



Second Session – Forty-Third Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report
(Hansard)**

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Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-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
CORBETT, Shannon	Transcona	NDP
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
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>	Spruce Woods	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, April 9, 2025

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

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

Please be seated.

Speaker's Statement

The Speaker: Before we get on to routine proceedings, I have a statement for the House.

So in the last little while, there's been any number of school groups in the gallery, and a disturbing trend has been happening where members on the floor have been actually trying to engage with students in the gallery. As we all know, people in the gallery are not allowed to participate in what takes place in this Chamber, and we should always be cognizant of the fact that we shouldn't be trying to engage, other than to acknowledge when there's students here.

Unless you think that this is just something that I think—that your Speaker thinks—we've had some complaints, actually, from some school groups that have been here in the Chamber that didn't like the way they were feeling when members were specifically trying to talk to them.

And this is not a problem that's specific to any one party or the other. It's happened on both sides.

So other than when we acknowledge guests in the gallery, whether it's students or others, I would ask that we do not try to engage them in any debate or conversation that's taking place in this Chamber.

Thank you.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

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

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS**International Day of Pink**

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Minister responsible for Women and Gender Equity): I rise today to recognize April 9 as the International Day of Pink.

The Day of Pink is more than just a day in April. It's a year-round movement rooted in empowerment, allyship and justice.

This year's theme is a celebration of Re-Emergence, honouring 2SLGBTQI+ people whose work has shaped the world we live in and who continue to fight for a more just and inclusive future.

At the same time, we are seeing an increase in misinformation and discrimination targeting queer communities. South of the border, we are seeing a government roll back protections for 2SLGBTQI peoples in real time. President Donald Trump is literally erasing transgender and queer identities from the public record, from signing an order recognizing only two sexes to removing the T and Q in LGBTQ+ across government.

In February, the US government event—went as far as erasing references to transgender people from the website of the New York Stonewall National Monument, the very birthplace of the modern 2SLGBTQI+ rights movement in North America.

And as I've said many times, we're not immune here in Manitoba. In fact, we only need to look across the Chamber at members opposite, who are taking notes from Trump's playbook. There's a leadership race going on right now to become the leader of the PCs. One PC leadership candidate, the member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Khan), has literally been the face of transphobia, targeting transgender youth on bus benches

across the city during the PCs' failed election campaign.

The other PC candidate, Wally, has a long 'historia'—history of transphobia, including making a public Facebook post referring to a transwoman as, and I quote, a man dressed in woman's clothing, end quote. Wally has doubled down and refused to apologize for his transphobic posts.

We've seen four men from the PC caucus actually stand up in the House and vote again two-spirit and trans Manitobans' very existence and humanity. Our government, though, has chosen unity instead of division. We're building one Manitoba where we are proud to stand with 2SLGBTQI+ Manitobans. These are our relatives, and we stand in solidarity with them, not only today but every single day. Not only that, this session alone we've introduced two exciting pieces of legislation to support the 2SLGBTQI community.

Bill 26, The Vital Statistics Amendment Act, removed barriers for 2SLGBTQI Manitobans who are changing their sex designation. Once this bill passes, Manitobans will no longer need a letter from a health-care provider to formally change sex designation.

Bill 48, The Human Rights Code Amendment Act, expands the list of protected characteristics in the Manitoba Human Rights Code to include gender expression, protecting Manitobans from discrimination based on how they present their gender.

* (13:40)

We have also provided over \$1.7 million in supports for 2SLGBTQI Manitobans, including support for 2S Manitoba Inc. and funding for Gender Diversity and Affirming Action for Youth program, Pride Winnipeg and trans clinic—Trans Health Clinic.

When we talk about re-emergence, we recognize 2SLGBTQI+ Manitobans have always been here and will always continue to be here.

It's up to every one of us to stand in solidarity and continue the fight for equity and acceptance.

Miigwech.

Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz): On this International Day of Pink, we stand united against bullying, discrimination and intolerance in all forms.

Today is a day to reaffirm our commitment to creating a society where everyone feels safe, valued and respected.

