



Second Session – Forty-Third Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report
(Hansard)**

*Published under the
authority of
The Honourable Tom Lindsey
Speaker*



Vol. LXXIX No. 30 - 1:30 p.m., Thursday, March 20, 2025

ISSN 0542-5492

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-Third Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ASAGWARA, Uzoma, Hon.	Union Station	NDP
BALCAEN, Wayne	Brandon West	PC
BEREZA, Jeff	Portage la Prairie	PC
BLASHKO, Tyler	Lagimodière	NDP
BRAR, Diljeet	Burrows	NDP
BUSHIE, Ian, Hon.	Keewatinook	NDP
BYRAM, Jodie	Agassiz	PC
CABLE, Renée, Hon.	Southdale	NDP
CHEN, Jennifer	Fort Richmond	NDP
COMPTON, Carla	Tuxedo	NDP
COOK, Kathleen	Roblin	PC
CROSS, Billie	Seine River	NDP
DELA CRUZ, Jelynn	Radisson	NDP
DEVGAN, JD	McPhillips	NDP
EWASKO, Wayne	Lac du Bonnet	PC
FONTAINE, Nahanni, Hon.	St. Johns	NDP
GOERTZEN, Kelvin	Steinbach	PC
GUENTER, Josh	Borderland	PC
HIEBERT, Carrie	Morden-Winkler	PC
JACKSON, Grant	Spruce Woods	PC
JOHNSON, Derek	Interlake-Gimli	PC
KENNEDY, Nellie, Hon.	Assiniboia	NDP
KHAN, Obby	Fort Whyte	PC
KINEW, Wab, Hon.	Fort Rouge	NDP
KING, Trevor	Lakeside	PC
KOSTYSHYN, Ron, Hon.	Dauphin	NDP
LAGASSÉ, Bob	Dawson Trail	PC
LAMOUREUX, Cindy	Tyndall Park	Lib.
LATHLIN, Amanda	The Pas-Kameesak	NDP
LINDSEY, Tom, Hon.	Flin Flon	NDP
LOISELLE, Robert	St. Boniface	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Malaya, Hon.	Notre Dame	NDP
MOROZ, Mike, Hon.	River Heights	NDP
MOSES, Jamie, Hon.	St. Vital	NDP
MOYES, Mike, Hon.	Riel	NDP
NARTH, Konrad	La Vérendrye	PC
NAYLOR, Lisa, Hon.	Wolseley	NDP
NESBITT, Greg	Riding Mountain	PC
OXENHAM, Logan	Kirkfield Park	NDP
PANKRATZ, David	Waverley	NDP
PERCHOTTE, Richard	Selkirk	PC
PIWNIUK, Doyle	Turtle Mountain	PC
REDHEAD, Eric	Thompson	NDP
SALA, Adrien, Hon.	St. James	NDP
SANDHU, Mintu, Hon.	The Maples	NDP
SCHMIDT, Tracy, Hon.	Rossmere	NDP
SCHOTT, Rachelle	Kildonan-River East	NDP
SCHULER, Ron	Springfield-Ritchot	PC
SIMARD, Glen, Hon.	Brandon East	NDP
SMITH, Bernadette, Hon.	Point Douglas	NDP
STONE, Lauren	Midland	PC
WASYLIW, Mark	Fort Garry	Ind.
WHARTON, Jeff	Red River North	PC
WIEBE, Matt, Hon.	Concordia	NDP
WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC
<i>Vacant</i>	Transcona	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, March 20, 2025

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

The 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, know it with certainty and accomplish it perfectly for the glory and honour of Thy name and for the welfare of all our people. Amen.

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

Please be seated.

Speaker's Statement

The Speaker: And just before we go to routine proceedings, I have a very short statement for the House.

Yesterday, some things took place in this House that were very concerning for me as the Speaker, and also for several members of this Assembly.

I urge us all to do better, and it doesn't matter which side of this Chamber you're sitting on: that urging goes all the way around. When things get too loud, sometimes I can't hear what's being said. It causes me then to recognize that one party or one person is the voice I hear when perhaps I should be hearing other voices.

So I'd really urge us all to be respectful. We have a crowd here today that expects us to be better, that expects us to be leaders, to—expects us, certainly in today's time, to show more respect and kindness for each other. So I implore us to please do that today.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

The Speaker: Introduction of bills? Committee reports? Tabling of reports?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS**Journée internationale de la Francophonie**

Hon. Glen Simard (Minister responsible for Francophone Affairs): Monsieur le Président, j'ai le grand plaisir de vous adresser la parole aujourd'hui pour souligner la Journée internationale de la Francophonie.

Le 20 mars, nous célébrons avec plus de 343 millions de personnes à travers le monde qui parlent français.

Le thème pour 2025, « Je m'éduque, donc j'agis, » souligne l'importance de l'éducation pour former des générations engagées et responsables, tout en renforçant l'idée que l'accès à une éducation de qualité pour tout le monde contribue au développement durable et à la paix.

Cette journée est un rappel important que les francophones et les francophiles de notre province peuvent créer des liens non seulement dans notre province ou notre pays, mais à travers le monde – et ce, grâce à un amour partagé pour la langue française et les cultures de la francophonie.

Au Manitoba, nous sommes fiers de la diversité de nos communautés francophones. Nous reconnaissons le rôle primordial qu'a joué et joue encore la francophonie dans le tissu social, économique, patrimonial et culturel de la province.

Par ailleurs, depuis que j'ai été nommé ministre responsable des Affaires francophones, le Manitoba a fait avancer le dossier.

Par exemple, notre gouvernement a finalisé une nouvelle entente quinquennale pour les services en français avec le gouvernement fédéral, a rétabli le poste de sous-ministre adjoint au Bureau de l'éducation française, et travaillons très fort pour renforcer encore plus nos relations avec la communauté.

J'ai eu le grand plaisir d'échanger avec les membres de la communauté plus tôt aujourd'hui, et je crois fortement que l'annonce d'actions concrètes démontre

notre engagement envers le bien-être et l'avenir prometteur de la francophonie au Manitoba.

Monsieur le Président, comme gouvernement, nous œuvrons pour améliorer les services en français et nous arriverons à notre objectif : que le Manitoba soit véritablement une province bilingue.

Monsieur le Président, je demande à tous les membres de l'Assemblée de se joindre à moi pour souligner la Journée internationale de la Francophonie, de reconnaître nos invités spéciaux de la communauté francophone, et de célébrer le fait français au Manitoba.

Translation

It gives me great pleasure to address you today to mark the International Day of La Francophonie.

On March 20th, we celebrate with more than 343 million French speakers worldwide.

The theme for 2025, I educate myself, therefore I act, emphasises the importance of education in shaping committed and responsible generations, while reinforcing the idea that access to quality education for all contributes to sustainable development and peace.

This day is an important reminder that our province's francophones and francophiles can create bonds not only within our province or country, but all around the world—thanks to a shared love of the French language and Francophone cultures.

In Manitoba, we are proud of the diversity within our francophone communities. We acknowledge the essential role that our Francophonie has played and continues to play in the social, economic, heritage and cultural fabric of the province.

Furthermore, since I was appointed Minister responsible for Francophone Affairs, Manitoba has been successful in moving the issue forward.

For example, our government has finalized a new five-year agreement for French-language services with the federal government, reinstated the assistant deputy minister position for the Bureau de l'éducation française, and we are working hard to further strengthen our relationships with the community.

I had the great pleasure of exchanging with members of our francophone community earlier today, and I strongly believe that the announcement of concrete actions demonstrates our engagement to the well-being and the promising future of Manitoba's Francophonie.

Honourable Speaker, as a government, we are working to improve services in French and we will achieve our goal: that Manitoba truly be a bilingual province.

Honourable Speaker, I ask that all members of this Assembly join me in recognizing the International Day of La Francophonie, in recognizing our special guests from the Francophone community, and in celebrating the French fact in Manitoba.

MLA Bob Lagassé (Dawson Trail): Honourable Speaker, c'est avec une grande fierté que je prends la parole aujourd'hui pour célébrer la Journée internationale de la Francophonie.

C'est une journée spéciale célébrée partout dans le monde le 20 mars depuis 1988.

Aux francophones et aux francophiles ici au Canada et partout dans le monde, l'occasion de s'unir pour célébrer la langue française et sa culture dynamique.

