



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. 31 - 10 a.m., Friday, March 21, 2025

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

Friday, March 21, 2025

The House met at 10 a.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, and that we may seek it with wisdom and know it with certainty and accomplish it perfectly for the glory and honour of Thy name and for the welfare of all our people. Amen.

We acknowledge we are gathered on Treaty 1 territory and that Manitoba is located on the treaty territories and ancestral lands of the Anishinaabeg, Anishininewuk, 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.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: Before we get to routine proceedings, there's some special guests up in the gallery I would like to introduce at this point in time.

Seated in the Speaker's Gallery is the honourable wife of your Speaker, Sharon Lindsey, and her cousin, Sandra MacKenzie.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

The Speaker: Introduction of bills? Committee reports?

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Mike Moyes (Minister of Environment and Climate Change): Honourable Speaker, I'm pleased to table the Nutrient Targets Regulation Report on Nutrient Levels Through 2023 and Action Underway.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Further tabling of reports?

Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I'm pleased to table for Manitoba Justice the '21-24 annual report of the Manitoba Court of Appeal.

The Speaker: Further tablings?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

Hon. Nellie Kennedy (Minister of Sport, Culture, Heritage and Tourism): Today, we recognize the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, a day that calls on all of us to reflect on the harmful impacts of racism and recommit ourselves to the ongoing work of building a more just and equitable society.

Our government believes in one Manitoba. We believe that all Manitobans of all cultural groups and identities should be safe, celebrated and have every opportunity to succeed.

While members opposite thank Donald Trump for tariffs and celebrate harmful actions that target Indigenous, Black and racialized communities, on this side of the House, we know that diversity is our strength and we believe that we are stronger together.

As Minister of Sport, Culture, Heritage and Tourism, I have seen first-hand how lifting up communities and sharing values of inclusion make our province better. We also know that racism has very real impacts. Racialized communities experience higher rates of chronic illness, mental health challenges and barriers to accessing care. Our government is committed to ensuring that all Manitobans have access to the services that they need.

There's so many groups in Manitoba that do so much work to address racism. Our government supports these organizations and we work collaboratively to make a better Manitoba.

This day reminds us that addressing racial discriminations demands meaningful action and systemic change. On this day, I encourage all Manitobans to reflect on the role each of us plays in eliminating racial discrimination. That may mean engaging in difficult conversations about race and privilege, educating ourselves about the histories and experiences of

Indigenous, Black and racialized communities, or challenging discriminatory attitudes and behaviours when we encounter them.

Every action, no matter how small, contributes to the broader work of building a more inclusive and stronger society.

Thank you.

Mr. Richard Perchotte (Selkirk): March 21 is a—the day of remembrance when police killed 69 people during a peaceful protest against apartheid in Sharpeville, South Africa.

Racial discrimination is the practice of treating people differently solely based on their race, ethnic origin, skin colour. Racial discrimination does not stop at individual instances.

Another way it has manifested is through systematic racism where the discrimination is built into the foundational institutions of our society. Systematic racism can be subtle and ingrained in our society as normal.

Similar to the unfortunate event on March 21, racial discrimination can be perpetrated by actors in the systems meant to protect, such as our health-care system and law enforcement. Minority communities such as African, Asian and our Indigenous communities are continuously 'disproportionate' in poverty and in contact with the law.

In April of 2023, the Anti-Racism in Sport campaign was provided by the previous PC government. With the help of community partners, the Anti-Racism in Sport campaign was established. This additional funding brought attention to the racism and discrimination that First Nations, Métis, Inuit, Black, racialized and religious minority communities in Manitoba face.

As well as our contributions to the sports sector, organizations, notably those led by Indigenous, francophone and ethno-cultural communities, would be able to innovate and address new demands thanks to this funding.

We can perpetuate racism when we don't see the bias it has in our lives, and refuse to change and develop. Therefore, you must educate others and ourselves by sharing our understanding of the origins and current forms of racial prejudice with friends, family and co-workers. We must speak up against incidents of racism or prejudice in our homes, schools and social situations.

We can celebrate diversity engaging and attending cultural events—

The Speaker: Member's time is expired.

And, order, please.

I'll take this opportunity to remind all members that racism is in language, and suggesting that Indigenous people are our Indigenous people is completely wrong in this day and age. So please don't do it. *[interjection]*

And I would remind people not to clap when the Speaker says things, because it applies to everybody equally.

The honourable member for Fort Richmond.

MLA Jennifer Chen (Fort Richmond): Honourable Speaker, I'm honoured to rise today to recognize the Canadian Yazidi—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order, please.

I have to say members' statements first.

* (10:10)

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Canadian Yazidi Association

MLA Jennifer Chen (Fort Richmond): I am honoured to rise today to recognize the Canadian Yazidi Association, founded in 2014 by Nafiya and Jamileh, in response to the ISIS-led genocide against the Yazidi people in Iraq. They have made outstanding contributions to the Yazidi community in Manitoba, and provided critical resettlement services and the trauma-informed programs that focus on psychological healing, economic empowerment and the cultural preservation.

I have had the privilege of working with various refugee communities over the past 10 years. Many Yazidi families, who endured unimaginable trauma, have settled in Fort Richmond, such as Baylor Avenue, where they have found they have become part of our vibrant community.

I had the privilege of attending the Yazidi New Year and Ida Rojitz festival in 2024, where I witnessed first-hand the strength and resilience of the Yazidi people.

This year, the Yazidi community will celebrate this new year, known as Carsema Sor or Red Wednesday, on April 16. This sacred occasion symbolizes renewal, the arrival of spring and the triumph of light over darkness. It commemorates the creation of the

universe by Tawuse Melek, the Peacock Angel, a central figure in Yazidism. The new year is celebrated with vibrant traditions, including decorating homes with red flowers, exchanging dyed eggs symbolizing life and lighting candles to represent hope and divine blessings.

I invite all members to join me in expressing our gratitude for their unwavering commitment that has transformed the lives and created a space where survivors feel safe, empowered and connected.

Honourable Speaker, I want to add the names of the following individuals to Hansard: Nafiya, Jamileh, Asmaeil, Hesso, Manal, Sara, Harbiya, Fani, Khanse and Michel.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Manal Alhussein, Michel Aziza, Hesso Elias, Asmaeil Hassan, Harbiya Hilo, Jamileh Naso, Nafiya Naso, Sara Qasim, Khanse Zghla, Fani Zhdnan.

Warren Curling Club 100th Anniversary

Mr. Trevor King (Lakeside): Honourable Speaker, I rise today to recognize and celebrate the Warren Curling Club on the occasion of its 100th anniversary.

This past fall, the club hosted a special bonspiel to commemorate this significant milestone. I was honoured to bring greetings as the MLA—was also delighted to participate in the tournament alongside my family and fellow community members.

A particularly memorable moment of the event was the presence of lifelong friend and lifetime honorary member, Isla Hagborg. Isla threw the ceremonial first rock, a fitting tribute to her nearly eight decades of involvement with the club.

Isla reflected on many changes that she has seen over the years, from the ice, to rules, equipment, to technique. Much has changed but Isla emphasized that one thing has remained constant: the unwavering dedication and enthusiasm of community members in keeping the Warren Curling Club thriving.

Curling has been an enduring tradition for many families in this community, spanning multiple generations. As we recognize 100 years since the establishment of the club, it is important to reflect on its deep-rooted connection to Warren.

Over the years, countless individuals have participated in junior curling, women's, men's and mixed leagues, and numerous bonspiels. Many have also served in executive roles, ensuring the continued success of the club. While some members have taken

breaks due to other commitments, the love for the sport always finds a way back into their lives.

Just this past Tuesday evening, the Warren ladies league crowned its champions; the men's last night. And this weekend, the season will conclude with the Falcons hockey team bonspiel, where community members of all ages will come together once again to celebrate the sport.

Colleagues, please join me in congratulating the Warren Curling Club, its past, present executives, board members, volunteers and curlers on 100 years of promoting one of Manitoba's greatest sports.

The club's centennial celebrations not only honour its rich history but also highlights its ongoing commitment to community engagement and the future of curling.

Thank you, and hurry hard.

MAHCP Collective Agreement Settlement

MLA Jim Maloway (Elmwood): The Manitoba Association of Health Care Professionals, MAHCP, led by its president, Jason Linklater, and his team, has reached an agreement with Shared Health and the Winnipeg-Churchill and northern health regional employers organizations, averting a strike scheduled for March 7, 2025, earlier this month.

MAHCP represents more than 7,000 allied health professionals in more than 20 regulated health professions, including audiologists, cardiology technologists, diagnostic medical sonographers, medical laboratory assistants and technologists, radiation technologists, occupational therapists, paramedics, physiotherapists, respiratory therapists and speech language pathologists. These professionals are indispensable to our health-care system and work around the clock in a variety of settings.

The negotiated settlement between the MAHCP and Shared Health and Winnipeg-Churchill and Northern Health Region Employers Organizations is another meaningful step in resetting and restoring our health-care system and more properly aligning wages within our system.

Elmwood residents recognize that restoring our health-care system is very much a work in progress. We have much more work to do. The cracks in our health-care system did not appear overnight and they will not disappear overnight.

A major step forward with our government's recruitment of 873 net-new health-care workers into

Manitoba's public health system. After all, our health-care system depends on the workers.

This important settlement reflects everyone's commitment to the collective bargaining process and more fairness in the system for our workers.

Investment Concerns for Westman Region in Budget 2025

Mr. Grant Jackson (Spruce Woods): It's such a pleasure to be able to rise again as the member for Spruce Woods. And you know, our colleagues here on the Conservative side of the House who represent Westman, in particular, it is such a privilege for us to work as part of this team: the member for Riding Mountain (Mr. Nesbitt), the member for Brandon West (Mr. Balcaen), the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Piwniuk) and the member for Agassiz (Ms. Byram).

And Westman is such a great region of this province, and you know, the day after the budget, I just wish we had more to rise to talk about that came from yesterday's budget. I'm not sure, you know, in the shortest budget speech in the recent memory from the government side, here, on the NDP side, didn't mention the region one single time. No mention of Westman.

A very brief mention in the speech of two recycled—[*interjection*]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Jackson:—schools from the previous Progressive Conservative government for the Wheat City, and that's all this government had to offer for western Manitoba. What a shame.

No mention from the Infrastructure Minister about provincial trunk highways, an investment in rural roads, absolutely nothing for Highway 34, Highway 2 and Highway 5 in Spruce Woods constituency that all need major rehabilitation from this government. The Finance Minister and the Infrastructure Minister are failing Spruce Woods residents there.

No mention for health care in rural Manitoba. No mention for the Glenboro Spirit Sands Medical Clinic expansion project. No mention of the Carberry ER which they announced was open and then closed again. No mention for the Brandon Regional Health Centre expansion.

No mention of the Brandon University medical school. In fact, the president of BU is quoted in the paper as having spoken with the Advanced Education Minister, who said: You know, no, we're very

supportive of the project, but—just about timing. Because of course, why would we want to move faster to train more doctors in Manitoba when we got a medical crisis on our hands?

So this government failed, and this party will continue to stand up for Spruce—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Providence University College and Theological Seminary

Mr. Richard Perchotte (Selkirk): Today I want to recognize a significant milestone in higher education in Manitoba: 2025 marks Providence University College and Theological Seminary's 100th anniversary year. Since its founding, Providence has been a pillar of academic excellence and leadership development, shaping students who make a difference in our province, across Canada and worldwide.

Today we have the 'provo,' Dr. Nicholas Greco, and his family joining us in the gallery.

Providence, rooted in faith, knowledge, integrity and service, has consistently adapted to the challenges of each era. Through economic hardships, global conflicts, pandemics and technological advances, it has stayed true to its mission and values. A beacon of learning and resilience, Providence equips students to lead with wisdom and compassion.