We commemorate International Day of Pink today because of these very principles, to work towards future where all Manitobans have a sense of belonging, including the 2S-L-G-P-T-Q-+ community.

Not too long ago, the PCs were proud to establish the Manitoba Student Advisory Council to hear directly from 2SLGBTQ+ and other students about what the province can do to support them in education.

Unfortunately, while we should be using this occasion to focus on unity, the NDP have instead chosen to divide yet again. They have made unfair and divisive comments in this House, trying to score political points by painting those who disagree with them as intolerant. That's wrong. It's reckless and it's exactly the kind of divisiveness in the politics that today should stand against.

Our party believes in respect, in fairness, and in freedom and ensuring—[interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

Ms. Byram: —that every Manitoban, no matter who they are, feels safe and included in our province. We don't need to tear others down to prove our commitment to those values.

Bullying and discrimination, whether it be in our schools, in our workplaces or here in the Legislature must always be—[interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

Ms. Byram: —challenged. That's why we will continue to stand for policies that support all Manitobans rather than engaging in the kind of divisive rhetoric the NDP thrive on.

I encourage all members in the House here today to make a firm commitment to stand up to bullying.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): I ask for leave to respond to the minister's statement.

The Speaker: Does the honourable member for Tyndall Park have leave to respond? [Agreed]

MLA Lamoureux: The International Day of Pink has one purpose: to create a more inclusive and diverse world. It is a day to recognize the great leadership and influence that people can have.

This day began in 2007, when two students stood in solidarity with their classmate who was bullied for wearing pink clothing. These students successfully

encouraged others to wear pink, and as a result, a strong message was sent: it's okay to be exactly who you are.

Now, almost 20 years later, this movement is celebrated all around the world.

It is a form of commemoration and an opportunity to express gratitude, solidarity against bullying, whether it be at school, work, sports or online.

Now Honourable Speaker, 2SLGBTQI+ communities across the country continue to be stigmatized and subjected to discrimination in many aspects of their lives. In fact, most young people have reported experiencing situations that have negatively impacted their mental health.

This is why we need to do better, all of us here. People deserve to feel safe and accepted. And everyone, everywhere, needs to practise kindness, inclusion and human decency.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: Prior to moving on, there's some guests in the gallery that are going to be leaving right away.

We have seated in the public gallery, from Valley Gardens Middle School, 75 students under the direction of Alanna Stromberg, and they're the guests of the honourable member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe).

We welcome you here today.

And I guess this would be a good time to introduce the other guests we have in the gallery today.

I draw attention of all honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us today students from throughout the North who are in the city for the Skills Manitoba Competition.

From Frontier Collegiate in Cranberry Portage, we have, in outdoor power and recreation equipment, Ethan Johnston of Cranberry, and observing is Kayleen Anderson of Cross Lake, Joe Hutchinson of Cormorant Lake, Wawatew Colomb of Pukatawagan. In cosmetology, Taminka [phonetic] Harper from Red Sucker Lake, Nora Chartrand from Duck Bay, and observing is Shaniquia Turner-Henderson of Cormorant Lake and Emma Carriere from Cranberry Portage. In hairstyling, Isis Merasity [phonetic] from Brochet; in carpentry, Jordy Clarke of Brochet.

Helen Betty Osborne Ininiw Education Resource Centre in Norway House: In hairstyling, we have Leah Moose, Payton Lauter [phonetic], Miley Muswagon,

student observer. In fashion design, Creenan [phonetic] Kematch, Samantha Muskego-Albert, Kearston Ross, Grady Hart. In public speaking, Kennedy Sanderson. In workplace health and safety, Katie Tait. In job skill demonstration, Rashida Balfour and Juliette Bruce. In photography, Ava Albert; job interview, Mikayla Paupantekis [phonetic].

Now, I would like to introduce the instructors. From Frontier Collegiate: Sheldon Yaremchuk, outdoor power and recreational equipment; Glennis Valladares, cosmetology; Nolen Jacobson, carpentry. From the Helen Betty Osborne Ininiw Education Resource Centre: Kathy Foley for cosmetology; Crystal Bodfish, fashion design; Russell Asham, carpentry as an observer and a new instructor; Robert Rideout, photography; Debbie Asham, chaperone.