Translation

It is with great pride that I take the floor today to celebrate the International Day of La Francophonie.

It is a special day that has been celebrated all over the world on March 20 since 1988.

For French speakers and francophiles here in Canada and all over the world, it is an opportunity to come together to celebrate the French language and its vibrant culture.

English

In Manitoba, we are privileged to be home to a rich, diverse francophone community. Our province champions not only multiculturalism, but also bilingualism as a core value. Manitoba is proud to offer French-immersion programs in 115 public schools across 23 school divisions, ensuring that future generations can embrace and celebrate both of Canada's official languages.

Le français est plus qu'une simple langue. C'est un pont qu'on – qui nous relie notre histoire commune. C'est l'une des officielles du Canada, et ici au Manitoba, elle revêt une importance particulière, car c'est l'une des langues parlées par les Métis de la rivière Rouge. Ce lien profond enrichissant le tissu de notre communauté est continu de la Francophonie et qui nous sommes.

Translation

French is more than just a language. It is a bridge that connects us to our shared history. It is one of the official languages of Canada, and here in Manitoba, it is particularly important because it is one of the languages spoken by the Red River Métis. This deep bond enriches the fabric of our community, is part of the Francophonie and who we are.

English

As someone who has personally witnessed the beauty of the francophone culture and the language in our province, I am reminded every day how much it adds to our collective identity and spirit.

* (13:40)

Honourable Speaker, j'encourage tous les Manitobains à prendre le temps de se renseigner sur la Journée internationale de Francophonie et célébrer cette culture remarquable.

Que ce soit ici participer des événements culturels comme la Journée francophone au Musée des enfants, ou simplement de l'agissement avec le comité francophone, c'est une occasion de partager à la richesse de notre diversité et de tisser des liens plus forts entre nous tous.

Merci.

Translation

I encourage all Manitobans to take the time to learn about the International Day of La Francophonie and celebrate this remarkable culture.

Whether it's participating in cultural events such as Francophone Day at the Children's Museum, or simply working with the Francophone committee, it's an opportunity to share the richness of our diversity and to forge stronger bonds between us all.

Thank you.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Voices of Manitoba—Garbage Bag Fashion Show

Hon. Bernadette Smith (Minister of Housing, Addictions and Homelessness): Today, I rise to honour some incredible young designers of the third annual Garbage Bag Fashion Show.

This event is sponsored by Voices of Manitoba, a youth-led advocacy organization that aims to empower, advocate for and connect youth in and from care with the resources they need.

Voices is working together with graffiti art gallery, an inner-city studio whose mission is to create change in community. They've also hosted the Governor General for a round table discussion.

As part of their advocacy and drive to create change, the Voices youth leadership team will create fashion designs from garbage bags to bring awareness to the reality of those living in care and how often they move their belongings in garbage bags.

Through these designs, the youth will create an exhibition that will highlight their experiences within the care system.

Two designers have joined to help these youth realize their vision: Evan Ducharme, whose work has been featured in magazines like Elle, Vanity Fair Italia and Vogue; and Amy McPherson, who is a past resident artist at Banff Centre of the arts and a graduate with academic achievement from MC College.

This year, I am absolutely honoured to be modelling the youths' designs, alongside the Minister of Health, seniors and active living—or, long-term care, as well as the MLA for Waverly; Ace Burpee, host of Virgin Radio; and Mitch Bourbonniere, who is a community educator and activist from Action Therapy, just to name a few.

I invite everyone to come and enjoy the show at 109 Higgins from 7 to 9 p.m., on April 4. Admission to the show is free, but those attending can donate by buying photos of the designs that will be showcased.

And miigwech to everyone who supported the youth and helped make this project a reality. They have joined us today in the gallery, so I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating them in raising their voices and being role models for the youth that are coming behind them.

Journée internationale de la Francophonie

MLA Bob Lagassé (Dawson Trail): Good afternoon, everyone. Today, I would like to highlight and celebrate Journée internationale de la Francophonie.

I'm proud to take the time today to thank the francophone community, community organizations and municipal organizations for their dedication to advocating for and supporting francophone languages and services in our beautiful province.

I was honoured today to meet with the Société de la francophonie manitobaine and I—and have meaningful discussions about how the Province can

assist the francophone communities and services. SFM is the official voice of Manitoba's francophone community, and their dedication is something all Manitobans should be proud of.

Another organization I want to thank today is the Association of Manitoba Bilingual Municipalities. AMBM currently has 16 bilingual municipal members and works tirelessly with the Province and federal levels of government to provide tools and solutions that enable bilingual municipalities to address local challenges effectively and to achieve the desired outcomes for their communities.

These are two of many organizations within our province that are doing the important work to ensure Franco-Manitobans have what they need and can live in our province that recognizes the contributions they have made to our communities and they can live in a—in bilingual communities that support and value the francophone language and culture.

Having grown up in a bilingual home, I am proud to call myself a member of the francophone community, and would like to wish everyone a very joyous Journée internationale de la Francophonie.

Seven Oaks Adult Learning Centre

Mr. Diljeet Brar (Burrows): Honourable Speaker, today I rise to recognize Seven Oaks Adult Learning Centre and Seven Oaks settlement services for their invaluable contributions to the Burrows community.

It is never too late to access education. The Seven Oaks ALC admirably provides adult students with the opportunity to continue and advance their education. Whether they need support in earning grade 12 credits, acquiring a high school diploma, or earning credits towards post-secondary education and career building, the ALC is prepared to help mature students whenever—wherever they are in their educational journey.

My special thanks to Fran Taylor for her hard work and leadership at Seven Oaks ALC for many, many years. I wish her a happy retired life. I welcome the centre's new director, Shelby McNish.

Everyone should have the resources they need to succeed and feel at home here in our province. Seven Oaks settlement services is a commendable leader in helping this sentiment become a reality for newcomers in the Seven Oaks area.

They provide many supports for newcomer settlement and integration, helping newcomers in one-on-one or group settings. They make themselves

available to go where their clients are at, meeting them in the office, at their homes or at their schools.

From employment to English classes, family services, health care, housing and education, Seven Oaks settlement services offers a wide range of resources that anticipate the unique needs of every client.

Thank you all—thank you to all the staff at the Seven Oaks Adult Learning Centre for the important work that they do in supporting adult education and to the Seven Oaks settlement services team for the important work they do for the settlement and integration of newcomers here in Burrows.

Please join me in welcoming them in the gallery. Please add their names into Hansard as well.

Thank you.

Yaryna Chepiha, Jose Chinchilla, Stephanie Cooper, Belloty Kabamba, Jana McKee, Tara McLeod, Shelby McNish, Nikki Neufeld, Anu Rana, Fran Taylor

Laura Yellowback

Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye): Today I'd like to recognize an amazingly talented young lady from the great community of Grunthal: 17-year-old Laura Yellowback, who is a student at the Green Valley School, has recently won top prize in the youth category for her painting at the open juried exhibit at the Steinbach Arts Council. This year's art exhibit was so large that the Steinbach Arts Council had to stop submissions early. With more than 150 exhibits, this year marks their largest ever.

Laura entered the exhibit with a modern painting of a woman's head, and when you see this breathtaking art piece, it is easy to see how she achieved the top prize. Her tremendous attention to detail created a true example of artistic excellence.

What's most amazing is that Laura is talented in many mediums, including sculpture art, cake decorating, watercolour, sketching and, of course, painting.

The award-winning painting only took her one month to complete, and that included every aspect. Laura built the frame herself and made the canvas from fabric and paint, which makes the beauty of this art even more remarkable.

When asked what Laura would like to do after high school, it was no surprise to hear that she plans to study fine art in university. I am tremendously proud of the talent that I regularly see come from the small towns across the southeast, and Laura is a prime example of that. I look forward to having a

Yellowback painting hanging in my office one day, and I am sure we will all see many more of Laura's arts in the years to come.

Please help me in congratulating Laura, who is here today with her parents, Len and Mary-Anne Hart, sister McKia Charlette, and guests Cara Hart, Sandy Schroeder and Samarra Beardy.

* (13:50)

Journée internationale de la Francophonie

MLA Robert Loiselle (St. Boniface): L'Honorable Président, la Francophonie manitobaine est en plein essor.

Que ce soit dans nos commerces, nos écoles, nos centres de la petite enfance, nos centres de santé, au rural comme à l'urbain, notre Francophonie manitobaine ne fait qu'avancer avec ardeur et détermination.