As Providence celebrates its centennial, we honour the leadership, faculty, staff and students whose dedication has driven its success. Looking forward to the institution remains committed to expanding its opportunities in education, fieldwork, athletics and community engagement, ensuring a lasting impact on future generations.

* (10:20)

As they enter the next century, Providence faces the future with confidence, guided by the same pioneering spirit that defined its first hundred years.

May they continue to embody the values of faith, diversity of thought, community and curiosity, as they send graduates into their careers. Alumni, now serving in various fields like health care, social work, business and ministry, will continue to shape a world that reflects the best of Providence, a legacy since 1925.

Please join me in acknowledging this accomplishment.

ORAL QUESTIONS**Tax Increase Concerns in Budget 2025
Impact on Manitobans and the Economy**

Mrs. Kathleen Cook (Roblin): The very foundation of the NDP's budget yesterday is nearly \$1 billion more in higher taxes, hitting Manitoba families and businesses hard: \$292 million more in income taxes, \$154 million more in business taxes, \$178 million more in retail sales taxes, \$182 million more in property taxes and \$81 million more in assorted other taxes. That's \$887 million, almost \$1 billion more pulled from the pockets of hard-working Manitobans.

And that's not all. Bracket creep is back under the NDP. The CTF calls this budget punishing and a stealth tax hike.

Why is the NDP hitting Manitobans with nearly \$1 billion more in tax hikes during a cost-of-living—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired. *[interjection]*
Order.

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Deputy Premier): Honourable Speaker, yesterday, our government was so proud to deliver a budget that benefits Manitobans, our budget, delivered just exceptionally well by the best finance minister in the country.

This is a historic investment in building our province: \$3.7 billion to build, build, build and bring people together during this really tumultuous time.

While members opposite thank Donald Trump for tariffs, on this side of the House we bring Manitobans and Canadians together, and we're going to build a brighter future.

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

Mrs. Cook: Honourable Speaker, it's a long-standing tradition in this House for the premier to get up and answer the first two questions. He can't even be bothered to stand up and defend his own budget.

Somehow, the NDP expects to pull—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Cook: —nearly \$1 billion more in new taxes from hard-working, middle-class Manitobans in the middle of an affordability crisis and on the brink of a potential recession.

Yesterday—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order.

I need to be able to hear what's being said, and when you're all screaming and hollering, I can't hear what's being said. So let's tone it down.

Mrs. Cook: Yesterday, a University of Winnipeg economist called this expectation unrealistic, saying, would you take this document to a bank and try to get a loan? I think it would be difficult.

The NDP's budget is built on a house of cards.

How do they expect to squeeze nearly \$1 billion more from Manitobans at a time of economic uncertainty and on the cusp of a trade war with our largest trading partner?

MLA Asagwara: Honourable Speaker, while our incredible Finance Minister was doing the work of building this incredible budget for Manitobans, while he was consulting and listening to Manitobans and making sure that we had \$3.7 billion to build, build, build, what were members opposite doing? They were busy thanking Donald Trump for tariffs.

On that side of the House, that very same member was knocking on doors with the member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Khan), saying: We thank Donald Trump for tariffs, and you can count on us to turn our backs on Canada.

On this side of the House, we brought forward a great budget that puts Manitobans first and represents the values of Canadians.

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

Mrs. Cook: In the middle of an affordability crisis, the NDP have built a budget centred around taking as much money as possible out of the pockets of Manitobans.

Let me remind the minister: unemployment is up, inflation is up and Manitoba is staring down the barrel of a probable recession. Yesterday, the CFIB reported that small business optimism has plummeted to an all-time low. And more than half of Manitobans are just \$200 or less away from being unable to pay their bills. What Manitoba businesses and families need is relief right now, not next year.

How can the NDP justify making life even more expensive for Manitobans at a time when so many are struggling to make ends meet?

MLA Asagwara: Honourable Speaker, the member's wrong. Our budget builds a brighter future for Manitobans; \$3.7 billion to put Manitobans to work—put Manitobans to work.

Our budget focuses on protecting jobs right here in Manitoba and enhancing them, giving Manitobans more opportunities to be a part of building a stronger economy.

The Manitoba Chambers of Commerce had to say this: We are pleased to see the government's commitment to a reduction in the payroll tax and its focus on eliminating interprovincial trade barriers. The Chamber was pleased that Budget '25 included a commitment to enhance labour mobility, improve credential recognition and streamline regulations—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Tax Revenue Forecast in Budget 2025 Economic Uncertainty and US Tariffs

Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland): Honourable Speaker, what cloud is this NDP government living on? It is so clear from this budget that they are completely out of touch with the economic realities that Manitobans are facing today.

The entire budget hinges off half a billion in additional taxation that the minister says he's forecasting, yet workers are working at layoffs, businesses are looking at losing all kinds of supply chain contracts, and instead of supports, this NDP government, at this time in society and economic uncertainty, are actually facing higher taxes.

How does this minister justify forecasting half a billion dollars in extra income tax revenue?

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Deputy Premier): Honourable Speaker, business leaders love this budget. The Chambers love this budget. Manitobans love this budget.

And Honourable Speaker, I have to say, when that member stands up and talks about being out of touch, I wonder if she's really reflecting looking in the mirror. That member went out yesterday in response and thanks Elon Musk. That member is defending one of the wealthiest people on the planet instead of standing up for Manitobans.

Honourable Speaker, the only people who are out of touch are the members on that side of the House. While she stands up for Elon, we stand up for Manitobans.

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

Mrs. Stone: Honourable Speaker, when this minister is planning on collecting 9.4 per cent more in personal income taxes and 4.2 per cent more from businesses, other provinces are more realistic in their projections. In New Brunswick, they're forecasting less than 4 per cent for each. In Saskatchewan, 1.3 per cent from business and 0.1 per cent less from individuals.

Why does this minister paint a picture of sunny days when the economic reality knows, and Manitobans know, that we're headed for an economic storm?

MLA Asagwara: Honourable Speaker, our government recognize—Minister of Finance (MLA Sala) recognize that the threat of tariffs from Donald Trump are very real, which is why our budget prepares us and positions us to respond as needed and appropriately. Our budget is focused on protecting jobs, putting Manitobans to work and a historic \$3.7-billion investment in making that happen.

On that side of the House, what are they doing? What is that member doing? That member is defending and standing up for Elon Musk, one of the wealthiest people in the world, who's directly attacking Canada, who's trying to make life for Manitobans more expensive. We will take no lessons from that member while she stands up for the wrong country.

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

Mrs. Stone: Honourable Speaker, this minister loves to twist words and deflect from the realities that this budget is failing Manitobans, Manitoba families and Manitoba businesses.

This Premier (Mr. Kinew) and this minister should be ashamed of their budget. Real leaders have stood up and shared the numbers of what their tariff impacts would be ahead of time, yet this NDP won't even share what the real numbers are in their own budget.

In Nova Scotia, we see a budget that looks to the impact of tariffs, collecting 7.8 per cent less in personal income taxes and 10 per cent less from businesses.

* (10:30)

Yet this minister and this Premier seem to paint a ray-rosy, sunny day picture in Manitoba when the economic realities of today do not reflect that. Layoffs, higher taxes, cost-of-living crisis is what Manitobans are facing. That is the reality of today.

Why is this—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

MLA Asagwara: Our government is doing the hard work of standing up for Manitobans, the important work of bringing Manitobans and Canadians together.

That member, what is she saying about what's going on in the world, when our government takes a real step and says, you know what? We're not going to support Elon Musk. What does she say in response? I—this is a quote—I'm not a fan.

Honourable Speaker, standing up for Manitobans, standing up for Canadians, and that member says she's not a fan of doing that? She should stand up in her place and explain her position. On this side of the House, we put a great forward—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

MLA Asagwara: —a great budget forward for Manitobans. We're standing up Canadians, and we will never apologize for doing that.

Child Care Budget 2025

Mr. Grant Jackson (Spruce Woods): The—yesterday's budget, Budget 2025, the shortest budget speech in recent Manitoba history, was a complete miss on child care. Was it even mentioned in the speech? I don't think the words actually came out of the Finance Minister's mouth: a very important industry entirely missed.

In fact, Jodie Kehl from the MCCA confirmed to the Free Press that while he's talking about adding imaginary jobs, all those people are going to need child care. So where is the commitment to child—the child-care sector and their workers?

Why did this NDP government abandon child-care workers and the child-care sector at a time when Manitobans need it most?

Hon. Tracy Schmidt (Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning): Before I answer the question I would also just like to recognize the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

I would like to lift up all of our early childhood educators that do that good work in child-care facilities in our province, and I would like to acknowledge some of the legislation that we introduced earlier in this session to expand our Indigenous framework policy in education beyond just the K-to-12 system into the early childhood education system. Because we believe that that sort of education,

education on treaties education, education on the contribution of Indigenous Manitobans, should start as early as possible.

That is just one of the investments we are making in early childhood education. I cannot wait for the next question from the—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

The honourable member for Spruce Woods, on a supplementary question.

Mr. Jackson: Well, I'm glad the minister can't wait for the next question, because she certainly didn't answer the first one, so let's see if she'll do better this time around.

Perhaps early childhood education wasn't mentioned in the budget because buried deep in the budget documents, not in the minister's speech, certainly, is a \$135-million decrease in the Canada-Manitoba, Canada-wide early learning and child-care agreement as a result of the annual renegotiation of the Canada-Manitoba action plan.

Does this government actually believe that the federal Liberals, who are desperately handing out cash to try and stay in office, are cutting child care in Manitoba, or is this NDP government just that bad at renegotiating bilateral agreements with the federal government?

MLA Schmidt: I know that the member opposite would like to waste this House time campaigning for Pierre Poilievre, Trump's little buddy over there.

On this side of the House, what we have been doing is renegotiating a new Canada-wide child-care benefit for Manitobans, to the tune of \$1.9 billion. That is a five-year extension that's going to allow Manitoba and our government to keep investing in kids, investing in child-care centres. Honourable Speaker, \$1.9 billion that we were able to secure that the former government failed to deliver on.

Child care grew none under their watch. On this side of the House, we value the early childhood education system—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

The honourable member for Spruce Woods, on a final supplementary question.

Mr. Jackson: Here's the previous government's record on child care: the first wage grid ever implemented; the first province in the country to sign on to the

Canada-wide national plan; the first province in the country—[interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Jackson: —to reach the average of \$10 a day; 14,000 new spaces created in the province; and the first province to pilot the RTM model for daycares, getting them built faster, and getting the facilities out into communities faster than ever done before and faster than was done anywhere else in the country of Canada.

I don't have any time for the minister who wants to label me as Trump. Donald Trump has no place in Canada. They have no place calling us the 51st state.

Will the minister get back to talking about Manitoba and Manitoba's child-care sector that she and Budget 2025 absolutely failed?

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

MLA Schmidt: Honourable Speaker, while on this side of the House, we are focused on building one Manitoba, on that side of the House we know that the member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Khan) is thanking Donald Trump for tariffs that is going to make life more expensive here on this—in Manitoba.

And while the member from Spruce Woods denies it, the CBC reports that Khan's MLA endorsements come from former premier—

The Speaker: Order.

I would just remind the minister that we can't refer to other members by their name. Either their ministerial title or their constituency name.

The honourable Minister of Health—honourable Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning.

MLA Schmidt: While the member from Spruce Woods denies that he supports the MLA from Fort Whyte, the MLA from Fort Whyte, who has thanked Donald Trump, the CBC, in fact, names the member from Spruce Woods as endorsing the member from Fort Whyte. I will table this for the House.

On this side of the House we—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Infrastructure Spending Budget 2025

Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye): Infrastructure spending in this year's budget is even more misleading than it was last year. Once again, this government has ignored carry-over funding, which has been asked for

by industry organizations and adopted by our previous government, meaning that money budgeted was money spent.