Also present from Frontier School Division is Erica Hildebrand, assistant superintendent, academics and programming; Garry Neufeld, technical vocational co-ordinator.

And, on behalf of all honourable members, we welcome you here today.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Rural Manitoba Health Services

Mr. Doyle Piwniuk (Turtle Mountain): Honourable Speaker, my constituents understand members opposite may talk a big game, but they are carrying on the NDP way, ignoring rural Manitoba.

Recently, residents of Melita organized a meeting, a town hall meeting, to discuss health-care concerns. The room was packed with concerned Manitobans, but this government could not be bothered to attend despite multiple attempts to make it happen.

Throughout Manitoba, we've seen this happening. In Portage la Prairie, my colleague from Portage la Prairie organized a town hall about need for an MRI. Hundreds of residents showed up and made their-shared their stories. The Premier (Mr. Kinew) and the Health Minister were in town but not-made sure they ran away.

Turtle Mountain was deeply impacted by the last NDP Selinger government health-care cuts where hospital closures swiftly followed NDP mandates emergency-room closures.

That's their playbook: starve the area for staff and then claim it is unsustainable. They are at it again.

It's the important reality when it comes to health care. The residents of Turtle Mountain are far more

likely to see STARS air ambulance in real life than this Minister of Health, who seems to be suffering from the acute case of perimeteritis.

* (13:50)

Next time the community invites this government to come to sit with them, I highly recommend the Premier (Mr. Kinew) and his ministers take them up on it. They might just learn a little more about the reality out there, Honourable Speaker.

Battle of Vimy Ridge 108th Anniversary

MLA Robert Loiselle (St. Boniface): Honourable Speaker, today we recognize the 108th anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge. This specific battle holds a significant place in our nation's history as one of the first examples of Canadian unity on a global stage.

After two unsuccessful Allied attempts to dislodge the Germans from this heavily fortified height, the four Canadian divisions, fighting together for the first time, seized the ridge on the 12th of April 1917 after four days of intense fighting.

For Canadians, the taking of Vimy Ridge stands as a great feat of arms, collaboration, ingenuity and strategic capability that has helped to forge our national identity.

L'Honorable Président, le monument à Vimy fut érigé entre 1925 et 1936. Les noms des 11 285 soldats canadiens décédés en France au cours du conflit, mais dont les corps n'ont jamais été trouvés, sont gravés sur celui-ci.

Le site a été légué au Canada par la France à perpétuité en 1922 pour servir de parc mémorial. La crête de Vimy a été désignée lieu historique national canadien en 1997 et est gérée par Parcs Canada.

Translation

The Vimy monument was erected between 1925 and 1936. The names of the 11,285 Canadian soldiers who died in France during the conflict, but whose bodies were never found, are engraved on it.

The site was bequeathed to Canada in perpetuity by France in 1922 for use as a memorial park. Vimy Ridge was designated a Canadian National Historic Site in 1997 and is managed by Parks Canada.

English

The special envoy for military affairs has provided pins for all members of the Chamber to wear today. I encourage each of you to wear yours with pride as a small but meaningful way to honour those

who have served, those who continue to serve and the families who stand beside them.

Honourable Speaker, in their honour and in honour of the Battle of Vimy Ridge, I ask for a moment of silence.

The Speaker: Is there leave for a moment of silence after everyone is done their member statements? *[Agreed]*

Minnedosa Active Living Project

Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain): Honourable Speaker, Minnedosa is taking a much-needed and significant step forward in expanding its housing options for senior active retirees with the launch of the Minnedosa active living project.

Spearheaded by the Valley Life Housing Group, a not-for-profit organization representing six municipalities plus the Town of Minnedosa, this initiative is designed to provide a modern, community-focused housing solution that allows residents to age in place while maintaining their independence.

A recent public information session was attended by an impressive 140 people, reinforcing the region's strong demand for affordable supportive housing options.

