address many critical issues and to provide greater sustainability moving forward.

While the budget includes many expenditures and tax changes, it also provides one—for one of the biggest yearly increases in the net debt of our province in the history of Manitoba. The increase in the net debt this year is projected at \$1,642,000,000. It's extraordinary to have such a large increase in the net debt

for Manitoba in a year without a major flood or pandemic. The budget is historic in having such a large increase in net debt. Indeed, it will go down in history as the occasion that the PCs went to the bank to borrow a large amount of money in order to try to buy votes. The approach didn't work in 1999, and it won't work now.

Second, the budget appears to have been rushed, with the result that a number of initiatives, while well meaning, fall far short of what they could and should be. Let me deal with some of the areas which should have been better addressed.

In the introduction to the budget, the government talks about a commitment to advancing truth and reconciliation. However, there's little action in the rest of the budget speech and in the budget itself to support this. The only reference to the—in the rest of the budget speech is a reference to advancing economic reconciliation in the section on mining. But there's no indication of any specific measures to be implemented.

In our view, as Manitoba Liberals, the first act toward reconciliation should be returning the money that the NDP and PC governments stole from children in the care of Child and Family Services. Children in the care of Child and Family Services are among the most in need of all children in our province. It's unbelievable that NDP and PC governments stole more than \$300 million from these children. In some cases, the money had been put in trust funds so that the children in the care of Child and Family Services would have some financial resources when they aged out of care at age 18. The governments took this money from the trust funds of children who needed it and then put it in general revenue and used it for other purposes than helping children in care.

In this budget, sadly, there was no mention of returning these funds. Why is this? It's hard to understand the indifference being showed by this government to children who have been or are now in care.

The statistics gathered in the Winnipeg Street Census for 2022 showed that more than half of those who were homeless had been in the care of Child and Family Services. The same census showed that the most common age for a person to become homeless was at age 18. This is the age when children age out of care and lose the support they'd been getting.

* (11:40)

It was disheartening to hear from leaders in the community in Winnipeg who are looking after those

who are experiencing homelessness. We were told that at age 18, when youth were aging out of care, as recently as the last few months, some were going directly, on their 18th birthday, to Siloam Mission, as they were homeless, and there was no provision by the Province to help them. This is not the sort of place that a child who's been in CFS care should go to at age 18. Even though Siloam Mission provides excellent help, there are far better ways to transition to adulthood than to go to Siloam Mission.

I was alerted to this issue, which has been ongoing for some years, a number of years ago by an individual who made the point to me that the PC government was trying to use money from the federal government for those who are chronically homeless to fund space for children aging out of care at age 18.

This is unbelievable. The federal money was destined for those who are chronically homeless—had been homeless for six months—and it was being used to help children who've been in care and are only homeless because the government fails to provide a just and fair transition to adulthood for these individuals. These individuals were not homeless for six months; they just became homeless because of government policy, and the government should've ensured an adequate transition without having to label these youth as homeless.

The Finance Minister, in his budget speech, should've included a section specifically addressing reconciliation. He did not. While the latest government approach to homelessness does, at last, include an acknowledgement of the need to better transition children who've been in the care of Child and Family Services, we're not clear exactly how this is going to be supported.

And this comes too late for many, and we still have far too many children in care, and the government in six years still has not implemented the recommendations of the report authored by Diane Redsky, Michael Champaign and others, and delivered to the government in 2018.

Sadly, the government has also not provided for better support for those with learning disabilities, for, as we have found, individuals with learning disabilities and an IQ above 80 who are receiving no support from this government when they turn 18 are also more likely to become homeless. The governments need to provide support for such individuals under CLDS, but there was no mention of this in the budget, and these individuals will continue to struggle in a major way.

I talked last night to a mother of such a child, who is struggling and trying everything, but is almost despairing over the lack of understanding and lack of help from this government. Indeed, it is important to note that learning disabilities are not adequately recognized. As Linda Siegel found in a study a number of years ago in Toronto, 83 per cent of those who are homeless in Toronto at that time had some form of undiagnosed and untreated learning disability. We need to pay more attention to this.