The details get much more concerning. Under this minister, operating infrastructure capital projects took a 12.7 per cent cut, all while Corporate Services saw a 195 per cent increase.

Could the minister tell us how operating capital projects saw a significant decrease and Corporate Services were nearly tripled?

Hon. Lisa Naylor (Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure): I want to thank the member opposite for the question. It seems like they've remembered that transportation and infrastructure matter in this province. It's my first question since last November.

So I'm pleased to stand to talk about how we are building this province, and we're building this province through infrastructure. We are investing in highways, we're investing in airports; we're building strategic infrastructure projects across the province. The overall infrastructure budget for Transportation, infrastructure for water, for airports, general capital is a 10 per cent increase from Budget 2024. So we are investing more money than has been invested in many years in this department.

I will remind—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

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

Emergency Management Operating Budget for 2025

Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye): Honourable Speaker, this minister does not need to worry about the amount of questions coming; there's much more to keep this minister accountable, things like the budget talking about climate resilience. All of us in this Chamber saw the devastation of the recent California wildfires, and myself, I've seen the devastation in my hometown.

This year's operating budget for emergency management will see a 15.5 per cent cut. Last year we saw a significant cut in emergency capital, and now we are seeing the cut in operating. This means less money for disaster recovery and less money for emergency preparedness.

Honourable Speaker, does this minister not believe in climate change any longer, or how can she justify these cuts?

The Speaker: The honourable Minister of—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order.

Hon. Lisa Naylor (Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure): I thought we cleared up some confusion around that particular budget line last year. But just to be clear, there are multiple places across the budget, both within Minister Moses's—sorry, the Minister—

The Speaker: Order, please.

Once again I must remind members, we don't use each other's names; we—ministerial title. Even though his is quite long, that's the proper way to address members.

MLA Naylor: Thank your Honourable Speaker, and you have identified my weakness.

* (10:40)

So I will say the minister responsible for forest fire-fighting is—has substantial investments in that account.

I will also point out, that in my budget, we have—there's a 121 per cent increase for flood mitigation.

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

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

Lake Manitoba-Lake St. Martin Channel Project Request to Table Environmental Assessment

Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye): It's great that the minister tried to bring up flood mitigation efforts.

The NDP's off-again, on-again approach to infrastructure only drives up costs and delays much-needed protection.

Last fall, the minister advised in Estimates that she had formally requested the federal government to pause environmental assessments for flood relief in the channels of Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin and cut the entire project from the budget.

Yesterday, the Minister of Finance (MLA Sala) said that the projects are a go.

So, in the span of a few months, we've gone from no project to an approved project?

Will the minister table the federal environmental assessment that greenlights this project, or is the assessment about as real as an NDP balanced budget?

Hon. Lisa Naylor (Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure): I'm really proud of our government's work on progressing the outlet channels project.

What we saw year after year under the previous government was money entered into the budget and never spent, year after year. We saw an extremely underwhelming approach to flooding in this province. We saw a complete lack of consultation and respect for affected First Nations communities.

And our government has turned that around. We're working on MOUs, we're working with communities and we are so pleased to be able to progress this project forward and to enter it in the budget in the year in which the work is happening, not carrying it forward unspent year after year and pretending—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Safe Consumption Site and Addiction Treatment Funding Concerns in Budget 2025

Mrs. Carrie Hiebert (Morden-Winkler): The disappointing NDP budget is spending \$4.6 million for the implementation of a drug injection site, plus another \$1.3 million for operations. That's almost \$6 million.

The residents and businesses and other concerned organizations in Point Douglas were not consulted about the proposed location for this drug injection site.

Is the million dollars for one, two or three more injection sites, because that's a lot of dollars; there will be—sorry, where will they be located; and will the neighbourhoods be consulted?

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Acting Minister of Housing, Addictions and Homelessness): I just want to take a moment to recognize my colleague, my amazing colleague from Housing, Addictions and Homelessness, who, since assuming that position, has gotten to work cleaning up the mess of members opposite.

Seven and a half years of putting their head in the sand while Manitoba was ravaged with a toxic drug crisis. They put their head in the sand, they had no respect for Manitobans who were struggling with addictions—[interjection]

The Speaker: Member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Piwniuk) will come to order.

MLA Fontaine: They acted as if they didn't even exist.

Our minister is hard at work ensuring that our government under her leadership is saving lives, and that's what we're going to do.

The Speaker: Time has expired.

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

Mrs. Hiebert: Honourable Speaker, drug injection sites only help 15 per cent of the population around them.

The NDP put very little thought into this budget. On page 75, the budget—of the budget, this NDP government is promising to spend, I quote, \$1.5 million to expand access to addictions.

What does this mean? Exactly how is this minister spending 1.5 dollars to expand access to addictions?

MLA Fontaine: It's so disappointing that the first opportunity that members have to get up to discuss our budget, it is under the 'aupsices' that we are spending too much money on Manitobans that are struggling with addictions. We're spending too much money to save Manitoba lives.

I think it is incredibly shameful that the member opposite would get up and question the resources that we're putting in to save lives, to help Manitoba families that are struggling with addictions.

This is what Manitobans have asked us to do; this is why they sent us to government. And under the leadership of the minister, we're doing just that.

The Speaker: The honourable member for Morden-Winkler, on a final supplementary question.

Mrs. Hiebert: Honourable Speaker, this government is spending almost \$6 million to create a drug injection site, but has only committed \$1.5 million to addictions treatment in the city of Winnipeg.

Why is this minister spending significantly less money on recovery and treatment? Is this government planning to expand—adding more injection sites or more—do they want more treatment for people who need help?

MLA Fontaine: Again, it's incredibly disappointing; the member opposite getting up and asking a question that is based on the premise that we're spending too much money to support Manitobans that are dealing with addictions.

I do want to say, one thing that was mentioned in our budget was our—we're looking forward to our partnership with the Anne Oake foundation, who is doing—is

going to be doing phenomenal work offering those supports to Manitoba women that are struggling with addictions.

We're on the same page with Anne Oake and Scott Oake and the good work that they're doing. I don't know why members 'opposin' aren't.

Canola Growers and Hog Producers Request to Support Agriculture Industry

MLA Jeff Bereza (Portage la Prairie): The Finance Minister talked in a lot of hypotheticals yesterday when it came to farmers.

Farmers are some of the largest businesses in our province and they're getting ready to plant a crop. The farmers don't need hypotheticals; they need a plan, just like their bankers and suppliers demand.

When will this Minister of Agriculture be ready to provide a plan for farmers so they can plant a crop this year?

Hon. Ron Kostyshyn (Minister of Agriculture): I want to thank the MLA for Portage asking an agriculture question that relates to my personal lifestyle, what I did for 40 years of my life. And I don't have to get any questions from that individual that probably never had dirt under his fingernails because agriculture producers do—are the ones.

I want to ensure the agriculture producers that are listening and in partaking in this conversation that we're here as government to work with them along with the federal government as we work on team Canada's scenario.

You'll see in our budget that had been presented yesterday of the importance of helping out agriculture producers, not only today but into the future—

The Speaker: Member's time is expired.

The honourable member for Portage la Prairie, on a supplementary question.

MLA Bereza: And, again, there was no answers given. Our poor farmers, some of the biggest economic drivers, can't get an answer.

Honourable Speaker, our Manitoba farmers grow 3.3 million acres of canola, and \$100 million is worth \$30 per acre. Right now, farmers have lost \$180 and the Chinese tariffs haven't taken full effect.

When will this Ag Minister start treating the ag industry with the respect it needs and give it some answers?

Mr. Kostyshyn: Let me quote some comments that have been brought forward by a couple of the farm organizations that we continue to communicate regarding challenges that we all face moving forward with tariffs, and the Chinese tariffs as well.

KAP, the organization that was supporting the increase in funding and loan limits; that will help Manitoba farmers and their operations, said KAP president Jill Verwey. These include a \$500,000 more for the stability agriculture, SAM program, and young farmer rebates increasing to \$40,000, accompanying the loan limits to \$400,000. MASC direct loans limits are increasing by \$5.25 million to \$5.75 million, and stocker loan limits will also be increasing from \$1 million to 1.4—

The Speaker: Member's time is expired.

And the member for La Vérendrye—

Order, please.

The member for La Vérendrye (Mr. Narth) can stop hollering back and forth across.

The honourable member for Portage la Prairie, on a final supplementary question.

MLA Bereza: Again, thanks to the Ag Minister for wanting to put the farmers into more debt.

Honourable Speaker, our hog industry is just another example of how much this Ag Minister and government don't understand the impact of agriculture on our economy in Manitoba.

What is the government's plan to save jobs in Neepawa, Winnipeg, Brandon, Altona, just to name a few? What are you doing for rural Manitoba?

* (10:50)

The Speaker: Order, please.

Just remember to address questions through the Chair, not ask members directly what you're doing.

Mr. Kostyshyn: Thanks again for the question from the critic from Portage la Prairie.

It's kind of ironic that the critic is going to stand up and try and educate our side of the government about what we're doing wrong. What about the 300 per cent tariff that they put on Crown lands when they were in existence? And the young generation of farmers that you chose—you chose—to pick on them.

Do you honestly think that was a worthwhile—and we talk about taking over an idea that comes from the North Dakota state, they chose to go Trump style.

We in Manitoba, we in Canada stick up for agriculture. We stick up for our producers that is very vital to our economy, not only today but into the future. And I want to guarantee you: our budget will help farmers in the long run.

The Speaker: The member's time had expired.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order, please. Order. Order.

I would just caution the Minister of Agriculture that he should not be saying: do you honestly think something. Questions should obviously be directed through the Chair, not to individual members.

No further questions? Oh, sorry.

US Trade Dispute with Canada Supports for Jobs and Businesses

MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): I'm happy to hear that this government recognized the importance of the trade war in yesterday's budget and that they have committed to helping employees, business owners and industries.

Many Manitobans work for US-based companies, most notably retail and restaurant chains, and because of the trade war, more than ever people are making a moral choice to not support US goods and services. The livelihood of these employees and their families are at risk.

How are they to support themselves if laid off and how will this government help them pivot like they promised businesses?

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Deputy Premier): Really appreciate and welcome that question from the member for Tyndall Park.

You know, we know that Manitobans and Canadians right now are worried about the economic climate, and that's why our government brought forward under the leadership of the Minister of Finance (MLA Sala) a budget that invests a historic \$3.7 billion to build our province.

And building our province is really saying that we are making sure Manitobans have jobs—well-paying jobs that can support themselves, their families and communities. We've taken additional steps as well to make sure that we can support local businesses and, quite frankly, just protect our Manitoba economy.

So our government is well positioned to address those threats, while members opposite on that side of the House embrace them.

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

MLA Lamoureux: Honourable Speaker, we need to stand up for employees who are both directly and indirectly impacted by the trade war. This includes everyone from floor factory employees to farmers to those working in human resources and everyone in between.

If a Manitoban loses their income because of the trade war, what will this government do to support them directly?

MLA Asagwara: Honourable Speaker, I thank the member for that really important question. Our government took steps immediately to ensure that local businesses, Manitoba businesses can defer their resources and ensure they can keep workers on the front lines of their businesses as needed.

I want to quote, you know, some folks who have made really strong statements in response to our budget. So the executive director of Manitoba Building Trades, Tanya Palson: It's a really good budget, all good things. We've been waiting for a capital spend like this to help people this area go in and support union jobs. So yes, we're in a good spot. End quote.

Our government is working hard on behalf of all Manitobans to protect jobs and create jobs so we can build a better and brighter future in our province. On that side of the House, they're doing the opposite; they need to join team Manitoba, join team—

The Speaker: Time is expired.

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

MLA Lamoureux: We have a lot of big industries, such as the pork, aerospace and agriculture industry, as well as many small businesses, whether that be coffee shops, restaurants or grocery stores—just as examples—that may very much need additional supports from this government due to the trade war.