Plans have been unveiled for an 84,000-square-foot, three-storey residential complex that will redefine senior living in Minnedosa. The development will feature 50 suites, offering a variety of living spaces tailored to different needs.

Residents will receive two nutritious chef-prepared meals daily, as well as receive light housekeeping services. Recreation and activity rooms will be part of the facility, as will a dedicated wellness area to provide access to hair, nail and foot care services. Transportation services will be provided, ensuring residents can access medical appointments, go shopping and attend local events.

The total cost of the project is estimated at \$17.7 million, with no tax burden being placed on any of the participating municipalities. The fundraising goal of \$3.5 million will provide the necessary down payment to secure financing, ensuring the project's long-term sustainability.

To spark the fundraising effort, an anonymous donor has pledged to match all local contributions, dollar for dollar, up to \$250,000.

Rental rates have been set and applications have been opened for prospective residents.

With strong community and regional engagement, financial backing, an experienced team leading the way, this project will ensure that area seniors do not have to relocate to Brandon or other communities.

Honourable Speaker, this facility will represent not only a place for seniors to live, but a thriving, supportive community where residents can enjoy the next chapter of their lives with security, dignity and connection.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

The Speaker: Order, please.

I would request that we go back to the conclusion of the member for St. Boniface's (MLA Loiselle) member statement. It was my mistake. Normally, when it's a ministerial statement, we wait until everyone else has spoken before a moment of silence. For a member statement, it should be done directly after the member requested it.

My apologies to the member and if we could all rise now for a moment of silence to recognize all those who participated in Vimy Ridge.

A moment of silence was observed.

The Speaker: Thank you.

The honourable member for—we're back into—the honourable member for Fort Garry.

Grant Park High School Improv Team

Mr. Mark Wasyliw (Fort Garry): I rise today to recognize a group of incredibly talented and dedicated students from Grant Park High School who make up the school's competitive improv team, a team that's had an extraordinary year.

While improv classes have always been offered at Grant Park for many years, the competitive team was only formed last year. Starting out with just five members, they quickly made their mark by placing second in the province, in their very first season, competing at the regional Canadian Improv Games.

This year, the team expanded to eight students, including returning members who brought focus, energy, determination to the regional competition held in February. Their hard work paid off as they placed first in Manitoba, defeating a long-standing undefeated team and earning the right to represent our province at the Canadian Improv Games national competition taking place later this month in Ottawa.

The Canadian Improv Games have been running for over 40 years and are considered one of the most prestigious youth improv tournaments in the country.

Teams are judged not only on their humour, but also their storytelling, character work and teamwork, all based on audience suggestions and created on the spot. It's challenging, fast-paced and collaborative art form that builds skills students carry with them beyond the stage.

Under the guidance of drama teacher Elizabeth Stephensen and assistant coach Kyle Gerbrandt, this extracurricular team balances rehearsals around busy schedules filled with choir, musical theatre and other performing art commitments. Their dedication speaks volumes about the value of the arts in education, fostering creativity, collaboration and confidence in our youth.

The clean—the team includes students: James, Rhianna [*phonetic*], Susannah, Eva, Aaron, Asher, Anna and Josh, and they are here in the gallery with us today.

Please join me in congratulating the Grant Park High School competitive improv team and provincial champions as they prepare to represent Manitoba on the national stage.

Marvin Hovorka

Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye): Thank you, Honourable Speaker, for the opportunity to recognize a true legend in southeast Manitoba. I had the great honour to recognize the late Marvin Hovorka as a recipient of the King Charles III Coronation Medal. Marvin unfortunately passed away last June at the age of 86, leaving a large void within our region.

Marvin represented what it meant to be a true community advocate. He was an entrepreneur, farmer, school principal, logger, local politician, family man and loving husband to Doris.

Marvin was an educated man in a time when very few farm boys went on to post-secondary education. With a desire for education, Marvin went wherever he needed to obtain it. This meant finishing high school in Baudette, Minnesota, teachers' college in Winnipeg and Bemidji, Minnesota for university.