Dès l'arrivée de Pierre Gaultier de Varennes, sieur de La Vérendrye, en 1738 à la Fourche pour y bâtir le Fort Rouge, la langue française s'est enracinée à la rivière Rouge, et c'est déjà depuis tout près de 300 ans que l'on parle le français au Manitoba. Langue de Molière, Rimbaud, Louis Riel, Gabrielle Roy, Annette Saint-Pierre et Réal Bérard, le français est le véhicule de notre culture francophone au Manitoba, autant chez les Métis francophones, les Franco-manitobains, nos amis québécois, de France, sans oublier nos frères et sœurs franco-africains.

Mais notre parcours n'a pas toujours été facile. Le règne de la terreur des soldats de Wolseley de 1870 à 1873 envers les Métis a dispersé les Métis de la rivière Rouge dans l'Ouest canadien. Et quoi dire au sujet de la Loi Thornton de 1916 qui a aboli l'éducation en français au Manitoba, et ce jusqu'en 1970.

Néanmoins, n'oublions jamais que grâce à plusieurs générations de Franco-manitobains fiers et engagés, le français a survécu au Manitoba, même face au racisme, la persécution, les préjugés et à l'assimilation.

Mais aujourd'hui, l'Honorable Président, le flambeau de la Francophonie rayonne à travers notre belle province, et nous avons le droit d'être fiers de ce Manitoba que nous avons fondé et aidé à bâtir pour devenir l'engin économique que nous sommes aujourd'hui.

C'est pourquoi, je proclame à haute voix : Longue vie à la Francophonie manitobaine, et vive la Journée internationale de La Francophonie.

Translation

Manitoba's Francophonie is booming.

Whether in our shops, schools, early childhood centres or health centres, in both rural and urban areas, Manitoba's Francophonie is forging ahead with enthusiasm and determination.

From the arrival of Pierre Gaultier de Varennes, Sieur de La Vérendrye, in 1738 at The Forks to build Fort Rouge, the French language has taken root on the Red River, and French has been spoken in Manitoba for almost 300 years. The language of Molière, Rimbaud, Louis Riel, Gabrielle Roy, Annette Saint-Pierre and Réal Bérard, French is the vehicle of our Francophone culture in Manitoba, as much among the Francophone Métis, Franco-Manitobans, our friends from Quebec and France, not forgetting our Franco-African brothers and sisters.

But our journey has not always been easy. The reign of terror of Wolseley's soldiers from 1870 to 1873 against the Métis scattered the Métis from Red River across Western Canada. And what can we say about the Thornton Act of 1916, which abolished French-language education in Manitoba until 1970.

Nevertheless, let us never forget that thanks to several generations of proud and committed Franco-Manitobans, the French language has survived in Manitoba, even in the face of racism, persecution, prejudice and assimilation.

But today, Honourable Speaker, the torch of La Francophonie shines brightly across our beautiful province, and we have every right to be proud of this Manitoba that we founded and helped to build into the economic powerhouse that we are today.

That is why I proclaim loudly: Long live the Manitoba Francophonie, and long live the International Day of La Francophonie.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: Prior to oral questions, there's some guests in the gallery I would like to introduce.

First, sitting in the loge to my right is the former member for Seine River, Theresa Oswald. We welcome you here today.

Seated in the Speaker's Gallery, we have with us today Debbie Campbell, director of finance for the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba and Omar Sanchez, manager of finance for the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba. And we welcome you here today.

Further, I'd like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery, where we have with us today Fran Taylor, Jana McKee, Tara McLeod, Jose Chinchilla, Anu Rana, Stephanie Cooper, Nikki Neufeld, Shelley Smith, Shelley [phonetic] McNish, Belloty Kambamba, Yaryna Cheyeyha, who are guests of the honourable member for Burrows (Mr. Brar). And we welcome you all here today, as well.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Previous Funding for Child Care Inquiry into Future Funding Levels

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Leader of the Official Opposition): I was pleased to announce back in 2023, along with the federal minister at the time, Karina Gould, \$132 million allocated to 36 schools across Manitoba and 2,400 child-care spaces. And another 45 million was provided to support more than 680 new child-care expansion projects at six post-secondary institutions.

This included 89 new spaces in Anola, 74 in Lac du Bonnet, 104 in Pinawa. But, unfortunately, Honourable Speaker, the Premier was not watching his minister, and they had cut the spaces to these communities in the most recent tenders.

With the budget coming in the next hour, can the Premier tell us why he cut these child-care spaces from the plan?

Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier): Honorable Président, je veux te souhaiter une joyeuse Journée internationale de la Francophonie. Je suis très fier aussi d'accueillir tout le monde, tous les membres de le public qui sont ici pour célébrer cet événement important pour le patrimoine manitobain. Je ne sais pas ce que le membre de Lac-du-Bonnet a vu ou vécu, mais la seule chose que j'ai coupée, c'est les – que j'ai coupée, c'est les sièges pour les membres des conservateurs.

Il y a beaucoup parmi d'entre eux où les carrières dans les politiques sont annulées. On voit plus de Heather Stefanson; on voit plus de Janice Morley-Lecomte; on voit plus des autres, Rochelle Squires comme ça. Ça, c'est la coupure que nous avons faite, pour ce qu'on pourra investir dans les garderies, investir dans les écoles, et surtout investir dans le système de santé pour vous, les personnes tout partout dans la province de Manitoba.

Translation

I would like to wish you a happy International Day of La Francophonie. I am also very proud to welcome everyone, all the members of the public who are here

to celebrate this important event in Manitoba's heritage. I don't know what the member for Lac du Bonnet has seen or experienced, but the only thing I cut was the seats for the Conservative members.

There are many of them whose careers in politics are over. We no longer see Heather Stefanson; we no longer see Janice Morley-Lecomte; we no longer see others like Rochelle Squires. That is the cut we have made, so that we can invest in daycare centres, invest in schools, and above all invest in the health system for you, the people of the entire province of Manitoba.

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

Child-Care Centre in Falcon Lake Funding Commitment Request

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Leader of the Official Opposition): Honourable Speaker, it would just be nice if the Premier for once would answer a question and actually commit to reinstating the things that he's already cut.

He has no problems patting himself on the back, taking credit for Progressive Conservative initiatives that we put forward prior to the last election. There is a group of community members from Falcon Lake and West Hawk Lake that are also looking at starting a new licensed child-care centre in their community.

And with the significant federal and provincial funding that I had the pleasure of announcing in 2023, can the Premier commit today to funding a new child-care centre in Falcon Lake in this upcoming year, Honourable Speaker?

Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier): Patience is a virtue, so I encourage my friend to be patient, because in less than an hour, he's going to see the best budget that Manitoba has ever received—investments in schools, investments in health care, investments to stand up against Donald Trump's tariffs.

We're standing up for team Canada. The members opposite, on the other hand, though, we're not sure where they stand. Just yesterday, he was comparing me to the American President. Well, you know what that means with this PC leadership contest going on. It means that one of their leadership candidates is going to endorse me, the other one is going thank me, and the member opposite wants to be me when he grows up.

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

Previous Funding for Child Care Inquiry into Funding Levels

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Leader of the Official Opposition): I appreciate the compliment today, Honourable Speaker, on looking that much younger than the Premier today. But it just would really be nice if the Premier would actually—would answer a question for a change.

Again, I announced the school base expansion as part of the Budget 2023, which included Pinawa, Lac du Bonnet and Anola. Now, I understand that the Premier is talking about being patient.

But the problem is, is that when he cut these programs, when he cut these spaces, what he's done in these last 18 years—which, Honourable Speaker, really is not much at all—what is happening is when they reannounce all those programs this afternoon, it's actually going to cost Manitobans that much more, because he delayed it for a year and a half.

So will he commit today, Honourable Speaker, to reinstate all those spaces that were announced to all those wonderful agencies and schools all across this wonderful province of ours?

Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier): Yes. Here's a little sneak preview. This budget has 4,600 child-care spaces, 2,000 more than he's trying to pat himself on the back for. So great job to our Minister of Finance (MLA Sala), great job to our Minister of Education and early learning.

When it comes to PC initiatives, absolutely not are we going to go into the same policy direction. People in the gallery here know that we've reopened an emergency room that they closed in rural Manitoba. That was in Carberry.