Economic uncertainty affects all of us, and many businesses will be looking for alternatives in terms of supplies and raw materials.

What is this government doing interprovincially to build up new suppliers?

MLA Asagwara: Honourable Speaker, on this side of the House, we happen to have not only the most popular premier in the country, but we have a Premier (Mr. Kinew) that is really leading the way in working

with the other first ministers and working with the federal government to put the needs of Manitobans first and make sure we're protecting our local economy and our Canadian economy.

Whether it's the Manitoba Building Trades council, Manitoba Federation of Labour, CUPE Manitoba, City of Winnipeg, agriculture, the Manitoba pork producers, Keystone agriculture, everybody is on board, working together, supporting this great budget, because they know our government is investing in bringing Manitobans together, building a better province and making sure we're protecting our economy.

Team Canada, team Manitoba approach. I encourage all members of this House to join that approach. We are stronger together.

Women's Health Care Budget 2025

Mr. Logan Oxenham (Kirkfield Park): Honourable Speaker, yesterday was a great day for women's health care in Manitoba. After two terms of a PC government that cut women's health care, closed the Mature Women's Centre and fired nurses from the front lines, Budget 2025 is a sharp contrast.

Finally, we have a government that isn't afraid to talk about women's health and invest in it unapologetically. This budget is full of investments in women's health.

Can the Minister of Health please elaborate on these remarkable investments and how they will make life better for Manitobans.

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care): I thank my colleague from Kirkfield Park for that great question.

We couldn't be prouder of our government's investments in women's health. Given comments made by wannabe leaders of the PC Party and attacks on women's health globally, now, more than ever, is the time we should be firmly on the side of women's health care and put the money behind it to support it.

I'm so proud of our Finance Minister for standing up yesterday and, for the first time ever, including the words menopause and perimenopause in a Manitoba budget speech.

Those are words that the opposition is afraid to say—they were afraid to say when they were in government for two terms.

We're adding Plan B to our free birth control program; we're covering hormone replacement therapy

medication; we're investing \$10 million in the Women's Health Clinic, and we're reopening the Mature Women's Centre—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Moose Hunting Tags Reduction in Number Issued

Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River): Since conservation was non-existent in Budget 2025, I'm going to ask a simple question here.

In July of 2024, Virden resident, Moe Massart [*phonetic*] wrote the Premier (Mr. Kinew) regarding the reduction in the moose draw. The Premier couldn't be bothered to answer. The minister of economic development, investment, trade and natural resources couldn't be bothered to answer. Instead of ignoring Mr. Massart [*phonetic*], perhaps the minister will respond today.

What substantive evidence exists that supports a 75 per cent reduction of moose hunting tags as it pertains to the four game hunting areas?

Hon. Ian Bushie (Minister of Natural Resources and Indigenous Futures): Honourable Speaker, it's interesting the member stands up and talks about engagement, because there was absolutely no engagement whatsoever from members opposite when they were in government to Indigenous communities, Manitoba Wildlife Federation, Manitoba Métis Federation, and now they want to stand in their place and talk about conservation and talk about moose draws and talk about the numbers that are there when they do not believe in science whatsoever.

We're enhancing moose surveys so we can have accurate figures to actually go out and talk to communities and deal with this issue first and foremost at the front.

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

Mr. Wowchuk: Here, the minister continues to avoid answering Mr. Massart's [*phonetic*] very valid question. So he has this information in regards to game hunting area 21.

Could the minister provide an explanation as to why this zone was closed?

Mr. Bushie: I thank the member for the question, because it gives us the opportunity to actually talk about the realistic opportunities to be able to engage communities, to be able to engage the areas and talk about game hunting overall and really get into the science of what this is.

I have not made political decisions like members opposite did first and foremost, each and every day, to please their friends, please their family and—*[interjection]*—oh, now they talk—I can hear chirping on the side, talking about their friends. So that's all they care about, being able to stand up here and talk about being able to support only what they want to be able to do to further their own personal interests.

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

* (11:00)

Mr. Wowchuk: Obviously, the minister is getting quite upset by a simple question.

Finally, Mr. Massart [*phonetic*] asked the minister: What substantive evidence supports that it remains closed? Very simple.

Mr. Bushie: I guess that's the problem with having somebody like Shannon Martin prepare all their questions over there. Brian Pallister banished him to the basement; Heather Stefanson kept him there. And the reason that he's coming out now, because he's totally out of touch with reality and out of touch with the engagement that our government wants to be able to take each and every day.

So we're having that engagement with Manitobans, across all spectrums, across all aspects of Manitoba, across all game hunting areas of Manitoba, so we can purely come with the science of what this is and we can make informed decisions, something the members opposite have no idea what informed decision means.

Provincial Revenues Deficit Projections

Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland): Honourable Speaker, this out-of-touch NDP government is collecting a billion more in taxes and revenue, \$82 million more in personal income taxes on the backs of Manitoba families, \$182 million more in education property taxes on homeowners and small businesses, and that is on top of double-digit increases on education taxes on families. Yet he's still planning on running a \$1.9-billion deficit.

So I ask the minister: What happens when his wishful thinking and revenue dreams do not come true this year? Will this minister stand up, be honest with Manitobans and tell us what exactly the deficit will become?

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Deputy Premier): So negative, so negative, Honourable Speaker. Our Finance

Minister introduced a historic budget, so historic he's on the front page of so many newspapers, being celebrated for investing \$3.7 billion to build, build, build.

He's investing money to make sure women's health care is stronger than ever; building school after school after school after school after school after school in Manitoba.

Honourable Speaker, it's a great budget for Manitobans, it's a great budget that brings Canadians together, and on this side of the House we encourage that side of the House to finally, finally join team Canada.

The Speaker: Order, please.

I would caution the member for Midland about using the term that the minister wasn't being honest. That's getting very close to crossing the line of what's acceptable and what isn't acceptable. So a little more thought into your questions and choosing the right words.

And the time for oral questions has expired.

PETITIONS

New Neepawa Health Centre

MLA Jeff Bereza (Portage la Prairie): Honourable Speaker, I wish to present the following petition.

To the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, the background of this petition is as follows:

(1) Thanks to the investment made under the previous PC provincial government and as part of the clinical and preventative services plan, construction for the new Neepawa Health Centre is well under way. The facility and surrounding community would greatly benefit from added diagnostic machinery and equipment, but specifically the addition of a CT scanner.

(2) The new hospital is being built east of Neepawa, on the north side of the Yellowhead Highway, PTH 16. It will nearly double the size of the existing hospital and will better serve patients from the broader western Manitoba geographical area.

(3) CT scanners are standard equipment that combine X-ray images from several angles to create detailed, three-dimensional models of structures inside the body.

Mr. Tyler Blashko, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

They perform critical diagnosis—diagnostic procedures that support the diagnostic—diagnosis and

treatment of a wide range of injuries and diseases, and the new equipment will be able to complete these important scans faster, with a sharper and clearer image.

(4) The average wait times for Manitobans to receive a CT scan is currently seven weeks, and there are over 14,000 patients on the wait-list to receive the diagnostic imaging procedures.

(5) The new CT scanner will reduce these wait times as it would decrease the need for patients to travel long distances, sometimes involving overnight stays, to access the care they need.

(6) The new scanner will reduce pressure on emergency response services, who would no longer have to transport these patients, opening up appointments in other communities and allowing more people to get care that they need sooner.

(7) A CT scanner in the Neepawa Health Centre will enable further treatment and diagnosis to take place in a community, reducing the wait times for patients in surrounding areas and reducing the burden of travel to other facilities.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to support the investment and placement of a CT scanner machine in the Neepawa Health Centre in Neepawa, Manitoba.

This petition has been signed by Jamie Ellis, Cheryl Unger and Sheri Malmgren [*phonetic*] and many, many more Manitobans.

Thank you.

Introduction of Guests

The Deputy Speaker: Before we continue on with petitions, I just welcome all members to direct their attention to the gallery. We have with us from the Fédération des aînés de la francophonie manitobaine 13 students under the direction of Nadège Tuo, and they are in the constituency of the honourable member of St. Boniface.

* * *

Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz): I wish to present the following petition.

To the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, the background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Thanks to the investment made under the previous PC provincial government as part of the clinical and preventative services plan, construction

for the new Neepawa Health Centre is well under way. The facility and surrounding community would greatly benefit from added diagnostic machinery and equipment, but specifically the addition of a CT scanner.

(2) The new hospital is being built east of Neepawa, on the north side of Yellowhead Highway, PTH 16. It will be nearly double the size of the existing hospital. It will better serve patients from its broader, western Manitoba geographic area.

(3) CT scanners are standard equipment that combine X-ray images from several angles to create detailed, three-dimensional models of structures inside the body. They perform critical diagnostic procedures that support the diagnosis and treatment of a wide range of injuries and diseases, and the new equipment will be able to complete these important scans faster and with sharper and clearer images.

(4) The average wait times for Manitobans to receive a CT scan is currently seven weeks, and there are over 14,000 patients on the wait-list to receive the diagnostic imaging procedure.

(5) The new CT scanner will reduce these wait times as it would decrease the need for patients to travel long distances, sometimes involving overnight stays, to access the care they need.

(6) The new scanner will reduce pressure on the emergency response services, who would no longer have to transport these patients, opening up appointments in other communities and allowing more people to get the care they need sooner.

* (11:10)

(7) A CT scanner in the Neepawa Health Centre will enable further treatment and diagnosis to take place in community, reducing the wait times for patients in surrounding areas and allowing more people to get the care they need sooner. A CT scanner in the Neepawa Health Centre will enable further treatment and diagnosis to take place in community, reducing the wait times for patients in surrounding areas and reducing the burden of travel to other facilities.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to support the investment and placement of a CT scanner machine in the Neepawa Health Centre in Neepawa, Manitoba.

This petition has been signed by Kathryn Jasienczyk, Robert Walker, Jim Sas and many, many other Manitobans.

Phoenix School

Mrs. Kathleen Cook (Roblin): I wish to present the following petition.

The background to this petition is as follows:

Phoenix School, a kindergarten to grade 5 school located in Headingley, has experienced consistent enrolment growth over the last several years. Enrolment is expected to reach 275 students in the next two years.

Because the school is now over capacity, the school division has had to install portable classrooms on site as of fall 2024.

For several consecutive years, the top capital priority of the St. James-Assiniboia School Division has been the renovation and expansion of Phoenix School.

In 2022, the Phoenix School expansion and renovation project was approved to proceed to the design phase. The project included, among other amenities, a new gymnasium, two new classrooms, a multi-purpose room and room for 74 child-care spaces.

In June 2024, the school division received notice from the provincial government that the project has been deferred. There is no guarantee if, or when, the project will move forward.

There are currently hundreds of children on a wait-list for child care in Headingley. The daycare operator in Phoenix School has been told that they will continue to have space within the school for the 2024-2025 school year only, that further expansion of child-care space within the school is not possible and that space may be reduced moving forward due to the shortage of classrooms. If new space is not constructed as planned, many families may be left without child care.

It is critical that the expansion and renovation of Phoenix School proceed as planned in order to support the needs of students, teachers and families in the growing community of Headingley.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to proceed with the planned renovation and expansion of Phoenix School without further delay.

And this petition is signed by Tracy Gould, Emma Fillion, Joe Fillion and many, many other Manitobans.

Support for Border Communities

Mr. Josh Guenter (Borderland): Honourable Speaker, I wish to present the following petition.

To the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, the background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Illegal border crossings into Manitoba have increased 14 per cent in 2024, raising significant public safety and security concerns, particularly in border communities.

(2) Changes to the Canada-US Safe Third Country Agreement have driven migrants deeper into hiding to avoid apprehension, making law enforcement efforts more difficult.

(3) Border patrol officials believe that criminal organizations, including Mexican cartels, are involved in smuggling operations at the border, posing serious security threats to Manitoba.