In 1958, Marvin married the love of his life, Doris, and spent time teaching at Sisler High School and starting a family, but in 1966 found himself back home in Sprague as the principal of his hometown school. This lasted until 1976, when Marvin resigned to pursue business ventures and grow his community.

It is hard to find someone in southeast Manitoba that doesn't know Mr. Hovorka, and for good reason. Marvin ran the family logging business full-time from

1976 but, along with that, also owned several different businesses in the community, as well as farmed.

* (14:00)

His community involvement included four terms as municipal reeve and being pivotal in nearly everything that has happened in that corner of our province, including, but definitely not limited to, attracting the largest employer, building a seniors' housing complex and starting a chamber of commerce.

Marvin Hovorka was a true community builder and will be missed by everyone.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Resolution Regarding O Canada Request for Government Support

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Leader of the Official Opposition): Honourable Speaker, I know it's incredibly heartwarming for many of us to see Canadian patriotism and pride on the rise in recent months, but in all this noise and fanfare, we cannot forget those who have afforded us this freedom to take pride in our country. Because the freedom we all enjoy today was never free. The Battle of Vimy Ridge forged in blood the Canadian identity that we know today.

So as we fly our flags high and sing out O Canada, may we never forget the Manitoba soldiers who made the ultimate sacrifice at Vimy Ridge and the decades since.

Honourable Speaker, I'd like to ask the Premier if he will stand with me tomorrow and pass the resolution unanimously in this great Chamber.

Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier): It has been a great honour of my life to visit battlefields in France, where good Canadians, young people like those joining us in the gallery today, laid down their lives in the name of freedom and democracy. And I know that everybody who has made that trip and represented the people of Manitoba in those settings feels the same way.

It's that same solemn duty that leads us to stand up for team Canada right here each and every day, not just on Thursday mornings, but 24-7, 365 days a year.

This year, our government is very proud that, under the leadership of our military envoy, we will be introducing a new honour for veterans and for members of the Canadian Armed Forces to pay tribute to those who fought for our rights and freedoms. It is but one way that we can repay the immense debt that we owe to these Canadian heroes.

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

Mr. Ewasko: I haven't really heard a yes, Honourable Speaker, but I'm taking it to be a yes.

Honourable Speaker, with the daily onslaught of the US and Chinese tariffs, it is important that we all recognize the important things that make us Canadian and part of the Commonwealth. It's important that we educate our children and the youth on our Canadian history, our traditions and our heritage.

This week, members of this Legislative Assembly have had the pleasure joining the Lieutenant Governor for the presentation of the King's coronation medals to deserving Manitobans.

Tomorrow, we will be debating a resolution that we will ensure O Canada is sung by members every day in this Chamber, not just Thursday mornings.

So I ask the Premier today: Will he support this resolution and join us tomorrow in quickly implementing this tradition as part of our daily routine in this wonderful Chamber, Honourable Speaker?

Mr. Kinew: My patriotism is rooted in the knowledge that generations of Canadians fought for the rights that I enjoy today. The fact that my father was not allowed to vote in this country when he was a young man is something that I always keep top of mind.

And because of the sacrifice, the first-hand knowledge, of those who earned our democracy, it instills within me a great reverence for the hallowed nature of the fact that everybody in this country gets to have a say in election day.

And that is why, since the earliest days of my time in politics, I have refused to use political wedges. If I need to divide people in order to earn votes, I am not worthy of your support. I would invite the members opposite to reflect on those words.

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

Mr. Ewasko: Honourable Speaker, I was proud to join Manitobans at the rally of Canada taking place across this great country of ours, on the grounds of this Legislature.

A few years ago, we were proud to host a display of the Magna Carta at the Manitoba Legislative Assembly. That began over 800 years of parliamentary and democratic traditions that led to our Commonwealth of Nations.

So I ask the Premier today: Why, then, is he supporting his Education Minister on abandoning the Royal Anthem as part of our education system, God Save the King, Honourable Speaker?

Mr. Kinew: Now, all of us swore an oath to the King before taking office, but I'll remind the member opposite what happened immediately before we swore those oaths.