But one of the biggest mistakes that they ever made during their failed two terms in office was closing one of the biggest emergency rooms in the province, the only emergency room in south Winnipeg. That's why I'm very, very happy to announce to everybody here that this year's budget, Budget 2025, has money to put shovels in the ground this year to open a new emergency room at the Victoria general hospital.

And you know what the—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Education Property Tax Increase Impact on Average Homeowners

Mrs. Kathleen Cook (Roblin): The NDP's failure to properly fund education has left Winnipeg families footing the bill. Instead of providing stable funding for education, they removed the 50 per cent education property tax rebate and left school divisions scrambling, forcing them to hike taxes by double digits just to keep up.

* (14:00)

Now, homeowners in the Pembina Trails School Division are being hit with a 16.6 per cent tax increase, another massive burden on families already struggling just to keep up. This is a direct result of the NDP's decision to underfund schools, leaving school divisions holding the bag.

Why are the NDP forcing Winnipeg families to pay for their government's failures?

Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier): So before we get into the substance of the response here, I just want to point out for everybody watching, it's the long-standing practice for the Leader of the Opposition to ask the first six questions. Ran out of steam already.

And you know what happened—[interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: —yesterday? Ran out of steam yesterday. Every single PC member of the Legislature ran out of questions yesterday, and they had to sit down to make time for somebody who got elected under our banner.

Well, here's the thing: we're repairing the education system after years of cuts under the PCs, and when it comes to affordability, listen up—[interjection]

The Speaker: Order. Order.

I just spoke to members that perhaps maybe we could try being a little more respectful of each other today, and I would ask all members to pay heed to that.

Mr. Kinew: And when it comes to affordability of property taxes, today's budget has another \$100 for the Homeowners Affordability Tax Credit, bringing the total amount to \$1,600.

We're saving you money.

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

Mrs. Cook: That's incredibly underwhelming, Honourable Speaker.

Pembina Trails families are being forced to pay 16.6 per cent more in school taxes. Let me enlighten the Premier. The average home price in Pembina Trails is \$440,000, well above the break-even point, which means that yes, the average homeowner in Pembina Trails is going to be paying hundreds of dollars more in school taxes this year, just like tens of thousands of homeowners across suburban Winnipeg.

Why will no one on that side of the House stand up for suburban Winnipeggers and admit that a 16.6 per cent tax hike is simply unacceptable?

Mr. Kinew: Some numbers: \$1,600 tax credit for homeowners. That's in today's budget—\$1,600—way more than the PCs ever did. The PCs run around and talk this and that. They raised taxes. They charged a gas tax on Manitobans every single day in office.

So here's the thing: not only are Manitobans going to be getting a \$1,600 tax credit, but the education system is getting more resources under the stewardship of the Minister of Finance (MLA Sala) and the Minister of Education.

So if you want to throw around percentages, here's a percentage to keep in mind: this government, for Manitobans, is a hundred per cent better than Heather Stefanson's government ever was.

The Speaker: The honourable member for Roblin, on a final supplementary question.

Mrs. Cook: Just yesterday, Winnipeg's mayor, Scott Gillingham, called these school tax hikes, quote, almost historic. He pointed out that, quote, we've got school divisions here increasing property taxes by more than 16 per cent, which is certainly a far greater increase on the average—[*interjection*]

The Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Cook: —home than the municipal tax this year. The NDP might think they can dodge responsibility for these tax hikes—[*interjection*]

The Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Cook: —but they can't, forcing school divisions and trustees and municipal councillors to take the blame for their bad budgeting. It's shameful.

Will the NDP finally admit that it's their reckless funding policies that are unfairly punishing families with the highest education tax increases in decades?

Mr. Kinew: Here are the facts: this Education Minister is giving schools funding that's higher than inflation and higher than population growth. On top of that

we're giving you, the average homeowner out there, a \$1,600 tax credit—a record tax credit.

But what do we see from the PCs? The same old, same old. They want to fight school divisions, just like they did with bill 64. They want to fight with municipal leaders, just like they did between Brian Pallister and Brian Bowman. They even want to fight with each other.

At yesterday's PC leadership debate, the front-runner, Wallay [*phonetic*] said, we lost a by-election just yesterday by almost two to one. We didn't have any new ideas in that election. Our numbers are actually going down, not up. We're trending in the wrong way.

Well, guess what? If Wally doesn't win the leadership, look out, Chris Adams; look out, Paul Thomas, because you have a new political prognosticator who's got his finger on the—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

US Tariffs on Industrial Manufacturers Support for Lakeside Businesses

Mr. Trevor King (Lakeside): Honourable Speaker, I have several manufacturers in my constituency of Lakeside, including CentrePort. They employ hundreds of Manitobans. These companies will be profoundly impacted by the tariffs. The problem is they don't manufacture consumer-level products. They sell to commercial, industrial and government customers. When you sell on an industrial scale, markets are much more limited.

Will the minister be providing 'incentive'—incentives to Manitoba businesses so that they can prioritize products from other Manitoba and Canadian businesses?

The Speaker: The honourable member for—the honourable Minister for Business, Mining, Trade and Job Creation.

Hon. Jamie Moses (Minister of Business, Mining, Trade and Job Creation): Well, Honourable Speaker, in the face of this trade war, Manitobans and Canadians are coming together. We're so happy to be supporting that effort with our new buy local initiative. This—not only this initiative, but this act is going to help enable companies right here in Manitoba, right across the country, through our—not only our procurement approach, but to help them support sustaining their supply chains and growing our economy right here in Manitoba.

Instead of taking the approach of thanking Donald Trump for the tariffs, I'm going to thank the Manitoba business community for the efforts that they're putting in to fight Donald Trump and the tariffs that he's putting on our economy.

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

Mr. King: Honourable Speaker, much like agricultural products, there are some manufacturing sectors where the majority of their production goes to the US; there just isn't enough of a domestic market for their products. If the majority of their sales are in the US and their inputs are from the US, they may be forced to relocate to the US. Tax deferrals and bracket shifts just won't be enough.

What specifically will the minister do when a manufacturer knocks on his door and says, sorry, we have to leave?

Mr. Moses: One thing I know, Honourable Speaker, I won't be doing is thanking Donald Trump for the tariffs. That's what members opposite spend their time doing. We're not going to do that.

Not only will I thank the business community for their continued effort to grow our economy here, putting more Manitobans to work with good-paying jobs, I want them to know that our government is going to be here to support them. We've got more good news in our budget to show how we want to support our business community through the face of these tariffs, and I'm going to let good news come from our Finance Minister in just a few minutes.

Seine-Rat Roseau Conservation District Dry Dam Lease Application

Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye): Honourable Speaker, in La Vérendrye, we are lucky enough to have one of the most active conservation districts in the province, providing tremendous value to our environment and to our local agriculture producers.

The Seine-Rat Roseau Conservation District has been working on a Crown land lease application for a dry dam within the Gardenton Community Pasture. There have been unnecessary delays, and now they can't even get a response for the status of the application.

Why is the Minister of Natural Resources okay with radio silence from his department for those on the ground doing the work?

Hon. Mike Moyes (Minister of Environment and Climate Change): I just want to take a moment to say what an honour it is to be in this position as the Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

In my time so far, I've been able to meet with numerous stakeholders across our province, and we've been meeting with members of the department, and I want to just take this opportunity to say that they are doing incredible work in our parks department, in terms of our protected areas, in terms of ensuring that our water is safe. They're doing great work, and I look forward to working with them in the days to come.

The Speaker: The honourable member for La Vérendrye, on a supplementary question.

Mr. Narth: The issue with the lack of communication reaches all the way to the top, Honourable Speaker. On February 4, the watershed district wrote a letter to the Minister of Natural Resources to ask for assistance in resolving this issue as soon as possible.

* (14:10)

I quote that letter and I table it in case the Minister of Natural Resources lost his copy.

It is very important that we get a resolution to this problem, as the district is currently doing our financial budget for the next year. Since this is an issue that's directly relevant also to agriculture, that minister was also copied in the letter.

Do either one of these ministers have a plan on responding to this concern in my constituency?

MLA Moyes: What I can tell you right now is that we are consulting with stakeholders right across our province, and what I would also like to point out is that we love nature on this side of the House.