We have produced our own report on the approach needed to decrease the number of people experiencing homelessness. It's much superior to the government's approach because we'll ensure there's housing for those when they become homeless, rather than waiting six months as the government plans to do. It has been shown clearly that it's much more effective to house somebody immediately when they become homeless than to have them be chronically homeless for six months, at which time it is more difficult.

We also recommended that there be a dashboard to provide up-to-date information and help to guide the activities and that, in time, that dashboard should include information on services, including those for addictions, poverty, CFS, because this is important and it will help many individuals. And because these are risk factors for becoming homelessness, it will help to decrease homelessness.

We have been hearing in the last few days, about a death of a man in the emergency room at the Health Sciences Centre. The Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) has been getting questions asking for more details as to what happened. The best the Premier has done is to reply that opposition members should not ask these questions. Not a very credible answer when the Premier herself asked similar questions when she was in opposition.

Furthermore, we are still looking for answers about the death of Krystal Mousseau about two years after her death on May 25th, 2021. Will we have to wait two or more years to find out what happened to this man? Meanwhile, nurses are waiting for action now to prevent future deaths. We understand that the Health Sciences Centre nurses had been sounding the alarm for a year, starting in the spring of 2022, about the imminent problems in the emergency room at Health Sciences Centre. How many more disasters and crises will there be under this government?

And today we learn of the latest of these crises, this one in home care. Manitobans have known for

quite some time that there is a crisis in home care, but the cancellation of hundreds of home-care visits this weekend highlights the crisis in real and raw terms. One of the most critical components of health care is home care. But if you can't get home care right—and this government can't—then you have a major problem, and in Manitoba we have a major problem.

I will add that there are various reports about what's going on in home care, and it is said that it's not uncommon for workers to get to a client's home only to learn that no one has been there to help that person for days. It is a tragedy that the situation has deteriorated to this extent.

And as far as recruitment of doctors and nurses, Doctors Manitoba has provided some—many recommendations for government actions. These were provided in November of last year, and yet the government, at this juncture—as the MLA for St. Boniface pointed out earlier today—has, in fact, only fulfilled a small number of the recommendations, and there is much, much more to do.

There is a big worry because 43 per cent of physicians are saying that they may leave their practice for one reason or another in the next few years, and three quarters of them say they will leave because they are fed up with the way that the system is run by this government. That's a lot of doctors in the system who are saying that there is a problem. The government needs to listen and has to do better.

Improving home care, it should be added, is a particularly important because it is the basis for much home care, and better home-care service can decrease the need for emergency room and hospital visits. We saw recently the disastrous way that the wife of Eric De Schepper was treated. This was tragic that the help only came after she died. We need to act. We need action now.

The government has talked about backlogs in health-care provision, and in the budget documents we see that major backlogs continue to exist in many areas: in pediatrics—I think that's pediatric surgery—neurosurgery, gynecology, general surgery, thoracic surgery, vascular surgery, in accessing MRIs. In the latter, with respect to MRIs, we've earned recently the story of Dr. Jeff Bresler, that in—the waits for MRIs are so bad that it's difficult to even get an appointment.

In our emergency rooms, there continue to be long wakes; and this, as well as the backlogs, need to be better addressed, and we shouldn't be at this stage where there is so much to do and so little being done.

There are concerns over ICUs. Are there enough nurses being trained so that we will be in good shape or not? I fear that we're not training enough.

Primary care is a crisis. The government's approach to the nursing shortage is to dial 1-800-the-Philippines. We appreciate the attention to immigration, but suspect that based on past history, it may not be as successful as the government hopes. The government was aware of the nursing shortage in 2016. Why were not more measures taken then to ensure we have an adequate number of nurses now?

* (11:50)

The government's strategy to recruit and retain doctors is focused on increasing the number of spots in medical school, but let's face it, that's going to take years to add the new doctors we need. We should be doing better than this. We should be implementing all the Doctors Manitoba recommendations.

We were nevertheless pleased to see two initiatives that we have been advocating very strongly for. The enhanced coverage of glucose—continuous glucose monitors and insulin pumps for those who—with type 1 and type 2 diabetes who are eligible. This is a positive step and one we have been calling for and pushing for for some time.