(4) Human smuggling networks are abandoning vulnerable migrants, including families, in isolated and dangerous locations, exposing them to severe risks, especially during Manitoba's harsh winters; and

(5) Border communities are preparing for a possible surge in illegal border crossings, which could overwhelm local resources and emergency search-and-rescue services; and

(6) Despite these challenges, there has been little communication or support from the provincial and federal governments regarding their plans to assist border communities, leaving them under-resourced and unprepared to manage this escalating crisis.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to lobby the federal government to develop and implement a comprehensive plan to assist border communities in managing the rise in illegal border crossings into Manitoba.

(2) To urge the provincial government to work closely with federal and local authorities to ensure adequate resources, including funding and support for emergency services, are available to protect local communities; and that immediate measures be taken to dismantle and destroy all human smuggling networks operating in Manitoba.

This petition has been signed by Jody Houle, Sarah Bueckert, Mary Reimer and many, many Manitobans.

Morden Waste Water Project

Mrs. Carrie Hiebert (Morden-Winkler): I wish to present the following petition.

To the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, the background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Between 2011 and 2021, Morden's population grew by an impressive 27 per cent, outpacing the national average by 16 per cent, according to Statistics Canada.

While growth is welcome and encouraged, Morden has long faced a critical need for infrastructure upgrades to meet current demands and support future development.

Morden's waste water system has operated beyond capacity for years, prompting the Province in 2019 to halt property subdivisions due to insufficient winter waste water storage.

As of 2024, after exploring all options, the city announced in July that the estimated cost for critical infrastructure upgrades has risen from \$70 million to \$88 million to \$108 million.

(5) These revised estimates leave Morden with a significant funding shortfall of 13 to 33 million dollars.

(6) Despite efforts to address the gap, including plans to raise utility fees for residents and businesses, such increases that have been delayed since 2017 due to the lack of approved capital projects, taxation is not enough.

(7) The lack of waste water capacity has severely impacted economic activity and growth in Morden and surrounding communities. Without much-needed waste water infrastructure investments, growth and economic development will hinder—be hindered in all of southern Manitoba.

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to take immediate action and recognize the critical need of this waste water project for economic growth and environmental sustainability by committing to advocating and working with federal government to close the gap with additional funding for Morden's waste water treatment system.

(2) To urge the provincial government to ensure all levels of government and regulatory bodies will

expedite necessary funding and approvals necessary to advance the Morden waste water project with no further delay and ensure no hindrance to growth and economic development for Morden and southern Manitoba.

This petition has been signed by Henry Penner, Gordon Hoeschen and Janice Myers and many other Manitobans.

Provincial Trunk Highway 34

Mr. Grant Jackson (Spruce Woods): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Provincial Trunk Highway 34, PTH 34, is a two-lane provincial primary highway that runs from the US border where it meets with ND 20 to PTH 16 at the town of Gladstone.

(2) PTH 34 runs north-south in the south-central region of the province. It is the main highway for the towns of Crystal City, Pilot Mound and Holland, serving as a main corridor for semi-trailers, farm equipment, daily drivers and local school bus routes.

* (11:20)

(3) A new bridge is currently being constructed over the Assiniboine River at PTH 34, north of Holland, in the RM of Victoria. The bridge serves as an important north-south link over the Assiniboine River between the Trans-Canada Highway and PTH 2.

(4) The deterioration of PTH 34 has raised major concerns due to its narrow shoulders and numerous deep potholes that pose serious safety risks considering farmers often need to use the highway to transport heavy equipment.

(5) Construction of a new bridge in accordance with current design codes and the RTAC standard, located on PTH 34 crossing the Assiniboine River, will support trade and commerce and improve public safety in the area, and also accommodate flood events on the Assiniboine River.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to address the conditions of Provincial Trunk Highway 34, making the necessary upgrades to RTAC standard and to resurface the road once the new bridge has been completed.

This petition has been signed by Robert Pittet, Rachel Claeys, Jacqui Hurton and many other fine Manitobans.

Opposition to Releasing Repeat Offenders

Mr. Trevor King (Lakeside): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Kellie Verwey, a beloved young woman from Portage la Prairie, Manitoba, was tragically killed in a car crash caused by a repeat violent offender with a long criminal history.

(2) Despite repeated violations of his bail conditions, the offender was free to roam the streets and ultimately claim Kellie's life. This tragedy was entirely preventable.

(3) While the Criminal Code falls under federal jurisdiction, provinces have been given the responsibility for the administration of justice, allowing for meaningful provincial action on bail reform to ensure public safety.

(4) Other provinces have taken proactive steps to strengthen bail enforcement, but Manitoba has not used all the available tools to address this issue effectively.

(5) The provincial government has the ability and the responsibility to advocate for and implement measures that protect its citizens by ensuring that repeat violent offenders are not released in our communities without proper safeguards.

(6) Immediate action is required to close gaps in the justice system that allow dangerous criminals to remain free, which puts innocent Manitobans at risk.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to take immediate and decisive action on bail reform to address serious deficits in enforcement by utilizing all available provincial mechanisms to strengthen warrant enforcement, increasing bail supervision, and opposing release of offenders, thus ensuring that repeat violent offenders are held accountable and that public safety is prioritized over leniency; and

(2) To urge the provincial government to lobby the federal government to immediately repeal provisions of the Criminal Code that allow for the continued

victimization of law-abiding Manitobans while granting repeat offenders additional rights.

This has been signed by Tyson Langrell, Steven Dearman, Juliana Wouda and many, many Manitobans.

Thank you.

Provincial Road 210

Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye): Honourable Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Provincial Road 210, PR 210, is a 117.3 kilometre—or 72.8 mile—highway in the Eastman region of Manitoba that connects the towns and communities of Woodridge, Marchand, La Broquerie, Ste. Anne, Landmark, Linden, Île des Chênes and St. Adolphe.

(2) A significant portion of PR 210 also runs through the constituency of La Vérendrye.

(3) PR 210 is a significant commuting route for Eastman families and is also notably used by those in the agriculture, tourism, trade and commerce industries.

(4) The condition of PR 210 from Woodridge to Highway 12 is in an unacceptable state of disrepair.

Mr. Diljeet Brar, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

(5) The planned pavement upgrade was promised more than 20 years ago when it was constructed with a flat surface suitable for pavement but has yet to be completed.

(6) The condition of PR 210 from Woodridge to Highway 12 is in such bad shape that firefighters, police and paramedic services are severely delayed when responding to emergencies.

(7) The Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure as well as the Premier have a duty to respond to infrastructure needs identified by rural communities.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure to prioritize the reconstruction of Provincial Road 210.

(2) To urge the provincial government to include the stretch of Provincial Road 210 from Woodridge to Highway 12 in its reconstruction plans.

This petition has been signed by Kyle Okapiec, Julianne [phonetic] Gagnon and Ingrid Koch.

New Neepawa Health Centre

Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain): Good morning, acting honourable deputy Speaker.

I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Thanks to the investment made under the previous PC provincial government as part of the clinical and preventative services plan, construction for the new Neepawa Health Centre is well under way. The facility and surrounding community would greatly benefit from added diagnostic machinery and equipment, but specifically the addition of a CT scanner.

(2) The new hospital is being built east of Neepawa, on the north side of the Yellowhead Highway, PTH 16. It will be nearly double the size of the existing hospital and will better serve patients from this broader, western Manitoba geographic area.

(3) CT scanners are standard equipment that combine X-ray images from several angles to create detailed, three-dimensional models of structures inside the body. They perform critical diagnostic procedures that support the diagnosis and treatment of a wide range of injuries and diseases, and the new equipment will be able to complete these important scans faster and with sharper and clearer images.

* (11:30)

(4) The average wait times for Manitobans to receive a CT scan is currently seven weeks, and there are over 14,000 patients on the wait-list to receive the diagnostic imaging procedure.

(5) The new CT scanner will reduce these wait times, as it would decrease the need for patients to travel long distances, sometimes involving overnight stays, to access the care they need.

(6) The new scanner will reduce pressure on emergency response services, who would no longer have to transport these patients, opening up appointments in other communities and allowing more people to get the care they need sooner.

(7) A CT scanner in the Neepawa Health Centre will enable further treatment and diagnosis to take place in community, reducing wait times for patients in surrounding areas and reducing the burden of travel to other facilities.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to support the investment and placement of a CT scanner machine in the Neepawa Health Centre in Neepawa, Manitoba.

This petition has been signed by Harvey Ebner, Sheila Douglas, Randy Dowd and many, many more fine Manitobans.

Thank you, honourable acting deputy Speaker.

Medical Assistance in Dying

Mr. Richard Perchotte (Selkirk): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

These are the reasons for this petition:

(1) Persons struggling with mental health as their sole condition may access medical assistance in dying unless Parliament intervenes.

The Speaker in the Chair

(2) Suicidality is often a symptom of mental illness, and suicide is the second leading cause of death for Canadians between the age of 10 and 19.

(3) There have been reports of the unsolicited introduction of medical assistance in dying to non-seeking persons, including Canadian veterans, as a solution for their medical and mental health issues.

(4) Legal and medical experts are deeply concerned that permitting Canadians suffering from depression and other mental illnesses to access euthanasia would undermine suicide prevention efforts and risk normalizing suicide as a solution for those suffering from mental illness.

(5) The federal government is bound by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms to advance and protect the life, liberty and security of its citizens.

(6) Manitobans consider it a priority to ensure that adequate supports are in place for the mental health of all Canadians.

(7) Vulnerable Manitobans must be given suicide prevention counselling instead of suicide assistance.

(8) The federal government should focus on increasing mental health supports to provinces and improve access to these supports, instead of offering medical assistance in dying for those with mental illness.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to lobby the federal government to stop the expansion of medical assistance in dying to those for whom mental illness is the sole condition.

(2) To urge the provincial government to lobby the federal government to protect Canadians struggling with mental illness by facilitating treatment, recovery and medical assistance in living, not death.

This petition has been signed by Nitam Avova [*phonetic*], Lucia Toth, Caroline [*phonetic*] Facioli and many other Manitobans.

The Speaker: No further petitions? Grievances? So—

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

BUDGET DEBATE

(Second Day of Debate)

The Speaker: In accordance with our rules, the House will now resume debate on the budget motion moved by the Minister of Finance (MLA Sala), standing in the name of the honourable member for Midland.

Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland): This NDP government has completely missed the moment and missed the mark on this budget for Manitobans at a time of economic uncertainty and US and China tariffs.

This budget seems like an unplanned document that does not reflect the realities of today's economic climate. There are a lot of words but not a lot of foundation, and certainly, no action plan.

As is typical with NDP governments—and this one is proving no different—this is a budget of tax, tax, tax, spend, spend, spend and borrow, borrow, borrow.

The NDP have been taking the economy—have not been taking the economy and cost of living seriously since being elected, and Manitobans are now seeing that reflected in this budget and are now paying the price: higher taxes, higher deficits, higher spending, higher borrowing, at a time when Manitoba families and Manitoba businesses can least afford it.

Instead of making the urgent investments needed to support Manitobans facing rising costs of living, US tariffs, China tariffs, they have failed to add any meaningful, long-term tax relief for families and businesses.

Unemployment has increased over six per cent. Manitoba is leading the nation in food and housing inflation. We are last in the country for energy, mining and forestry investment, and we have big declines in

our economy. And that was before tariffs and the trade wars took effect.

The NDP have been taxing us out of competitiveness. They've been spending beyond their means. And now we're hitting an economic crisis and the NDP is trying to play catch-up on the backs of Manitobans and Manitoba families.

The NDP has put off building the Manitoba economy for 17 months, and now during a tariff war—an economic slowdown—they finally decide to speed things up, but with lofty and unrealistic goals. Expecting Manitobans to spend into the economy while not offering any relief to do so is the NDP sitting on clouds and not facing the economic realities of today.