On that side of the House, over two terms, how much did they conserve? Was it 5 per cent? Was it 2 per cent? No; in fact, their conservation over two terms was less than 0.1 per cent. That is shameful.

We're going to do better for Manitobans, each and every day.

Trade Strategy for Manitoba Legislation to Address Certification Barriers

Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland): Honourable Speaker, this NDP government has had months to come up with a meaningful trade strategy. They've delayed; they've deflected. They said they would type in—talk in hypotheticals, and now we're in a very real trade war, not just with the United States but also with China.

So will they commit to introducing legislation, like other provinces across Canada have done, including certification and licensing equivalency?

Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister of Finance): Honourable Speaker, Donald Trump is creating a historic challenge for Canada and for Manitoba. And that's why today, later, when we table our Budget 2025, we're going to show the way forward as to how we're going to respond to the threats that Donald Trump is creating for our province. We are going to build, build, build this province.

Our government has been responding to this threat from the very start with tax deferral supports, with the standing up of a US trade advisory council, with an amazing buy local campaign, and we're investing in a trade office in Washington that the members opposite cut with their lack—their usual lack of foresight on that and everything.

They're busy supporting Donald Trump and fighting to have them bring more engagements in our sovereign country. They seem to be celebrating that.

On this side of the—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

The honourable member for Midland, on a supplementary question.

Canadian Energy Independence Support for East-West Projects

Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland): All we know with this NDP government is we see tax, tax, tax, spend, spend, spend.

If this minister is truly going to build, build, build, will he answer, yes or no: Will he commit to supporting and pre-approving all east-west energy projects for energy independence here in Canada, yes or no?

Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister of Finance): Honourable Speaker, when it comes to energy, the members opposite don't have a leg to stand on.

In seven and a half years, you know how many megawatts they built? Zero megawatts. They did absolutely nothing. No vision, no building, nothing. Their expertise—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order.

MLA Sala: —the thing that they were very best at, was jacking up hydro rates on Manitobans. That's their record.

What's our record? We're keeping rates low and we are going to build out hydro to meet the needs of our businesses and keep rates affordable for years to come.

Personal-Care Home in Emerson Staff Vacancy Concerns

Mr. Josh Guenter (Borderland): It's been nearly two months since I first sent a letter to the Health Minister, asking this NDP government to clarify their long-term commitment to the Emerson personal-care home. Since then, nothing has happened. There are still eight empty suites at the Emerson care home, eight units that are not available to seniors in their local community.

Families are being told the suites are not available because of staffing challenges. This government claims they've hired hundreds of new health-care workers, but where are they, Honourable Speaker? There are still seven job openings for health-care aides and nurses at the Emerson care home.

When is—[*interjection*]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Guenter: —the minister going to fill those vacancies so seniors in Emerson—[*interjection*]

The Speaker: Order, please. Order, please.

Minister of Education needs to quit hollering across. Just spoken to people a couple of times already today. It's time to be more respectful.

Mr. Guenter: When is the minister going to fill those vacancies so seniors in Emerson can stay in their community?

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care): I'm happy to report, Honourable Speaker, to the member for Borderland that we've been actively, actually, meeting with leadership in the region. We've been meeting to ensure that as we move forward and continue to add folks to the front lines and capacity to our health-care system, that we work together to not only make sure that folks in Emerson have greater access to the care they need in their community, but we all work together to fix the damage that that member did while the PCs were responsible for health care.

That member sat with his caucus and watched them cut health care, close emergency rooms and cut over 200 personal-care-home beds from across Manitoba and in his own community. I would encourage that member

to apologize to his constituents for his hand in cutting the services that they count on.

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

Mr. Guenter: I'm sorry to say, I spoke to local leadership just this morning and those eight suites are still empty.

This minister is reciting the same old talking points from two months ago—we've done this, we've done that—but the minister is not addressing the issue.

Is this facility being starved for staff because the NDP government wants to close the Emerson personal-care home? Will this minister commit to the long-term operation of the Emerson personal-care home? *[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order, please.

The honourable member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Piwniuk) will also come to order.

MLA Asagwara: Honourable Speaker, I want to reassure that member that our government is doing what the failed PC government refused to do: investing in strengthening health-care services in rural Manitoba.

And Honourable Speaker, I think it's important for Manitobans to know that that member opposite would love to see health care in Manitoba go the way of the United States. That member thinks that Manitobans should become Americans. That member opposite wants to see health care in Manitoba become privatized. That member opposite is doing everything other than standing up for Manitobans in rural Manitoba.

On this side of the House, we're not taking that approach. We're team Canada. We're team Canada public health care. We're team Manitoba in rural Manitoba. We're team Manitoba, start to finish, every—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Seven Oaks General Hospital Request to Re-establish ER Services

MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): Honourable Speaker, in the last provincial election, the Premier (Mr. Kinew) stood and committed to reopening emergency services at Seven Oaks hospital. I table this article here this afternoon.

So I'm asking the Premier, stand up again here this afternoon and tell us—share here with the House—

that Seven Oaks hospital and a plan for the emergency room to be reopened will be in this afternoon's budget.

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care): I want to thank the member for that really important question.

The Premier has been very clear that our priority on this side of the House is to staff the front lines of the health-care system and make sure we have the people at the bedside to deliver the care that Manitobans count on.

Our government has made sure that we surpassed our target of 1,000 net-new health-care workers—1,255 net-new health-care workers on the front lines, which is allowing us to open hundreds of beds, including at Seven Oaks.

I want to reassure that member, we're starting with building the new ER at the Victoria general hospital, and we are making sure we're working our way to Seven Oaks each and every day.

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

MLA Lamoureux: Honourable Speaker, the NDP government continues to neglect health care in the North End of the city of Winnipeg. This government that used the topic of the Seven Oaks hospital as a talking point—a lot—during the election, yet almost halfway through their mandate, we've seen no plans, not even any preliminary plans.

Can the minister share with us anything tangible that they have done to improve services at the Seven Oaks hospital during their time in government thus far?

MLA Asagwara: That's a great question from the member for Tyndall Park.

What I want to reassure her is that out of the 1,255 net-new health-care workers on the front lines, we have allied health-care professionals, nurses, doctors, health-care aides at Seven Oaks as a result.

We are doing the work the previous government refused to do. We're staffing the front lines. We're adding care to the bedside of Manitobans, including at Seven Oaks hospital. We're going to continue to do this work because we know that no matter where you live in Manitoba, you deserve to have a government that cares about you and your health care.

On that side of the House, they cut services at Seven Oaks hospital, they closed emergency rooms and they disrespected health-care workers—the same

health-care workers who ratified an agreement just this morning.

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

* (14:20)

MLA Lamoureux: In the last provincial election, my constituents and people who live in surrounding areas, we got our hopes up, believing that this government would not neglect the North End and the Seven Oaks hospital. The hospital was built to be so much more than it is today. It has the potential to reduce wait times and to improve patient outcomes.

Has the Department of Health done any sort of cost analysis on what it will cost to—in order to re-establish emergency services at the Seven Oaks hospital?

MLA Asagwara: Honourable Speaker, our government is doing the very, very important work of making sure that folks in northeast Winnipeg accessing care at Seven Oaks have the care that they deserve.

We're adding capacity to the front lines by hiring record net-new health-care workers to Seven Oaks hospital and across the province. We've met with health-care providers, leaders and front-line health-care workers at Seven Oaks to get their ideas, to make sure we're working together to strengthen services there.

I'm happy to say we've taken real steps at Seven Oaks that I'm always willing and happy to share with that member, and there's more work to do.

I cannot wait for this House and all Manitobans to hear from our incredible Minister of Finance (MLA Sala) what is in the '25-26 budget that's going to directly benefit those living in that part of Winnipeg.

We're fixing seven and a half years of damage by the previous—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Brandon, Manitoba Announcement of New Schools

MLA Robert Loiselle (St. Boniface): L'Honorable Président, notre gouvernement est fier de bâtir un Manitoba uni. Nous sommes ravis d'avoir annoncé cette année la construction de nouvelles écoles à Transcona, Pembina Trails et McPhillips, qui aideront nos communautés en croissance à avoir accès à une éducation de haute qualité. Nous avons fait les investissements historiques dans le financement de l'éducation, alors que le média — que le gouvernement

conservateur précédent n'a rien fait, à part de couper et d'obliger des éducateurs à faire plus avec moins.