The second was the support for hearing aids for seniors. I have worked very closely with Gladys Nielsen and many others on this matter, and we are appreciative of this being implemented. Liberals in the Legislature are making a difference in the way that we advocate and that needs to be recognized.

In education, we hear daily of school boards who are struggling to manage a budget which is inadequate to deliver the education that our children and youth need. The budgets provided to school boards were not based on the amount that's needed to provide the education, but rather on an arbitrary figure from the Province.

We are particularly concerned that many children with varied learning disabilities, including dyslexia, dyscalculia and others, and those with executive function disabilities are falling through the cracks and are not being diagnosed early enough and are not being helped well enough.

Also very concerning is the fact that too many children with learning or executive function disabilities who have an IQ above 70—or 75 or 80, depending on the day that you ask the government—they are not

getting the support they need when they turn 18 years of age.

Linda Siegel in Toronto found that 83 per cent of those who were homeless had a learning disability. We need to be much more aware of the impact of undiagnosed and untreated learning disabilities, and we need to provide the support for those who need it when they become 18 years of age.

We're also very concerned about the education for Indigenous students, as their rates of graduation continue to be low. There is no mention in the budget speech of the importance of working with First Nations, Métis and Inuit leaders to ensure that the graduation rate for Indigenous students increases.

When it comes to climate change and the environment, we are making globally a transition from using fossil fuels to using electricity—cars, trucks and many other uses—boats, lawn mowers, small tractors and so on. Today as Manitobans, we spend about \$4 billion each year and send it out of province to pay for the gasoline and diesel that we use. We could be spending this money toward the electricity needed to power vehicles and other machines which currently use gasoline or diesel. It would be cheaper, and we would be spending the dollars here in Manitoba and helping Manitobans.

We are concerned about the proposal for a sand mine near Anola, near Vivian, and the future of the aquifers in southwestern Manitoba. I will be presenting tomorrow at a hearing on this.

When it comes to crime, the violent crime severity index for Manitoba is about twice as high as the index for Canada as a whole. There is a similar twofold increase rate for intimate partner violence. We, in both cases, are an outlier, because this government and the NDP before it didn't pay enough attention to preventing crime. It is a black mark on this government to have such high crime rates. And it's clear that the present government and the previous NDP government were doing a very poor job of preventing crime. Much better is needed.

There are incredible opportunities in agriculture at the moment. One of these is in the better support for ecological services. There was a pilot in Blanchard, but it has been forgotten by the current PC government. We're appreciative of some improved support for municipalities, financially, but continue to be very concerned about the Province setting up a system where it can overrule municipal decisions.

As my colleague for Tyndall Park raised the other day, there is a major concern about how the government is operating child care, that in fact the \$10 fee applies during the week when students are in classes, but it doesn't apply—as I understand it—when there's an in-service day, and it doesn't apply in summer when students are on vacation.

But parents still have to work at these times. They still need the child care, and we understand that they may be having to spend \$20 or more a day. This is misleading, the way the government has presented it, and that is an overall problem with this government. When it presents misleading information it loses trust, and this government is losing the trust of Manitobans. It is no longer reliable, and we will vote against this budget because of this lack of trust.

Mr. Len Isleifson (Brandon East): You know, we stand in the House to debate all kinds of motions and bills and issues throughout the year, and here we have an honour of standing up on a Friday, a Friday morning, and so I just want to wish everybody safe travels home. I understand there's a storm coming, so all members of the House, if you're leaving today, please drive safe and have a great safe weekend.

On to the budget and the reason we're here today. I do want to talk about how this budget affects my constituents, some of the comments that I've received from constituents in Brandon, some of the comments I've received from the business community as well, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

When I look at this budget, the biggest question that I've received so far, and keep in mind that the budget was, you know, just put out there; I have not been home yet, so it's all emails and phone calls and texts that I've been receiving. But communicating with some of my constituents, it really is a good budget. It paves the future for growth in Manitoba.

And I'm not going to talk just about business. I want to talk about individuals as well. But I—the biggest question I've received from constituents, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is some of them, believe it or not, people do watch question period. They are watching these debates and they're confused. People are confused because they listen to the budget speech, and then they hear comments coming from the opposition which doesn't balance with the budget sheets that we've presented.