We defeated the PCs after they launched one of the worst campaigns in the history of this province. News flash for the member opposite: the history of democracy in these lands goes way back beyond 800 years. Anishinaabe people, Dakota people, Dene people, Cree people all practised forms of democracy in these lands long before the Magna Carta was ever constructed.

And so for the members opposite to roll in here after trying to prey on the lives of Indigenous women during their failed 2023 campaign, and now to again try in this, like, subtle, roundabout way, question our patriotism? I call that out fully, and I say shame on you. Don't even bother bringing that mess in this hallowed Chamber again.

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

Manufacturing Sector Carbon Tax Inquiry

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Leader of the Official Opposition): Two days ago, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change (MLA Moyes) told Manitobans, and I quote: We're also allocating \$7.3 million toward the output-based pricing system, which is going to work with industry to make sure that they're addressing their climate goals. I table the excerpt.

Also, from the Canadian Press, Honourable Speaker: Output-based pricing system is government speak for a carbon tax.

Stock markets are in turmoil, Honourable Speaker. Businesses don't know what's happening with the on-again, off-again Trump tariffs and the Chinese tariffs.

So I ask this Premier: Will he tell his minister to stand down and stop thinking of new ways to tax employers?

Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier): There's no carbon tax across Canada because the federal government listened to us here in Manitoba, who said you can get to net zero without making people pay more.

At the same time, we cut the gas tax here in Manitoba. You know what they did? Not only did they charge a gas tax each and every day they're in office, but the member for Lac du Bonnet—that's him—the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Piwniuk)—that's him—the 'mender' for Interlake-Gimli on the close side; the member for Riding Mountain (Mr. Nesbitt) over there; the quiet one behind him from Swan River right there; they all voted in favour of a carbon tax here in Manitoba not once, but twice, and then each and every one of them wrote about it in their local newspapers like the Beausejour Clipper, the Interlake Spectator, the Star and Times, and on and on and on.

The hypocrisy is astounding. I only wish the government could make money charging by the ton of all the nonsense they spew into our environment.

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

Mr. Ewasko: Honourable Speaker, on this Day of Pink, we see the true Broadway bullies, the NDP Kinew government in action.

Manitobans do not want a carbon tax.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Ewasko: They don't need a carbon tax. And the only person who appears to want and need an NDP carbon tax is the minister for the Environment and Climate Change, Honourable Speaker.

The Premier has already walked back his election promise of net-zero electricity grid by 2035. Premier can't even make his own environmental goal but has no hesitation forcing employers to make them.

While we know that the NDP are facing a multibillion-dollar deficit, we cannot tax our way out of it. Employers need support, not new taxes.

Will the Premier do to his planned carbon tax what he did to his net zero and toss it in the recycling bin, Honourable Speaker?

Mr. Kinew: We're on a path to net zero, and we've also this year brought in tax breaks for businesses across Manitoba to keep people working in face of the Trump tariff tax.

* (14:10)

But we all know what's really going on here. We all know he's frightened because there's a PC leadership contest going on. And the PC leadership contest, it's the most magical time of year, because every single

time they have one, there's an establishment candidate and then there's the exciting candidate who inspires a lot of people in rural Manitoba.

And just like every other contest, that exciting candidate from outside Broadway is selling tons and tons of memberships. He's got way more support. But the magical part is, when they go count the votes, somehow all that support is going to disappear and the establishment candidate is going to win yet again.

So to long-time PC supporters who are disillusioned with these shenanigans, I would say this: We're reopening rural ERs; we cut the gas tax; we're working hard for you. Come on over to us in the next election.

Manitoba's Energy Needs Capacity Expansion Plan for Hydro

Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland): For the record, this Premier still hasn't answered whether he plans to keep a carbon tax and put a carbon tax on our manufacturing sector here in Manitoba, and Manitobans deserve and have the right to know what his plans are for carbon tax.

This Premier is consistently on the record flip-flopping about his plans for Manitoba Hydro. Either he doesn't understand Manitoba's energy needs, or he's developing major policy on a whim.