Le ministre des Relations municipales et du Nord peut-il informer l'Assemblée des formidables nouvelles au sujet des nouvelles écoles à Brandon ?

Translation

Our government is proud to build a united Manitoba. We are delighted to have announced this year the construction of new schools in Transcona, Pembina Trails and McPhillips, which will help our growing communities have access to high-quality education. We have made historic investments in education funding, while the previous Conservative government did nothing but cut and force educators to do more with less.

Can the Minister of Municipal and Northern Relations inform the Assembly of the great news about the new schools in Brandon?

Hon. Glen Simard (Minister of Municipal and Northern Relations): Je tiens à remercier mon collègue pour cette excellente question.

Pendant sept ans, les gouvernements Pallister et Stefanson ont failli — ils ont reçu un F : pas de plan, pas de budget pour des écoles à Brandon. Nous, notre gouvernement, on va livrer : on va ouvrir deux écoles à Brandon — un pour la DSFM.

Nous croyons dans la construction d'un Manitoba uni. Nous savons que le Westman est en pleine croissance. Nous savons que les investissements de ce gouvernement, non seulement dans les constructions des écoles, mais en éducation, est forte. J'ai vécu les coupures des Conservateurs, j'étais dans la salle de classe avec mes collègues. On a souffert sous leur gouvernement. Maintenant, c'est un nouveau —

Translation

I would like to thank my colleague for this excellent question.

For seven years, the Pallister and Stefanson governments have failed. They got an F: no plan, no budget for schools in Brandon. Our government is going to deliver: we are going to open two schools in Brandon, including one for the DSFM.

We believe in building a united Manitoba. We know that Westman is growing fast. We know that this government is investing heavily, not only in school construction, but also in education. I experienced the Conservatives' cuts; I was in the classroom with my

colleagues. We suffered under their government. Now it's a new—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

**Tim Hortons in Winkler—PNP Employees
Timeline for Work Permit Renewal**

Mrs. Carrie Hiebert (Morden-Winkler): Honourable Speaker, I rise today on an urgent matter for Winkler business.

The Tim Hortons in Winkler is currently threatened with a critical labour shortage. Eight employees who came to Manitoba under the Provincial Nominee Program are still waiting for their work permits to be renewed.

Not only is this an anxious time for these employees, but the loss of this many staff could threaten the viability of this local business.

Will the Labour Minister expedite the work permit process for these staff and employees?

Hon. Malaya Marcelino (Minister of Labour and Immigration): I'd like to thank member opposite for that question.

It gives me an opportunity to update the House to let folks around here know that we in our NDP government were able to bring in 9,540 families to Manitoba last year.

Last year, we were also able to work with the federal government to extend work permits for folks whose work permits were expiring in 2024, and that's work that we're going to be continuing to do: working with the federal government to try to extend work permits for people whose work permits are expiring in 2025 so the condition that member opposite is describing will not happen to Manitobans—

The Speaker: Time is expired.

The honourable member for Morden-Winkler on a supplementary question.

Mrs. Hiebert: We need to provide for people who are in our province right now.

The Tim Hortons restaurants in Winkler, Morden and Carman employ 28 people in the Provincial Nominee Program, but many of these jobs are threatened because of the employees—can't get their work permits renewed. These are jobs they have tried to fill locally without success.

Will the Minister of Labour and Immigration commit to processing these work permits now, so

businesses in southern Manitoba aren't threatened by the labour shortage and don't have to close their doors?

MLA Marcelino: As I have mentioned earlier, we have been working with the federal government to make sure that we can extend work permits from 2024 and, as well, try to do that again this year to extend work permits in 2025.

I'm pretty sure that members opposite don't even know what I'm talking about. They were not even able to—all they did—they were—they said that trying to even process was aspirational. That's what the previous Immigration minister said; that to be able to process our federal nominations was an aspirational goal.

And they were not able to do that. They left 2,178 families out in the cold because they were not able to process things that the federal government gave us an allotment. So members opposite do not have a leg to stand on when it comes to immigration in this province.

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

**Oak Tree Towers Residents
Meeting Request with Minister**

MLA Jeff Bereza (Portage la Prairie): Honourable Speaker, tomorrow I'm meeting with community organizers, municipal leaders, emergency services and others to discuss the urgent need for action for the residents of Oak Tree Towers in Portage la Prairie that are being terrorized in their own homes.

Will the minister join me in a constructive and frank dialogue with community members of Portage la Prairie and Oak Tree Towers tomorrow afternoon in my office?

Thank you.

Hon. Bernadette Smith (Minister of Housing, Addictions and Homelessness): I've already shared with that member that we've continued to meet with the residents. We are almost finished putting a security fence in. The key card access cards are almost ready to go. There will be security cameras expedited in that building, as well as we have security patrols going in that building seven times an evening.

MLA Bereza: Honourable Speaker, there's clearly a disconnect between what the residents are saying to me and what is being heard by this minister. Residents are being threatened with eviction for speaking up, while the drug dealers and criminals remain.

Allegedly, a subject recently arrested in connection to a double homicide was picked up where? At Oak Tree Towers. Residents are prisoners in their own homes.

When will this minister start working with residents instead of protecting the criminals?

Ms. Smith: Well, I can assure that member that we take a different approach from that side. When they were in government, they were cutting police. They cut 50 police officers. We're not doing that; we're investing. We're full enforcement, and we're working with police service.

We are putting in safety guards in Oak Tree for the residents. We've been working with them. Those members across the way know that those residents were knocking on those doors for years. They were not listening to them at all. What were they doing? They were cutting services, they were cutting security guards, they were cutting maintenance budgets, and they were cutting staff.

US Tariffs on Canadian Goods Support for Manitoba Businesses

MLA David Pankratz (Waverley): Honourable Speaker—[interjection]

The Speaker: Order, please.

MLA Pankratz: Honourable Speaker, the trade war launched against Canada by Donald Trump is a deeply troubling chapter in our shared history with the USA, and while members opposite seem to be more concerned with whether we're hurting Trump's feelings or not, we're doing the hard work of actually talking to Manitobans and businesses here in Manitoba.

So our government is stepping up to ensure that the impacts of these tariffs are mitigated.

Can the Minister of Business, Mining, Trade and Job Creation tell the House about the steps we are taking to help local business in Manitoba?

Hon. Jamie Moses (Minister of Business, Mining, Trade and Job Creation): Well, I thank my colleague from Waverley for that amazing question. It's true: the Donald Trump tariffs are going to have an impact on our economy, and that's why for months we've been working directly with businesses to support them.

We know tariffs are largely about manufacturing, and that's why early on in our mandate we prioritized investing in manufacturing jobs. Investments in NFI Group, StandardAero, Magellan, all show how we

take seriously the investment in manufacturing jobs right here in Manitoba.

* (14:30)

On top of that, we've brought together a council of businesses to—which consults on the US trade tariffs. We've deferred taxes. We reopened the US trade Washington office that the members opposite closed. And we've pulled the US booze off the shelves. That's real action.

And, Honourable Speaker, more good news in—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

New Software to Track Surgical Wait Times Compatibility with Existing Medical Records

Mr. Richard Perchotte (Selkirk): This Health Minister forced a new surgery wait-time tracking software program on surgeons and their front-line staff. This software is not compatible with medical industry's current electronic medical records systems. This is requiring twice the work for any patient data being entered and tracked.

Why is the minister okay with doubling the workload of front-line workers of Manitoba surgeons?

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care): Honourable Speaker, for seven and a half long years, two terms of the failed PC administration, Manitobans had no movement made on the modernization of their electronic medical records. Zero. No plan. No effort. Manitobans would reach into their wallets, their pockets, to get their health cards and it had disintegrated, just like the health-care system being destroyed by the PCs.

On this side of the House, we're modernizing health care. We're investing in making sure electronic medical records—[interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

MLA Asagwara: —are reality, and Manitobans are pulling out their wallets, holding up their health cards and, finally, it's plastic.

More good news in our budget.

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

Mr. Perchotte: Honourable Speaker, this minister could have contracted the three current EMR software providers and asked them to add code that would provide the data required. Instead, they rammed through software that takes front-line workers away from entering new patients.

Why is this minister stopping new patients from being entered into the medical system?

MLA Asagwara: Honourable Speaker, I have to say thank you to that member for showing Manitobans exactly why they could not be responsible for modernizing electronic medical records in our province. That question makes very clear how little they understand how to modernize health care, and should reassure Manitobans that when they sent them to that side of the House, they made a great decision for health care in our province.