So I just—as I've been telling them, I want to tell everybody, please feel free to go onto www.gov.mb.ca/finance where the documents are

located. And I certainly welcome any of my constituents to call my office, to email my office. I'm certainly there. My staff—we're there to help, you know, provide and ensure that they get the correct information that they're seeking.

And again, it's as we all are, I'm not talking about my supporters; I'm talking about all the constituents in Brandon East. Regardless of what political stripes you have, or if you don't have any, that's fine, too. Give my office a call if you have questions about the budget. I would love to sit down and go over the lines of the budget and show how this historic budget is really moving Manitobans forward.

And when I look particularly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, at what's happening in Brandon and some of the things that have been going on there, and I think I've mentioned before about the great work that His Worship Mayor Rick Chrest had done when he was the mayor in bringing forward the Downtown Wellness and Safety Task Force, really looking at some of the issues that we have that—everybody has mentioned here about the safety issues. How do we provide a safe environment for our citizens? How do we help those in need get the help that they so desperately need?

* (12:00)

And it's there, so I really want to give hats off to the previous mayor and, you know, his councillors, and the members of the community that volunteered to sit on this community—or, pardon me, on this committee. I know I was honoured to receive a phone call from His Worship, back in the day when this started, to ask if I would sit on the task force. I have a keen interest, as most are aware of my past history in working—security work at the regional health authority, in how to provide safer communities. And working on that, it was an honour to sit on there.

And the work that they did, Mr. Deputy Speaker, really points to the safer streets part of our budget speech that came out. One just has to look at what's happening in the communities—and it's honestly not all about money. It's not all about throwing money at issues. We seen that over 17 years of the previous NDP government, threw money at issues but there were never any solutions. Never any solutions.

And I know that this is a different crew that's over there now. I look across the hallway, consider you all friends. And, you know, and I'm sure they understand where the past went awry under their government.

So, yes. So, we look at how do we make streets safer? And it's not just about providing services in the realm of those that need help. Yes, we need to provide those services. And we do. We work—especially in Brandon, I work very closely with Barb McNish at the Samaritan House. They are doing some amazing work, and our government has been able to come on board and work with them tremendously to help provide shelters, to help provide meals.

But it also takes a community to build this type of resilience of safety in our streets. And when I say that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I've had a number of conversations with the business community that want to come on board and, you know, do their part. You know, we struggle in our downtown, so we've heard the issues that they have in Winnipeg, as well. Businesses leaving downtown. You know, we have people that are living on the streets that need help. But one group cannot do it. We all need to come together.

So, regardless of how much money is put into a situation, you need to have a plan. And I'm so proud of this government that has a plan on dealing with safer streets.

But you do need that funding, as well. So when we look at, you know, this historic investment that's in this budget, you know, more than \$100 million to really address those challenges of violence and homelessness. I'm looking forward to the Minister of Families (Ms. Squires); I'm looking forward to her report on homelessness.

I—again, in my previous role on city council in Brandon, I was honoured to be the chair of the committee that looked at homelessness, looked at how we can make our environment safer. And—so, to me, this is just an all-around start to moving on because, as we've heard many times, we're very upfront that there is more work to do. But we need a starting point and we need a plan and we have those. And with this budget, we can certainly see that move forward.

Again, \$51.8 million, Mr. Deputy Speaker, going into a strategy over the next two years on reducing violent crime. Again, we need that funding, thanks to this government, so that we can move these strategies forward and we can help those in need.

I really have to take my hat off to our Minister of Justice (Mr. Goertzen) and the ministers of justice across this province who are really pushing for bail reform on a national level. Again, we're putting the money where our mouth is, but we need to ensure that everybody comes on board.

Again, I just previously mentioned homelessness; \$51 million in our homelessness strategy will go a long way. I know the member from Kirkfield Park had talked briefly in his statement about Homes for Heroes, a great program, and as the special envoy for military affairs, I'm involved in that program.

I've been honoured to attend their ceremonies where they're receiving funding, revealing their plans and actually putting a shovel in the ground, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And it's certainly something that we can look at, as a government, on providing funding for programs that come up with solutions. And that's why this budget is such an incredible budget to see.