For a budget that is supposedly trying to Trump-proof the economy, this budget fails to deliver and fails to implement any actionable items. There is little to no long-term, meaningful tax relief for Manitoba families who are facing 'foodflation,' job risk, housing affordability. Property taxes have skyrocketed and education taxes have skyrocketed. And this NDP is sitting back and enabling it to happen.

They made the decision over a year ago to increase taxes on Manitobans, to increase taxes on businesses and to ignore growing the economy. And what we're left with is a weak economy heading into a possible economic recession.

So what we've seen over the past year since those poor fiscal decisions were made by the NDP, is families are struggling and stretched, Manitoba has the highest 'foodflation' in the country, property taxes have skyrocketed and unemployment has increased. Job growth has declined and Manitoba fell in investment dollars in key sectors like critical minerals.

They have had 17 months to try to grow the economy and they have failed at it. Manitobans are struggling, they are stretched, they don't have any money left in their pockets to give to this NDP government, yet the NDP has decided to take from them anyway.

The NDP have shown that they are terrible fiscal managers and did not plan for any future challenges that could arise like we are seeing today.

* (11:40)

They have in no way supported Manitobans in the way that Manitobans need support right now, today. We're not talking about next year or the year after that, or delays, deferrals, holiday freezes. We are talking

about long-term, meaningful relief for Manitobans who are struggling.

They have not supported businesses, and they have skyrocketed the deficit and the debt that Manitobans will be paying for years to come. In addition to \$2.3 billion in interest costs going to Bay Street and Wall Street lenders, there is no meaningful long-term affordability measures in this NDP's budget. Affordability is the number one issue Manitobans are facing: affordability, costs of living and the economic uncertainties of China and US tariffs.

I have cited and I have tabled polls week after week in this House, stating that this has been the No. 1 issue for Manitobans, yet the NDP has failed to capture that moment. The NDP has had 17 months to make life more affordable for Manitobans, but instead all we have seen are ad hoc, poorly thought-out temporary tax policies that do not provide any long-term meaningful relief to Manitoba families and Manitoba businesses, and certainly no business certainty at this uncertain economic time.

Yet, they still increased our projected deficit in December to \$1.3 billion, and now with economic tariffs possibly \$1.9 billion. But yet they're still taxing Manitobans. So where has all this spending gone? And Manitobans are paying the price. They're paying the price today, they're going to be paying the price tomorrow and they're going to be paying the price for years to come.

Affordability, the economy and jobs are clearly not a priority for this NDP government. The reality is, is that the NDP continues to tax Manitobans; they continue to tax us out of competitiveness; they are overspending; they have overspent; and now we're headed into an economic recession, and the NDP clearly does not know how to respond; and that is clearly reflected in this year's budget, with the lack of thought, the lack of planning and the lack of recognition of the challenges that are facing us today, as well as the challenges that lie ahead.

Not only have they been taxing Manitobans over the past year, but they continue to do so in this budget. It is unacceptable to hike taxes on families and Manitoba businesses today in these uncertain economic times. It is irresponsible to hike taxes on Manitoba families and Manitoba businesses during a trade war.

This NDP government is bringing back bracket creep rather than slashing income taxes on Manitobans like they should be doing, and that Manitobans desperately need right now. They're actually increasing

them to \$82 million. The government is raising taxes on Manitobans by not indexing income tax brackets and B-P-A—personal—basic personal exemptions—by inflation.

Inflation is going up, which can put income earners into a higher tax bracket just by receiving the slightest wage increase. Even though prices and costs continue to go up, many taxpayers are going to be paying more in income taxes as a result of this NDP government.

Taxpayers, Manitoba families: they're already stretched. Their pockets and bank accounts are getting emptier and emptier, and this government—this NDP government—thinks it's okay to keep taking and taking while giving themselves increase in wages.

This NDP is completely out of touch with the reality that Manitoba families and Manitoba businesses are facing today. Earlier this week, this minister stood up and committed that this was going to be a, quote, education-focused budget. Yet double-digit property tax increases across the province in every single school division in the city of Winnipeg.

The NDP government failed to plan for the 2025 City of Winnipeg assessment that happens every two years, while cutting education funding; and as a result, hard-working Winnipeggers and hard-working Manitobans are paying the price as a result of their poor fiscal decisions and their poor fiscal planning.

We sounded this alarm a year ago for Manitobans. We drew attention to future assessment increases and property value increases, and the result of increasing taxes that this would have on Manitoba families. And we are now seeing this today.

This NDP decided not to plan for what these future challenges were. They were ignorant. They were ignorant to what was coming over this next year, and now we're seeing it. Winnipeggers and Manitobans are seeing it as a result of these double-digit education tax increases across the province, and now this minister is enabling it. He's letting it happen. He's sitting back and letting school divisions tax Manitobans at historic rates.

The City of Winnipeg finance chair has said that he has never seen this high school taxes in his 18 years on council. Mayor Scott Gillingham has said this is historic increases.

The NDP is capitalizing on the assessment changes to underfund schools and let the school divisions run rampant with tax hikes so they could avoid accountability and making difficult and hard financial decisions. And families, they're the ones that are paying the

price. Manitobans, Winnipeggers, they're the ones paying the price as a result of this NDP's government poor planning and poor fiscal management.

The NDP removed the cap on how much school divisions could increase—the cap at 2 per cent protected homeowners—while the former PCs increased education funding to historic levels. By removing this cap, this NDP is hiding from Manitobans. They are hiding from being accountable to the people who elected them and has led and enabled school divisions to hike their taxes by up to 25 per cent at East. St. Paul. By allowing school divisions to hike taxes this aggressively, the NDP are adding more homes into paying higher taxes.

With an underwhelming \$1,600 tax credit, more families will actually pay more in property taxes as the general assessment takes effect and these double-digit education property taxes get hiked. This tax credit is window dressing for Manitobans and Winnipeggers that are being faced with these double-digit tax increases.

So there are going to be many middle-class Manitobans that'll be paying significantly more in education property taxes because this NDP removed the 50 per cent education tax rebate and allowed education taxes to skyrocket to up to 25 per cent.

This NDP government is clearly caught between ideology and reality. The reality is, is that businesses cannot absorb any more, and with a \$1.9-billion deficit, I would have expected a lot more tax relief coming to Manitobans and a lot more tax relief coming to Manitoba businesses. But this is not the case that's reflected in this year's budget.

The NDP cannot keep taxing us out of competitiveness. We need to phase out the payroll tax immediately, not next year. This needs to happen today. And quite frankly, Honourable Speaker, it should've happened a year ago if the NDP had kept up with the PC plan to start phasing out the payroll tax. But instead, businesses are left with the economic uncertainty and tax uncertainty of waiting a year, of which this NDP could repeal it anyways, for that payroll—job-killing payroll tax threshold to come into place.

This is about Manitoba workers and growing our homegrown businesses. You can't tax economic growth. It doesn't work like that.

The NDP have made fake commitments to increase the payroll tax threshold a year from now in 2026, but with tariffs and high costs, some businesses might not even be around by next year. That is what this minister does not get. That is what this NDP does not get.

They are delaying and deferring in order to deflect from the realities and the hard fiscal decisions that they need to be making, and they have chosen not to make those decisions. Businesses need the support today, not a year from now and not two years from now. Businesses need tax certainty, and they need to be competitive with other jurisdictions. That is the only way that Manitoba will grow.

They had 15 months before Trump's tariffs to support businesses and Manitobans, and they failed to do anything. They chose not to provide that support. They made their choice, and Manitoba businesses are now paying the result of those poor decisions.

Unfortunately, for Manitobans, this NDP government significantly falls short in standing up for families and businesses at a time when those families and businesses need their support the most.

Last year's budget targeted small businesses with higher taxes. The NDP budget removed education property tax rebate for commercial properties. Many small businesses own their property, and this year, they had a much higher tax bill.

In addition, the NDP is actually, in this year's budget, taxing small businesses with a PST charge to cloud computing software. At a time when businesses are actually shifting to modern technology and services to cloud, the NDP is capitalizing on that and actually charging a PST on it. What a ridiculous tax hike, an increase in red tape in the era of modern technology and an economic uncertainty that these small businesses are now going to have to deal with.

* (11:50)

One of the most disappointing facts about this NDP budget is there is no true economic plan. This budget did fail to capture today's economic reality and they failed to commit to a straight trade strategy. There is little support for businesses trying to navigate these tariff wars right now.

There is no trade strategy, despite the fact that other provinces—Alberta, Saskatchewan, eastern Canadian provinces—are coming out with theirs. They are making significant investments into a trade strategy and exploring other export markets. And what's this NDP's response? Sit on their hands, not plan, not have a strategy, no action, no implementation and Manitobans will pay the price.

The NDP government has actually said in their budget, labour mobility threatens Manitoba jobs. One of the biggest barriers to interprovincial trade is labour

mobility for Manitoba. Premier Houston has put forward legislation to break down those barriers. Smith, Moe and Ford are following suit with their commitments, but the NDP is actually saying the exact opposite of what this Premier (Mr. Kinew) said to the cameras and to his premier counterparts and fellow premiers.

This budget completely falls short on unleashing our economic potential. There is virtually nothing in the budget on energy independence and building our east-west pipelines. Where is that commitment to building pipelines in the province? Where is the commitment to building critical minerals across the country? Where is the commitment to Canadian energy and Canadian energy self-reliance? This is where this NDP is caught between reality and ideology.

The reality is, we do need pipelines; we need to move Canadian resources. But unfortunately for Manitobans, this NDP government is refusing to put their ideology aside and refuses to stand up for what Canadians need right now.

Honourable Speaker, in the lead up to this election, this NDP government promised that they would be on track to balancing the budget and eliminating the deficit in four years. How will this even be possible unless the NDP starts taking fiscal responsibility seriously and stop making promises to everyone everywhere and start allowing businesses to flourish without the additional tax burdens. This will be another broken promise that this NDP can add to their list of growing broken promises.

They are continuing to tax Manitobans, yet running larger deficits, with or without tariffs. An \$800-million deficit is the best case scenario for this NDP government; in reality, it could be \$1.9 billion. The NDP is putting a significant amount of confidence in extra revenue from economic activity at a time when the economy is actually slowing down. Manitobans are stressed, cost of living is going up, taxes are going up.

This NDP is so out of touch with Manitobans and the economic reality that Manitobans are facing. They're living in the clouds and they're promising a lot as we're entering an economic storm. This new NDP government is much like the former: they tax, they spend, they borrow, and when crisis hits, they try to play catch-up, but they do not know how because they have already weakened our economy so much.

This budget is a signal of what is to come, and Manitobans will see the consequences of electing this NDP government. This budget suggests they plan to

'ren'—run large deficits, large debt; and deficits, debt, borrowing and interest costs for many, many years to come despite federal transfers growing significantly.

This budget was not thought out properly, it was not planned, it does not reflect the true economic realities that Manitobans and Manitobans are facing today. If this NDP government was truly in touch with what Manitobans needed, we would have seen tax relief for Manitobans; we would have seen a slash in income taxes; we would have seen the phase-out of the job-killing payroll tax; we would have seen relief for Manitoba businesses. But we are not seeing any of that today.

They are deferring, they're deflecting, they're hoping Manitoba businesses forget about this promise a year from now. They'll repeal it; that's—[interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Stone: —what they'll do, because against their ideology to actually support businesses in their province and make this a tax-competitive province to other jurisdictions in Canada. This budget has failed, this NDP government has failed: they've failed Manitobans, they've failed Manitoba businesses and they've failed Manitoba families.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

The Speaker: Order, please.

I'd ask members to quit hollering back and forth so that at least one of us can hear what's being said.

MLA Billie Cross (Seine River): You know, I can honestly say that the negative cloud that hangs over this side of the room has not hit me yet, so I'm going to talk in a more positive manner.