Honourable Speaker, I cannot wait for our Finance Minister to share with Manitobans the investments in the budget that are not only going to continue to modernize health care, but make our systems stronger no matter where you live in our great province of Manitoba.

Crime and Public Safety Government Record

Mrs. Kathleen Cook (Roblin): Honourable Speaker, a 15-year-old is accused of stabbing a man at a convenience store in Charleswood earlier this month. And what did he use in the attack? A machete. Not only that, he was a known offender. He's now been charged with two counts of failing to comply with his sentence and two counts of failing to comply with conditions of an undertaking.

So the NDP's machete plan has failed, their bail reform plan has failed and now innocent bystanders are paying the price.

Why has this NDP government so utterly failed to keep their promises and protect Manitobans?

Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier): Our Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe) has led the country in banning machetes to the extent that Walmart Canada has now removed those weapons from their shelves, not just here in Manitoba but right across Canada. I want to acknowledge the good work and leadership of our Minister of Justice.

But I want to ask the member opposite what she thinks about the front-runner in the PC leadership; just to be clear, not the member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Khan)—the other guy, who said yesterday, quote: The NDP also won Winnipeg by providing the poorest, most vulnerable women in Winnipeg with free birth control. *[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: And he said, with a great 'devgree' of sarcasm, and I quote: Because when you are the most vulnerable in our society, you need the ability to be—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order, please.

The member for Roblin will come to order.

Mr. Kinew: We see what's on display in the PC leadership contest.

I just want to ask the member, when the Finance Minister stands up in 10 minutes to announce that Plan B is going to be free in Manitoba, is she going to join us to support this year's budget?

The Speaker: The time for question period has expired.

Petitions? Grievances?

ORDERS OF THE DAY GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Government House Leader): Is the will of the House to recess for 10 minutes, with a two-minute bell ringing?

The Speaker: Is it the will of the House to take a 10-minutes recess, with a two-minute warning bell? *[Agreed]*

The House recessed at 2:36 p.m.

The House resumed at 2:48 p.m.

The Speaker: Order, please. Order, please.

As previously announced, we will now go to the budget speech.

BUDGET ADDRESS

Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister of Finance): I move, seconded by the Premier (Mr. Kinew), that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

Motion presented.

MLA Sala: Thank you to everyone who has joined us here today for our government's second budget.

C'est avec beaucoup d'humilité que nous vous accueillons à l'Assemblée législative et que nous nous engageons sur une voie positive pour le Manitoba, ensemble.

Translation

It is with great humility that we welcome you to the Legislative Assembly and set out on a positive path for Manitoba, together.

English

On behalf of the Manitoba government, we honour the sacredness and importance of this land, and the ancestors that once walked where we are standing today: the Anishinewuk, the Cree, the Dene, the Dakota, the Métis, the Inuit and the Anishinaabe nations who paved the way to what is now known as Manitoba, home to all treaty people.

* (14:50)

Honourable Speaker, as Manitobans we are proud of who we are. We are proud to be Canadian. I am delivering this budget at a pivotal moment in our great nation's history. Donald Trump has threatened our sovereignty and our economy. This threat is unjustified. This threat is a tax on working people. From manufacturing plants in the Pembina Valley, to the nickel mine in Thompson and the steel mill in Selkirk, we know this tax will harm regular people on both sides of the border.

Here in Manitoba, our team will always fight to lower costs for families. We did it when the previous government raised rents and hydro rates. And that is what we were elected to do, before Trump, now and long after he's gone.

Let us be clear, our fight is not with all Americans. It is with one American.

We have stood shoulder to shoulder with Americans as allies on the battlefield. Together we have protected peace and defended democracy around the world. We didn't start this fight but we are not backing down. We are building one Manitoba.

This budget meets the moment with a record \$3.7 billion in capital projects to put Manitobans to work and protect our economy. We are building schools, emergency rooms and personal-care homes. We're building highways and bridges, channels and airports.

The only thing we're tearing down, Honourable Speaker, are trade barriers between provinces. And not only does this budget build Manitoba, it builds Canada.

Protecting Manitobans from Tariffs

Our government responded right away to Trump's tariff tax. From a council on US trade to tax deferrals for businesses to a buy local campaign.

We have built an entire contingency budget with hundreds of millions of dollars in support to help businesses pivot to new markets, help workers skill up and find good jobs and support our canola farmers and pork producers facing tariff threats from the US and from China.

We are putting Manitoba workers and businesses ahead of American corporations. And today I'm proud to announce that we are ending the previous government's multimillion-dollar contract, the contract they signed, with a Texas firm for your park passes.

And while we're at it, Honourable Speaker, we are going to make entry to Manitoba's parks free for the entire year, so Manitobans and Canadians can explore our beautiful province here in the heart of our great nation.

Rebuilding Health Care

When our new government was sworn in, health care was in chaos. Manitobans will never forget how the previous government cut and cut and cut. They fired nurses, they disrespected doctors and they ignored health-care workers. We said we would be different and we are.

Under our new government, front-line health-care staff have good deals, fair wages, better work-life balance and safer workplaces. Today, there are 1,255 net-new health-care workers on the front lines of Manitoba's health-care system, and we're paying them what they deserve with a historic investment in the people who care for Manitobans.

Honourable Speaker, we now have a solid foundation of staff and we are ready to start building. Budget 2025 puts shovels in the ground this year on the new ER and Mature Women's Centre at the Victoria Hospital, the new ER in Eriksdale and a new health-care centre of excellence in downtown Winnipeg.

We are renovating the children's ER to provide better care and comfort to families with sick kids. And we will make sure the land on the Victoria General Hospital grounds is put to good use to support the construction of the Anne Oake family recovery centre.

And while the previous government broke their promise to seniors in Lac du Bonnet and Transcona, we are breaking ground. This year, construction starts

on new personal-care homes in Lac du Bonnet and Transcona. And we are moving ahead with a third personal-care home in Arborg.

We are opening three new clinics, adding hundreds of surgeries at the Grace Hospital and in Selkirk, not in the United States. And we're bringing ER wait times down by adding 90 more beds to our hospitals.

After the previous government tried to privatize the Sleep Disorder Centre at Misericordia, we are adding new public funding to help more Manitobans.

Budget 2025 takes better care of our seniors with a new \$40-million investment in front-line staff. It takes better care of families in the North with staffing for a mobile MRI for the North. And it takes better care of women. Because on this side of the border, on this side of the House, we believe in a woman's right to choose. We will always protect safe access to abortion and reproductive health care.

Budget 2025 invests in safe abortion services at the Women's Health Clinic, funding to include Plan B in our free birth control program, and new and transformative health care for women in menopause and perimenopause.

We are rebuilding health care for you.

Lowering Costs for Manitobans

Our government is here to help your family with savings where you need it most: on your drive to work with permanent gas tax relief; when you drop your kids off at daycare with over \$2,000 a year in savings; and every month with our hydro rate freeze.

We're increasing our homeowners affordability tax credit, saving families \$1,600 a year. Renters will also save more with our second increase to the renter's affordability tax credit.

At the grocery store, we're putting a stop to big grocery monopolies that drive up prices. We're renewing our successful home security rebate to save you money.

And when it comes to the popular EV rebate, we're keeping that going, too. But we've made a few improvements: no more Teslas, and no rebates for EVs manufactured in China either. I think that's something we can all agree on.

You work hard, and you should be able to afford the basics, save for the future and be able to take the kids to a movie or a Jets game.

We're going to make sure that in Manitoba, you can.

Growing our Economy

Our government is building Manitoba's economy and creating good jobs.

Budget 2025 includes the biggest investment in capital funding in Manitoba's history: \$3.7 billion to build Manitoba and build Canada.

Budget 2025 will create nearly 18,000 new jobs, increase wages and salaries for Manitobans by \$1.3 billion, and lift our GDP by \$2.3 billion.

Honourable Speaker, I want to take a moment to tell you what we are building. Phase 2 of the water treatment plant in Winnipeg, built with good union jobs; \$881 million in upgrades to the Hydro infrastructure that powers our economy and keeps our lights on across the province; a historic \$809-million investment in Manitoba's infrastructure, twinning Highway 1, building the Lake St. Martin and Lake Manitoba outlet channels the right way and moving forward with the Wasagamack airport.