Again, I know in our budget we talked about \$3.6 million for the Downtown Community Safety Partnership here in Winnipeg.

And you probably say, why would a member from Brandon stand in the House to talk about funding that's going to downtown Winnipeg. And it's simple, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We are all in this together. We need to build and we need to start somewhere. So I'm one hundred per cent confident and positive that what we learn in Winnipeg can be used in other communities throughout Manitoba and even in Brandon.

And, vice versa, there are things happening in Brandon right now that other communities such as Winnipeg are looking at that will certainly help—and I hate to use the word revitalize downtown, but rebuild, restructure and rebirth the vibrancy that we can have in a community.

One of the things, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe it was two or three weeks ago, I held a town hall where I reached out to over 6,000 residents in Brandon East and sat and talked to over a thousand of—almost 1,100 for over an hour. And some great questions came from there and it allowed me to really try to get an understanding of what their priorities are and where they would like to see our government go with this year's budget and then into the future.

And I got to say, the top priority—and I don't have a percentage, I wish I had that with me—but it's in my office in Brandon. But the number of people who were concerned with the top subject was incredible, and it was basically help. We need help. We need help from our provincial government. We don't want handouts; we want hand ups. We want to be able to reach our goal. We want to be able to put our children into sports. We want to be able to send our children to school healthy.

And, again, one of the ways we can do that is by reducing taxes. However, reducing taxes on some items is not the best solution. The best solution is right where it affects the family, which is the personal tax exemption. So, again, a \$311-million investment into tax relief in the personal exemption, as we've heard, it's just—I believe it's 10.5 thousand—\$10,500 a year that someone has to make prior to paying personal income taxes. And with this budget, we will see that rise to \$15,000, putting us even with the Canadian—the federal government, I should say—and putting us, I believe it was third—we saw it earlier today, I think it was third highest in the country.

That's where we help individuals, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That is probably the largest group that I have received emails and 'texas' from since the release of this budget, is based on that information. It is certainly one that people now realize—how do you save money.

And in—as we heard this morning, if anybody—I know there was some of the members on this side were at breakfast this morning with the Manitoba Chambers—and I apologize, I didn't see any of the opposition members at that breakfast, but I might be wrong, they might have been there, so I apologize if I didn't see you there this morning. But even chatting at that, when we talk about the benefit of taking this number of Manitobans entirely off the tax roll, and how can you afford to operate a government if you're removing that kind of volume of taxes out of your revenue line.

Well, it's easy, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if you look at the charts, if you look at the trending situation across Canada, Manitoba is growing its economy. We're growing our population. With an increase in population brings increased tax base. So the tax base that's coming in is outweighing the tax base that we're losing.

In conjunction, yes, it's about a partnership with the federal government on certain levels, as well, and it is certainly something that we can strive to work continually with our partners, whether it's federal or municipal, on building stronger inroads for our community.

And I will stand in this House any day and fight for the residents of Brandon. You know, I will look at all of these issues here and say how can we help more. It was mentioned yesterday—and I apologize, I don't remember which member was talking—about schools and the number of schools that have been built or have not been built by the previous government.

I was really adamant and fought on behalf of Brandon citizens to not only build a school in Brandon, but to ensure that school was built in Brandon East, where we needed it the most. And back in 2017-2018, you know, we committed to not just the one school—Maryland Park School, which it is now fully operational, at capacity.

So, I'm happy to say that back in 2017-2018, we didn't promise one school in Brandon. We promised three schools in Brandon. We promised two K-to-8 schools and one French immersion school.

* (12:10)

And they're there; they're working on those right now, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And we are at that situation where, how do we look at ensuring that our families can continue to grow, continue to afford to live.

And again, aside from the personal tax exemptions that we've talked about, we're also talking about the school tax rebate. Up to 50 per cent this year alone, and I believe next year I think it's, like, 75 per cent, you know, until a point where they don't have to pay any of that tax.

So, again, it's about affordability for families, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's not always about building government. It's about building a society where our members in our society can live, can thrive, can grow, and that's something that we have a responsibility, as legislators, standing in this building.