I'm proud to stand up today to talk about the incredible budget our team has worked so hard to develop for the 2025-2026 fiscal year.

Budget 2025 focuses on building. We are a party that builds Manitoba. The members opposite, they like to tear it down. Building a resilient and protected Manitoba that cannot only withstand the challenges we are facing, but for us to come out stronger as a listening government. And we really do listen.

I was at an event last night for the Manitoba School Boards Association, and I couldn't believe how many members came up to thank our government for being collaborative, for listening, for meeting with them. Even a member from this side, his relative, came over and thanked us for the work we do.

As a listening government, our members have travelled across this province to hear what issues are most important to Manitobans, and we've heard you loud and clear. You care about health care, about our economy. You care about creating more Manitoba jobs, having better infrastructure, more schools and daycares. Budget 2025 is built on these commitments and is exactly what Manitobans have been asking for.

We're facing uncertain times. Threats of tariffs and trade wars loom over Manitobans every day. But just know that we've got your back and we will get you through this time. This budget should provide comfort for this uncertainty. And Manitobans can rest assured that we have a contingency plan and funds earmarked to mitigate the effects of these tariffs. Our government has been working hard to protect your jobs and safeguard a provincial economy so that you can continue to provide for your families and keep building the good life that you've worked so hard for. Budget 2025 will help us continue to do this with the additional tariff budget. It's important that we support one another as we weather this storm. We are in this together as one Manitoba with one future.

As the wife and mother to a small-business owner and the daughter of a small-business owner, supporting local businesses in our province is one of my priorities, and I'm so proud to see the passion reflected in the budget. We're cutting payroll taxes, which will help create more jobs and save businesses \$8.5 million annually. We're investing \$500,000 into the export support program that will help Manitoba businesses diversify their sales outside of the United States, making them stronger and giving them access to new markets. We're also investing \$10 million into a new business security rebate program that will help businesses stay safe in our province, preventing the thefts and break-ins that cost businesses precious dollars.

Since being elected, our NDP government has made significant progress in rebuilding health care after the PC cuts and mismanagement for seven and a half years. We've hired 1,255 net-new health-care workers, added staff beds, opened minor injury and illness clinics across our province. And we are helping more Manitobans access the quality care they deserve right here in Manitoba.

Budget 2025 will build on our efforts to bring care closer to home across Manitoba. We will put shovels in the ground and start the work of rebuilding the Victoria Hospital emergency room that the previous government shuttered, which forced community members to travel halfway across the city to access

emergency health care. With this new budget, we are bringing more health care back to south Winnipeg. And as the MLA for Seine River, I know that this is what my constituents has been—have been asking for.

Our budget will help us continue the good work we have been doing to reduce emergency and surgical wait times. When the previous government fired hundreds of health-care workers, wait times surged dramatically, leaving Manitobans in pain and suffering for hours. They created a toxic culture in health care, where staff were overworked, underpaid and overwhelmed. And the PCs treated them like they were expendable.

* (12:00)

Our government values health-care workers and understands that they are the backbone of our health-care system. We can't rebuild health care in Manitoba without them. We must invest in them and change the culture so that they want to stay and work in our great province. This means paying them fair and decent wages, which our amazing Budget 2025 is allowing us to do. We are setting new records in health-care investments, with a 1.25–\$1.2-billion increase with nearly 70 per cent of that going directly to our crucial front-line staff.

I have elderly parents that are aging in place, and I know how important it is to age with dignity in your own community. The PC government let seniors down time and time again. They made life more expensive and failed to protect those living in care homes during the pandemic due to poor planning.

Even now, they continue to let them down. They stalled The Seniors' Advocate Act from being passed, a bill that establishes a seniors' advocate office that will identify, review and investigate systemic issues and concerns that face seniors here in our province.

Despite their attempts to block this bill, our NDP government got it passed. This year, we're doing even more: investing in new personal-care homes in communities, both in Winnipeg and rural areas, including the area of Transcona, where my parents live.

As a former Indigenous educator, I am thrilled to see we are investing in revitalizing Indigenous languages in our schools and finding ways to integrate land-based learning and knowledge keepers in our classrooms. Many Indigenous children have grown up not learning their ancestral languages or other aspects of their culture because of the structures of colonialism. This is why revitalizing Indigenous languages and culture is so important. When children are immersed

in their languages, they engage with their culture and they thrive.

We must continue to create opportunities for children to embrace this. Our budget will help us train new language teachers, create Indigenous language revitalization programs and make other massive strides in the area of Indigenous education, something I am so excited for.

Every child deserves to have the best learning environment possible. The previous government chronically underfunded school divisions and let classroom sizes get out of control. As a long-time teacher, I know when the PCs were in power, our school ran out of paper late April. How do you do lessons with kids? How do you photocopy work? How do you give them assignments if you don't have paper? We ran out of paper because we were not properly funded. Teachers in our school had to run out and buy paper just to print for our students.

Members opposite are laughing. They think it's funny. I think it's ridiculous, and I still don't understand what they did during their seven and a half years in government. All I can say, it must have been ineptitude for things to get as bad as they did. Students and teachers and parents and families were hurt while the PCs were in power in terms of our education system.

We know as a government that we are investing in Manitoba's future when we invest in our children today. We are building 11—that's right, 11—new schools across this province, including two new schools in Brandon to meet the needs of the growing communities who need them the most. These new schools will provide the best learning environment for our young learners.

Working families need to feel supported by their government. This is why our NDP government is investing in opening new child-care spaces so that families have more flexible and affordable options that meet their needs.

I'm a grandmother; I have three grandsons. I have two that are under the age of one. You know, I understand first-hand how difficult it is to find daycare spaces.

We're doing our best: we're going to continue opening more spaces and we're helping lower costs for families with the extension of the \$10-a-day child-care program to cover school holidays. We've opened over 4,300 child-care spaces, and are on track to open 4,600 more since forming government.

We've made incredible strides, but in talking with my constituents, I know there's still more to do and they understand that change and repairing a system that was broken takes time. They appreciate our hard work. I will always be there to support my constituents; they know this. I have wonderful relationships with so many of them. I'm always there to listen, and I know all the colleagues on my side of the Chamber do as well.

Budget 2025 will allow us to keep expanding on the things that we have already done. We have accomplished so much in our first year of government, and I can't wait to see what we do in the next year. As we make progress on the promises we made to Manitobans with this budget.

This budget will help us build more than just new capital projects; it will help us build a brighter future for Manitobans everywhere.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Mr. Grant Jackson (Spruce Woods): It's a pleasure to get up and put a few words on the record today about yesterday's budget, Budget 2025, from the Finance Minister and this Kineu government.

You know, I think it's interesting, we went through question period earlier today; neither the Premier (Mr. Kineu) or the Finance Minister bothered to answer any questions about their budget the day after it was delivered. I think that's pretty telling about how the leadership of this budget feels and how proud or lack thereof they are of the budget that, one day after it was delivered, they couldn't even be bothered to answer any questions about it here in the Chamber.

That's a shame, because Manitobans have a lot of questions about this budget, and I would say—*[interjection]* Well, members opposite are heckling me. I did actually ask questions about the budget today. Of course, they weren't listening, and neither the Premier or the Minister of Finance (MLA Sala) bothered to answer them, nor did they answer any of my colleagues' questions.

So it's unfortunate. Perhaps the members opposite should listen a little bit more in question period, and they might actually know what topics are being covered here because they're important questions for Manitobans.

Now, we know, of course—that this budget is probably, at least for many experienced colleagues, certainly ones more experienced than me, the shortest budget speech in recent memory, and maybe that's

why, you know, the members opposite have so little to say about it, because it is so thin.

It is probably the thinnest budget in recent memory. It was certainly the shortest budget speech in recent memory, and I think that speaks to the lack of preparedness of this NDP government. We know they're good at the performative stuff; they certainly are, you know. They get the clips and the zingers and the one-liners, but it—when it comes down to actually talking about, for example, a looming trade war with Canada's largest trading partner, they don't have a whole lot to say. Because they don't have a whole lot of things to offer Manitobans.

And that's a problem, because there is a lot of Manitoba's jobs and GDP that is on the line here with our largest trading partner. Members opposite seem to think I'm afraid to say it. The United States of America is Canada's largest trading partner, and yes, President Donald Trump has threatened a trade war with his country's oldest and most closest ally; that is completely unacceptable. We have no interest in supporting that. I condemn it, universally. But what we expect is more than just words from the governing party, and that's all they have to offer.

They took down the Canadian flag after four days because they got their press conference and their views. That's as deep as their patriotism goes. And then they got some bad press about it, so they put it back up again. And you know what, I bet you they used the same American-made caution tape to block off the traffic both times to get that flag back up on the building. So that is just a perfect example of how shallow the depth of this government really is, and their budget is no different.

We—they say they've got contingency funding set aside for potential tariffs and their impact. Finance Minister didn't have any more details than that yesterday. That's all he said: Oh, don't worry, I've got contingency funding. Oh, maybe it's \$100 million, then I heard him say in a press conference it's maybe \$200 million.

We don't even have a clear dollar figure on it. Honourable Speaker, \$100 million. My colleague from Portage la Prairie, as our agricultural critic, will tell you, if the ag industry is facing tariffs from both the United States and China—100 million bucks? Three days? Is that about all that would last?

About three days that this minister—that's all the planning that he's done to protect the core of Manitoba's economy from a looming trade war. Three

days of financial contingencies in place. That's not very good planning. In fact, that is terrible planning for the future of Manitoba, the backbone of this economy and our hard-working agricultural sector. We find that completely unacceptable, Honourable Speaker.

In addition, our manufacturing sector. I'm not sure if it was mentioned; the Premier (Mr. Kinew)—or the Finance Minister mentioned he's going to create 18,000 jobs—we don't know where. Didn't know where. No idea how he's going to protect the jobs we have.

You know, it's kind of interesting—the trade minister and the Finance Minister have been asked numerous times by my colleague from Selkirk and others: Where exactly has the ministry of trade been looking for new markets for our manufactured steel and other manufacturing products?

* (12:10)

You know, you can just say, oh, yes, Manitoba first, Canada first, and then you actually have to find someone to buy the products that we make here that are now not going to be able to get into the United States and China and other markets. Minister of trade can't name a single conversation he's had with another jurisdiction about who is going to buy our products. Has he been speaking to European allies? Are they going to take some of our steel that's produced in Selkirk? No answer.

How about other Asian countries: India, et cetera; South Korea? Are they going to be taking our canola now that China is imposing tariffs on our canola? Has he reached out to counterparts there? No answer because this NDP has no plan to actually find investment markets who want to come and invest here, and they have no plan to find new markets for our products. And so that \$100-million contingency is going to disappear pretty quick, and after that this NDP has no idea where they are going to take our products and get them into markets, which is extremely concerning, and Manitobans should be deeply concerned that their jobs are on the line.

In addition, the details are extremely vague on timelines, and the tax relief that is announced in this budget won't take effect until 2026. Last I checked, the tariffs are coming on April 2; that's less than a week away. So that's going to be impacted now, and you want to give people tax relief a year from now, well, who knows? They are likely going to be out of business by then, Honourable Speaker. And then what is this NDP government's plan? Well, we don't know

because they've got couple of days' worth of contingency funds allocated and then we'll kind of take it from there; let's just wing it. Not a lot of preplanning in this budget from the Finance Minister.

In addition to some minuscule tax relief proposed in 2026 or 2027 from the Finance Minister for businesses, he's actually increasing taxes on hard-working Manitoba families whose jobs are on the line. Income tax revenues in this budget are projected to increase by \$446 million. Who did that projection?

When trade—a trade war is imminent and tariffs are imminent, you think Manitobans are going to be making more in income, so therefore you can collect more in income taxes when they're losing their jobs and their businesses are being destroyed by punitive, illegal tariffs? No, I don't think so.