We are building up the Port of Churchill and the Hudson Bay rail line to strengthen our trade corridor, access tidewater and protect northern sovereignty.

We're building the next generation of affordable clean energy in partnership with Indigenous nations. That's 600 megawatts of wind power to keep rates low for Manitobans, and a new Indigenous loan guarantee program to get it done.

And, Honourable Speaker, I think you're going to like this: we are building a new gold mine in northern Manitoba. That's right, our team is proud to get a new mine to the construction phase within 18 months of taking office.

* (15:00)

Honourable Speaker, we're helping local businesses too. Today I'm announcing that we are reducing the payroll tax to help 875 Manitoba businesses create more jobs and compete in new markets.

Budget 2025 also includes \$10 million for a new business security rebate that will give small business owners the supports they need to stay open and stay safe.

And while Manitobans and Canadians cancel those trips down south, we are investing an additional \$4.5 million in Travel Manitoba to boost our economy and showcase our beautiful province to the rest of Canada and the world.

Healthier Families and Safer Communities

Manitobans are proud of where we live. But under the previous government, your roads got worse, crime got worse and projects ground to a halt. Put simply: they stopped building this province. We are going to build.

After years of a funding freeze, the ground is starting to thaw. Last year, we increased municipal funding by 2 per cent, and this year we're doing it again.

But that's not all. Our new One Manitoba Growth Revenue Fund gives municipalities a dedicated 4 per cent of gas tax revenue to build hockey rinks, playgrounds and community centres, and deliver quality services to you, the people of Manitoba.

From Brandon to Boissevain, from Winnipeg to Winkler, from Carman to Churchill, we're bringing hometown pride back again.

Budget 2025 builds 11 new schools over the next three years so kids can get the attention they need from their teachers and families can send their kids to a good school in their neighbourhood.

Schools in Radisson, in West St. Paul and two—that's two—new schools in Brandon, including one school for la Division scolaire franco-manitobaine.

We're making sure that every school in Manitoba has the supports kids need and that no child has to go to class on an empty stomach. And we're going to make sure that no government can ever take that away. It's called Nello's law. We love you, Nello.

Manitoba has some of the most pristine lakes and majestic forests anywhere in the world, and our government is protecting them. We're stopping the spread of zebra mussels and protecting our forests with three new water bombers to fight forest fires and protect northern and rural communities.

Where are those water bombers made, you ask? I'm proud to tell you they are made right here in Canada.

No matter where in Manitoba you live, our government wants you to feel safe walking home or waiting at the bus stop. This budget increases Justice funding by \$76 million to hire more police officers, crack down on drug traffickers and stop retail crime.

And when Manitobans are ready to find their way home, our government will be there to help. This budget commits 670 social and affordable housing units. And it provides \$73 million to support our government's plan to end chronic homelessness.

Honourable Speaker, in Manitoba, when someone goes missing, we go looking and that's just who we are. Last year I stood in this Chamber and announced that we would search the landfill. And now, a year later, in a search that put the families first, we have now found Morgan Harris and Mercedes Myran.

Together, Manitobans have shown Canada and the world who we are. We're one people, one Manitoba and we don't leave people behind.

We're bringing them home.

A Government that Works for You

Honourable Speaker, it's an honour to serve the people of Manitoba. We know families interact with government every day in ways big and small, and we're committed to working hard for you with services that make your life easier.

We're mailing out new plastic health cards with a beautiful northern lights design chosen by Manitobans.

Our new buy Canada policy will make sure government contracts support Manitoba and Canadian businesses and workers.

And when it comes to being responsible with the books, I'm proud to say that we've made significant progress reducing the previous government's historic deficit and we are on track with a path to balance in 2027.

Honourable Speaker, today is a special day. It is the International Day of the Francophonie.

Je suis heureux de vous annoncer que ce budget renforce les services en français au Manitoba, avec davantage de personnel pour offrir ces services, une stratégie pour former et recruter plus d'enseignantes et d'enseignants de langue française, ainsi que des ressources et des formations linguistiques additionnelles dans la fonction publique. Et nous construisons deux écoles dans la Division scolaire franco-manitobaine, à Winnipeg et à Brandon. Quant aux nouvelles cartes de santé que j'ai mentionnées tout à l'heure, je suis aussi fier de dire qu'elles sont bilingues.

Translation

I'm pleased to announce that this budget strengthens French-language services in Manitoba, with more staff to deliver these services, a strategy to train and recruit more French-language teachers, and additional resources and language training in the public service. And we're building two schools in the Division scolaire franco-manitobaine, in Winnipeg and Brandon.

As for the new health cards I mentioned earlier, I'm also proud to say they're bilingual.

English

Last year, our budget was about uniting Manitobans under one positive vision for the future. After years of cuts and division, Manitobans wanted something to believe in.

We laid out our vision for one Manitoba, and this year we're building it.

Manitoba is a special province. We have a wealth of critical minerals that the world needs. We have a stable, diversified economy. We have farmers and producers that are leading the way in the agriculture sector. Business leaders with big hearts and big ideas. We're a central trading hub, connected by road and rail to the rest of the country and by the Port of Churchill to the rest of the world.

But what makes Manitoba truly special is you, the hard-working, compassionate people who power our economy and care for each other, the people who make this province home.

Honourable Speaker, I'm delivering this budget at a pivotal moment in our great nation's history. Canada's strongest partnership is being tested like never before.

This is a difficult challenge for Manitoba and for Canada, but it is also a moment of great opportunity.

Honourable Speaker, no longer will Manitobans and Canadians allow forces outside our control to determine our future. No longer will we let our future rest in someone else's hands.

We have to build it ourselves, true north strong and free. We are building one Manitoba together.

Now let's get building.

Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland): I move, seconded by the MLA for Roblin, that the debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker: The debate is adjourned and will remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Midland.

* (15:10)

Messages

Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister of Finance): Honourable Speaker, I have a message from Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor, as well as the budget documents, which I would like to table.

The Speaker: Please stand for the reading of the message.

The Lieutenant Governor transmits to the Assembly—Legislative Assembly of Manitoba Estimates for the sums required for the services of the province for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March 2026, and recommends these Estimates to the Legislative Assembly.

And this has been signed by Her Honourable Anita Neville, Lieutenant Governor.

Please be seated.

* * *

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Government House Leader): I move, seconded by the Premier (Mr. Kinew), that this House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker: The House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, March 20, 2025

CONTENTS

Speaker's Statement		Trade Strategy for Manitoba	
Lindsey	805	Stone	813
ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS		Sala	814
Ministerial Statements		Canadian Energy Independence	
Journée internationale de la Francophonie		Stone	814
Simard	805	Sala	814
Lagassé	806	Personal-Care Home in Emerson	
Members' Statements		Guenter	814
Voices of Manitoba—Garbage Bag Fashion Show		Asagwara	814
Smith	807	Seven Oaks General Hospital	
Journée internationale de la Francophonie		Lamoureux	815
Lagassé	807	Asagwara	815
Seven Oaks Adult Learning Centre		Brandon, Manitoba	
Brar	808	Loiselle	816
Laura Yellowback		Simard	816
Narth	808	Tim Hortons in Winkler—PNP Employees	
Journée internationale de la Francophonie		Hiebert	817
Loiselle	809	Marcelino	817
Oral Questions		Oak Tree Towers Residents	
Previous Funding for Child Care		Bereza	817
Ewasko	810	Smith	817
Kinew	810	US Tariffs on Canadian Goods	
Child-Care Centre in Falcon Lake		Pankratz	818
Ewasko	810	Moses	818
Kinew	810	New Software to Track Surgical Wait Times	
Previous Funding for Child Care		Perchotte	818
Ewasko	811	Asagwara	818
Kinew	811	Crime and Public Safety	
Education Property Tax Increase		Cook	819
Cook	811	Kinew	819
Kinew	811		
ORDERS OF THE DAY			
US Tariffs on Industrial Manufacturers		GOVERNMENT BUSINESS	
King	812		
Moses	812	Budget Address	
Seine-Rat Roseau Conservation District		Sala	819
Narth	813	Messages	
Moyes	813	Sala	823

The Legislative Assembly of Manitoba Debates and Proceedings
are also available on the Internet at the following address:

<http://www.manitoba.ca/legislature/hansard/hansard.html>