The other thing I did really want to quickly talk about again is I want to give kudos to Chief Wayne Balcaen. He is our police chief in Brandon, and some of the work that himself and his organization have been doing that really supports our Safer Streets campaign. And I know that Chief Balcaen was here during the budget speech, along with His Worship. And then two members of our post-secondary institutions in Brandon, Brandon University and Assiniboine Community College, were here as well. And I know we had an opportunity to talk about, you know, how do we provide safer streets. What does that really mean?

And so when we look at that again, it's about investing, the government investing in a community that it believes in. And believe me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we believe in Chief Wayne Balcaen and the work that him and his team are doing. We believe in the work that the Brandon Police Board is doing. And I say that with great honour, because I used to be the vice chair of that board, and I see that they're working

much harder than they did when I was there. So maybe that was my fault; I'm not sure. But they are doing incredible work and that allows us to do our part, which is investing over \$600,000 for flexible-length community-residential withdrawal management beds in Brandon. And that helps on that end.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if I had another 20 minutes I'd love to tell everybody in the House about a program that the Brandon Police Service uses that a previous chief, Ian Grant, brought in from another province and really built up in Brandon, and it is doing incredible work. I believe they now have it in Portage as well, and I know they're looking at northern communities. They may even have it in Thompson by now, as well. That, don't quote me on because I'm not exactly sure where that's at.

But again, it's because these folks are investing in our community, and it's an investment that we need to grow to the partnership that we need. And with the new mayor, His Worship Jeff Fawcett, you know, talking with him on a monthly basis, and I also meet with Tanya LaBuick, who is the president of the Brandon Chamber of Commerce, on a monthly basis. And, actually, tomorrow, I—not tomorrow, pardon me—next Friday, I believe I have meetings with them both, because we want to continue that dialogue.

We want to continue—how can the government of Manitoba work with you as a partner in ensuring the citizens of Brandon are well represented in this building? And, you know, with myself and the MLA for Spruce Woods and the MLA for Brandon West, we bring their voice here. We fight for them every day. And I think it wouldn't be a surprise if you asked any of our ministers if we're going to their doors and knocking on their doors, and bringing issues forward because we're looking out for our constituents.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm just going to—I've got a whole bunch more, but let me just wrap up quickly on something that, in addition to this amazing, exciting budget that, again, if these things don't happen, it's because they're not supported by the opposition. They're there.

We had BITSA introduced today, so there is no delay, so this should pass by June 1st, and then residents right across the province can enjoy the benefits that they deserve.

But one of the things I did want to mention just before I wrap up, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is January of 2022. So, over a year ago, I was honoured to be appointed the special envoy for military affairs. I want

to thank my colleagues for taking my calls, for sitting with me, for talking about issues that the military personnel in this province are facing, and how we, as a government, can help make their lives so much easier.

And when I look at, just an example, and what I really want to mention is April 1st is not just April Fool's Day, Mr. Deputy Speaker. April 1st is an amazing day here in Manitoba.

So, on April 1st, 2023, when that sun rises that day, if you are a member of the military, if you are in an active role in the military or if you are a veteran in the military and you want to go fishing without a fishing licence, throw your cast, throw your line in the water, because there is no charge for veterans and military officials.

In this province you do not need a licence; you just need your ID, starting April 1st. So that's another improvement that this government is doing to help those living in Manitoba.

Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): A vote for this budget would be a vote of confidence, and we do not, on this side, have confidence in this government, nor do Manitobans. They won't be fooled by, you know, these last-minute announcements in an election year where they're trying to throw money at things that they've continually cut.

And I want to bring attention to a whole bunch of issues that affect my constituents in Point Douglas, but not just in Point Douglas, in each and every one of their constituencies, as well, that they failed to support, they failed to address. They even failed to take their calls. They call our offices to do their case-work because they won't even help their constituents.

So I want to talk about housing. You know they made this big announcement about housing. The last seven years, homelessness in this province has skyrocketed. It's got so bad you can't even drive down Main Street without seeing someone on Main Street either laying on the ground, in a bus shack, you know, or standing in line. That is inhumane.

That's not a dignified way of living. And this government pats themselves on the back and think that they're doing enough to address the high rates of homelessness in this province? Shame on them. Shame on each one of those members for thinking that they are going to address this by this little bit of money that they're throwing at this issue.