So this is a fairly lofty, and I would argue, questionable prediction from the Finance Minister that, for some reason, in spite of an impending recession, trade war all of a sudden. Oh, but don't worry, Manitoba's incomes are still going to go up and they're going to have more money to pay to this NDP government. I think we will believe that when we see it, and I wouldn't hold your breath on that one, Honourable Speaker.

In addition, this government's budget is relying on federal transfers continuing to increase by an additional \$639 million this year. I doubt it. With the Canadian economy under threat nationally, think there's going to be extra dollars coming from the feds? I don't think so. They're going to have some issues of their own, let me tell you, from President Trump and his illegal tariffs, and they don't have the cash flow to be propping up this NDP government and their bad budgeting practices. And we see how bad that is.

I mean, last year they projected a, oh, just an eensy, weeny, teeny, tiny, little six-, seven-hundred-million-dollar deficit last year, which ballooned to \$1.3 billion. Course, we know they got it up to \$1.2 billion—\$2 billion in the first year that they were in office for six months after we handed them a \$230-million surplus.

So we've got a \$1.2-billion deficit for the first six months they were in office. Then the next 12, we've gone up to another \$1.3-billion—or deficit, and now they're projecting another \$700-million surplus. We'll see, Honourable Speaker, at the end of this fiscal year, how many billions of dollars that racks up to be.

Of course, as early childhood education critic for the official opposition caucus, I'm pleased that the NDP

has stopped their 18-month freeze on our plan to build nine new schools. Not sure why that took 18 months for them to realize that school divisions had prioritized these schools, not the government. They weren't political decisions where they were located. And if the members opposite feel like they were political, it's strange, then, that they're building them in the exact same locations that we proposed them.

So I think it's clear that they delayed these nine schools intentionally for political purposes to try and save face and repackage them in today's budget, so that—or, yesterday's budget—so that they can try to claim credit for them, even though they're building them in all the same places that were previously proposed.

So listen, it's too bad that these school divisions have had to suffer with larger class sizes for longer under this NDP government, but I will give them credit that they are finally building those nine PC-proposed schools. Thank you very much to the Education Minister and the Finance Minister for building those schools. I'm sure the school divisions and parents and students and teachers will appreciate it.

Sadly, no mention of child care in the budget speech at all. I don't think the minister—I don't think the words came out of his mouth a single time in the entire budget speech. For a party in the NDP that claims to be about families and children and supporting the ECE sector, couldn't even get a shout-out in the budget speech? I mean, it was the shortest speech in recent memory; there's no doubt about that, but half a sentence even, Honourable Speaker, would have been nice.

Nope, not from this NDP government, because child care, just like education, is on the back burner for this government. So, you know, we're looking forward to seeing whether they add some things—some details, going forward here. Are they going to support the wage grid? Are they going to build new centres?

We know there was an RFP for child-care centres that were approved in 2023. The RFP closed in January. It's now midway through March: no news. Those applicants have no news from that RFP that closed two and a half months ago about whether the contract to build those centres has been awarded. What are they waiting for? They already delayed it. The approval letters went out in July of 2023. They paused it because, again, the NDP wouldn't want to give the PCs credit for anything, so they're going to repackage them and roll them out.

Well, it's been 18 months, and two and a half months since the RFP closed. Hasn't Treasury Board met? They were preparing this budget; they must have been in Treasury Board meetings. Haven't they met? Did they—did the RFP for the child-care centres just not make the cut for those Treasury Board agendas? Where is this Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning (MLA Schmidt) on advocating to build child-care spaces in this province?

Well, we know she renegotiated the annual action plan as part of the broader Canada-Manitoba Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement and she signed off, because her signature is on the agreement to the action plan. She signed off on a \$135-million decrease in the annual action plan. I think that tells you all you need to know about how much of a priority building daycare spaces is for this Education Minister. And it's not even in the top 10 priorities for her, not to mention the top five, which is a real shame.

Because, you know, we have no details on these 18,000 jobs that the Finance Minister said he's going to create. But if he does magically pull them out of his hat and find them, I bet you they're parents, a lot of them. Bet you those parents, if they're going to work, are going to need child care.

And so, oh, that's right: no mention of new daycare spaces for those 18,000 new jobs; and tying those parents to child care and their jobs to child care so that they can participate more fully in our economy.

And we're going to need everybody we can get, Honourable Speaker, if this trade war with our largest trading partner does proceed. We've got all kinds of creep here in terms of the provincial government getting into other areas where they don't belong. We've got \$5 million to support border security. Well, last time I checked, that's a federal responsibility. And perhaps the argument is being made by the NDP that the federal Liberals have failed on border security, I don't know.

But it's interesting that they seem to be buying in to this question mark raised by President Trump that the Canadian border isn't secure. Oh, is that the NDP government following the lead of President Trump and agreeing with his policy positions that our border needs to be secured? Interesting, you know, they seem to accuse us of being big fans of Donald Trump—can't stand the man—and yet this government is taking policy direction from the Donald Trump White House.

Wow. Pretty concerning, I would think, to most Manitobans.

Now I would say it's really, really quite hypocritical, as you go further into the budget. The Green Team will receive an increase of \$1.3 million this year. Well, of course, Honourable Speaker, Manitobans have long memories, and they'll remember that last year in Budget 2024, the NDP cut the program by \$5.6 million.

* (12:20)

And then after public outcry and the gallery being packed with hard-working, non-profit community organizations that provide summertime employment to students through high school and university, they added a meagre—the MLA for Keewatinook was the minister at the time—itsy-bitsy little \$300,000 increase to his \$5.6-million cut, and now he's adding \$1.3 million back in this year's budget to try and save face.

So we've added \$1.6 million back on top of a \$5.6-million initial cut. I guess we can only hope that after two more budgets and when this government is defeated, they've got halfway to restoring the funding, and then we'll take it right back up to where it was when we get back into government.

It's a real shame, Honourable Speaker. And I will just focus a little bit on western Manitoba, because you know, we know the members opposite don't have a whole lot of experience out there, there's no doubt about that. And you know what, they repackaged our two schools for the Wheat City. We appreciate it. The Brandon School Division needs those school divisions; they never should have been delayed for 18 months for political purposes.

I'm glad the member for Brandon East (Mr. Simard) finally got a voice enough at the Cabinet table to get these back in the capital plan; thanks to somebody for listening to him over there. Not sure who that was, but good for them. Couldn't get it in the first budget, so now these schools are 18 months behind but they'll come eventually.

But, very sad, you know, we had the Minister for Advanced Education and Training tell the president of BU—he's quoted in the Brandon Sun today—as saying, well, the Advanced Education Minister phoned me and said, sorry, there won't be any money in the budget for Brandon University's medical school. And the minister said, no, no, well, all of us really support this project, but it's just about prioritizing and the timing of it.

Last I checked, we're in a doctor shortage here, Honourable Speaker. The members over there talked about it lots. So why would we want to rush building

a medical school in rural Manitoba? That's just—by gosh, what a silly idea. Let's just put that on the slow burner at the back of the NDP backbench over. Let's slow that project right down. That's the Advanced Education Minister's commitment to training doctors in Westman, and Westman residents will not let this government forget that, let me tell you.

So, Honourable Speaker, what else did they have to offer for western Manitoba? Zip in terms of infrastructure development. Where's the Oak Lake Dam? Nowhere, despite a councillor from the RM of Sifton, which is—houses Oak Lake, being on the minister's blue ribbon infrastructure panel, didn't even make the mention. No sign of the Oak Lake budget—or the Oak Lake Dam in this budget.

No sign of Highway 2, that also runs through that councillor and the chair's constituency in the Sifton municipality. Not sure if the Infrastructure Minister, to be honest, really had much to do with this budget at all. She—her department was pretty silent in that speech.

Nothing for the Western Manitoba Centennial Auditorium, Honourable Speaker, the premier events venue, a classic, historic space in the Wheat City that supports Westman's arts and culture scene. It's a building that's very important to me. This government had nothing to say about the arts and culture scene in western Manitoba. Absolutely nothing for that facility, and nothing for any other facility. Nothing for the Aud Theatre in Virden, or anything to do with sports, culture or heritage in western Manitoba whatsoever.

So once again, with my colleague from Turtle Mountain and with my colleague from Agassiz and my colleague from Riding Mountain and my colleague from Brandon West, we as the Progressive Conservative Party of Manitoba will continue to stand up for Westman residents. This NDP government is failing them, they've failed them every day since they were elected, they will continue to fail them and we will stand up for them and get back into government in 2027 and put Westman back on the map to the provincial government of Manitoba.

Thank you.

MLA Carla Compton (Tuxedo): Before I get into what I've already prepared, I—folks who know me know I like to provide information if someone shares they're uncertain or unawares of the event. The member from Spruce Woods was saying that he didn't hear anything about child-care spaces. Well, I do believe 4,600 child-care spaces are planned in our Budget 2025. So I did just want to offer that.

But I am truly grateful to be here and have the opportunity to speak to my very first budget, being an elected member—the new member—well, I'm not the newest member anymore, but member for Tuxedo.

First and foremost, I do want to acknowledge the hard work that the Minister of Finance (MLA Sala) and his team have done in creating our budget as well as—the tariff budget as well. So they prepared two budgets, basically. So they've done double the work in preparation for this. So I really want to commend them for the work that they've done, knowing that in these uncertain terms, it is so important that we're creating plan Bs to keep things stable moving forward. So I really do commend the work that they've done.

So how—so when we talk about stability, that's what leads to a healthy Manitoba, and a healthy Manitoba requires strong health care, education, safe communities, secure jobs, affordability and especially protecting Manitobans from Donald Trump's tariffs. And this budget is grounded in reality, and it's a practical budget.

We are building one Manitoba with \$3.7 billion in capital projects. This will create jobs; this will keep Manitobans working and get more Manitobans working. This is a budget about building as well as rebuilding.

And one of the top priorities of Manitobans, as well as the constituents of Tuxedo, is health care. And I want to focus on a few parts in the health-care section.

So with rebuilding health care, this involves strategic capacity building, and a few parts of that plan include human resources, capital projects and decreasing barriers to health care. So in the human resources section, some of what we've already achieved in this last year is 1,255 net-new health-care workers in Manitoba. That's 481 nurses, 386 health-care aides, 183 allied health professionals, 128 doctors, 39 residents and 28 physicians' assistants.

So what this is showing us is that we have been attracting many professionals from the various parts within the health-care system, and they are all essential, and they will play a role in decreasing our wait times as well as increasing the health outcomes for Manitobans.

And there is one important data point that was in the budget that I want to bring special attention to, and it was that the WRHA reported a 45 per cent decrease in mandatory overtime for nurses between October 2023 and October 2024.

This is significant. This is a concrete, measurable result that the hard work of the Health Minister and their team have been doing over the last year. This is a statistic that directly impacts the recruitment and retention of nurses in Manitoba, as well as to Manitoba. We are investing \$770 million in new funding to recruit and retain front-line health-care workers who care for Manitobans, and this will continue to lead to a further decrease in the mandatory overtime.

And so what does it mean to decrease mandatory overtime? What is the importance of that? Well, as a nurse who has worked in our health-care system and has worked lots of overtime, it means better rested nurses; it means clearer thinking; it means safer practice; it means better health outcomes for patients; means better work-life balance, and it feels—it also leads to better job satisfaction and feeling like you have connection to purpose of what you've been called to do, which are all very, very important in addressing burnout, which we know is one of the biggest challenges for folks who are nurses and other health-care professionals.

And so on that, I do want to just share a little bit of a story. People know I like to share stories. But I'm one of those nurses who, at more than one time in my career—

The Speaker: Order, please.

The hour being 12:30, in accordance with our rules, the—no, that's the wrong speech. I'm sorry.

The hour being 12:30, the time—this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 on Monday.

When we return to this, the honourable member for Tuxedo (MLA Compton) will have 14 minutes remaining.

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