This is a chronic issue that's been here for—since this government has taken office. They've sold over 1,700 units of social housing. These are units that are affordable. These are units that used to be actually staffed by a security guard. Now we're hearing from residents that they're riddled, the ones that are left, that are riddled with bedbugs, mice, cockroaches. Imagine living in that. And I know members on the other side can't imagine that because they haven't had to experience that, most of them, you know. But, on this side of the House, many of us have.

Many of us can relate because we've been there. We've had to live, you know, in a social housing unit because we couldn't afford to pay market rent. We've had to live in those situations because we've had a government that fails to come in and actually clean up the bedbugs, to get someone in there.

Even, you know, I've heard from seniors, I've heard from people with mobility issues, that can't move their furniture, and they're, you know, going to be evicted because this government says, well, if you don't move it, then we're not going to spray, which means you can't live there. Imagine that, Deputy Speaker.

So they call our office. We usually call community groups who will go in and help move furniture for seniors who have helped build this province that, you know, under this government are being underserved, people with mobility issues that, you know, are in wheelchairs, that have been—had amputations because of diabetes that have, you know, worsened because of this government's cuts and inactions, and, you know, them having to move to the city because there's no resources in their community because this government has cut them.

So I want to speak up for those folks, those folks that don't have a voice on that side, because we are bringing that voice to this Manitoba Legislature.

I think about, you know, Moms Stop the Harm. This group has lost their children to addictions. They've lost their loved ones. You know, I, myself, I know I've said this in this Chamber many times, you know, my father died over 20 years ago, and, Deputy Speaker, I know you knew my father. My father was a good man. He had his struggles just like every other person that is out there struggling with addictions. Everyone has a story. They are good people. They need support.

* (12:20)

Does this government provide the supports? No.

You know, their idea of providing support is recovery. Not everybody can get to that point where they can get into recovery, and even when they do get into recovery—and I just had—you know, my sister-in-law, as you know, lost her husband last year to an overdose, to, you know, bad toxic drug supply of down. He was in treatment. He went into treatment a few times, actually.

And you know what his mother said? His mother said when he came out, there was never any supports under this government. Never any supports. So what happened? It became a revolving door. He came out, didn't have the supports. He was turned back to, you know, the toxic drugs that are out there, go back into treatment.

This government is failing on so many levels to support those that are struggling with substance abuse. People want to get help, but they don't have access to the points to even get help. A supervised consumption site—and, Deputy Speaker, I've gone to Calgary. I've actually gone to Vancouver and actually went into one of the safe consumption sites and actually spoke to front-line workers and actually talked to people who were, you know, using; unlike the last minister, who went and walked the street and took pictures, I might add, and tweeted them out, of people who were struggling on the streets.

Never would anyone on this side be so inhumane to do that to a person who is living in an undignified way because governments are failing to support, such as we see in this province here. You can go to a camp. There's so many encampments. People are struggling to get housing and, again, you know, struggling with addictions because this government thinks that it's a moral failing because people use drugs.

Well, Deputy Speaker, people have stories. People have trauma, and unless we start to provide those supports to deal with those underlying issues, nothing's ever going to change. And, certainly, you know, when I look on that side of the House, I don't see folks that support those who are homeless, those who are struggling with poverty. I don't hear them talking about child poverty.

I don't hear them talking about nutrition in schools. I was an educator. I know how important it is for kids to have a good, healthy meal in the morning. And, you know, we're struggling. There's an affordability issue right now. This government's failing to support those who are struggling right now, including those families who can't even afford to maybe send a lunch to school, that schools are providing but are

having to take from somewhere else because they're being underfunded by this government.

And the Minister of Education, and I know they're an educator, and you know, I kind of put my head down to that, think, you know, how did this minister, you know, abandon these teachers? Because I'm sure that they had to provide food in their classroom for these students.

I'm sure that they saw kids who were struggling with extra needs and needed those extra supports. I'm sure that that minister also saw that there was a need for extra supports in schools, like educational assistants, like occupational therapists, like EAs. But, you know, unfortunately, I don't know what's happened. He's seemed to forgot that, you know, at one point, he was one of these educators that were in these classrooms, that were providing these supports to students.

And I think about our post-secondary, and I want to go to education only because it's in line with that, and I think about those that are struggling in poverty that don't have access to post-secondary because this government has taken away the bursaries, the bursaries—the very bursaries and scholarships that help students in the inner city, a bursary and a social program that actually helped my family get out of poverty. These—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable Minister of Education, on a point of order.

Hon. Wayne Ewasko (Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning): Just on a point of order, not really a major point of order.

The point is, is that I've—listening to the Speaker on her ruling earlier today on the point of order brought forward by the member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe) on our great \$10-a-day child-care announcement, I am tabling the documents that I quoted, the good news message for my constituent.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It's—I would just state that it's actually not a point of order, but I thank the minister for following through as stated this morning.

An Honourable Member: Can we respond to the point of order?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On the same point of order? If—[interjection]

Technically, it's a new point of order. The Speaker has ruled on the previous point of order, but members have the right to stand up and request to speak on a point of order—on a new point of order.

Point of Order

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The—yes, please. The honourable member for Union Station.

MLA Uzoma Asagwara (Union Station): Just want to acknowledge that our colleague, the MLA for Point Douglas, was in the middle of her speech talking about very important issues in regard to the budget and how it's affecting community members, and the minister could've chosen a different opportunity to do so.

It's disappointing that he would stand up in the House and interrupt this MLA in order to bring forward documents he could've done at another moment. But that seems to be typical of that minister's poor behaviour in this House.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On the same point of order, the honourable Minister for Advanced Education.

Hon. Sarah Guillemard (Minister of Advanced Education and Training): On the same point of order, I just want to point out that there are definitely some timing issues that can be taken into account here.

But, as the member has mentioned, that there was a number of issues that have been brought up during the member's time, one of which, accusing our side of the House of having nobody having lived in Manitoba Housing. That is false information.

I would ask the member for Point Douglas (Mrs. Smith) retract that statement.

Thank you.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Okay. *[interjection]* Order, please.

I'm going to respond to the point of order brought forward by the honourable member for Union Station (MLA Asagwara).

The Speaker requested the documents being discussed, and it is proper and, indeed, was requested by the table officers that that happen today.

Now, we're counting down minutes before the day ends and so the minister actually was inbounds to do

that, even though it wasn't a point of order. That was the right mechanism and the right way to do it.

So, certainly, we apologize for the interruption, and I would like to recognize the honourable member for Point Douglas, who still has the floor and eleven thirty-five remaining.

* * *

Mrs. Smith: I'll get back to education, you know, and I will go on to daycare, because the minister did table those documents.

And I know, you know, it's a sore spot for this minister, because this minister has misled Manitobans in thinking that \$10 a day for every single day of the year, 365 days a year, when kids are in daycare, that it's \$10 a day, when, in fact, it is not.

Deputy Speaker, \$10 a day is during a regular day, which—before and after school, a child that is in school—if there is an in-service day, they are charged \$20 a day. So—and then, if it's during the summer, summer break, parents have to pay \$20 a day.

So, we want to be clear about that on this side of the House. We don't want to, you know, mislead Manitobans. We want to give a clear picture and give facts. You know, something that the government on the other side tries to put smokescreens in front of and, you know, has lost the trust of Manitobans. Manitobans don't believe what this government has to say because they've continually mess—misled them.

They've continually made cuts. They've continually made cuts that have impacted lives. We've seen people in this province lose their lives in ERs due to overdoses. People in bus shacks that are freezing to death.

And has this government responded to any of that? No, they haven't, because you know what they're worried about—they're worried about getting re-elected.

But, you know what, Manitobans won't be fooled in an election year. They know that they can count on this side of the House for the NDP to stand up for them to fix health care—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Smith: —that they've broken and to ensure that Manitobans get the supports that they need when they

need it. Not just in an election year like this government is trying to do.

It's shameful that, you know, each minister on that side—and they're leaving in droves, Deputy Speaker. One in three ministers on that side has not—does not have confidence in their governing government.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Point Douglas (Mrs. Smith) will have 10 minutes remaining. The time being 12:30 p.m.—*[interjection]*

Order, please. Time being 12:30 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until Monday at 1:30 p.m.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, March 10, 2023

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