First, the Premier claims Manitoba will be net-zero by 2030, then he flip-flops and says it's not attainable—yes, no kidding. Next, he fires Jay Grewal for saying Manitoba needs extra capacity; then he considers the \$1.3-billion natural gas line. Next, he says Manitoba needs extra capacity, but then sees—he's actually going to export more to the US. Where is this 'capacity' coming from?

Manitobans deserve to know what this Premier's plans are for Hydro. What does he actually stand for.

Is he for natural gas development or is he not—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier): You know, I want to share with the member opposite, there's no carbon tax in Manitoba and there will never be one. And the reason why that's true is because we stopped the PCs from bringing in their PC carbon tax, not once but twice. So you're welcome. Please share that throughout the Pembina Valley.

But when it comes to the folks who are watching and wondering, why didn't the leader of the PC party ask six questions like he's supposed to every single day? Well, this is what we see time and time again,

week in, week out: they can't sustain an entire question period. So what do they do? They sit down before question six. They sit down before question three. And the only person who can fill the time is somebody who was elected under our banner.

So you know what, people in rural Manitoba? Send more MLAs to the NDP side of the House. More affordable cost of living, more health care in every part of the province and way stronger political leadership.

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

Mrs. Stone: This Premier has no clue what he's talking about. There is a carbon tax on Manitoba. Canola processing, livestock processing, fertilizer, steel manufacturing plants all have a carbon tax on the top of the US and Chinese tariffs that are impacting them. He does not know what he's talking about. He does not understand the carbon taxation that is on our manufacturing facilities today.

The reality is this Premier is caught between ideology and reality, and his constant flip-flopping is proof that he does not know where he stands, and he's not providing any investment in this province as a result.

In his most recent comments to the media, he again flip-flopped on his commitment to natural gas, despite proposing a \$1.3-billion plant, and he refused to answer what this new generating capacity will be supplied by. In fact, the Premier call it, and I quote, a miracle fuel nobody knows—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro): Manitobans know they can count on this team to protect jobs and protect our economy here in Manitoba. We're reducing costs for businesses. We brought in, with our recent budget, a payroll tax cut that's saving thousands of businesses money in this province because we know we need to do work to make this province an even more investable place.

We also brought in a permanent gas tax cut that's saving costs for businesses and Manitobans across the province. In addition to that, of course, our budget brought forward \$3.7 billion in new investments in infrastructure, PCHs, 11 schools and a long list of things that the members opposite never got done.

The only party in this province striking a carbon tax is the members opposite. We're going to fight to keep costs affordable for businesses and Manitobans.

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

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

Mrs. Stone: Honourable Speaker, this Premier (Mr. Kinew) and this minister consistently flip-flops on their plans for Manitoba Hydro. I table that article for the minister.

This Premier has shown a complete lack of understanding for Manitoba's energy needs. A multi-billion-dollar Crown corporation that's \$25 billion in debt: it's time for some answers, because this Premier continues to mismanage Manitoba Hydro with his flip-flops, fake commitments and rate shocks on Manitobans.

Does this Premier plan to expand capacity in Manitoba—yes or no? Does this Premier plan to export to the U.S.—yes or no? And does this Premier actually support Canada's natural gas sector? Yes or no, Honourable Speaker?

MLA Sala: Honourable Speaker, for seven and a half years, when it comes to Hydro, the members opposite had one accomplishment, and that was finding the new creative ways to jack up hydro rates on Manitobans. That's their only accomplishment when it comes to Hydro—jacking up rates.

What are we doing? We're making our system more reliable with investments in bipole; we're creating new generation with investments in wind in partnership with First Nations; and we're keeping rates low while we do it.

They had no vision. They did nothing over seven and a half years. We're getting the job done. We're building one Manitoba.

The Speaker: The honourable member for Midland. Sorry, the honourable member for Morden-Winkler.

Manitoba Housing Kennedy St. Units Living Conditions and Safety Concerns

Mrs. Carrie Hiebert (Morden-Winkler): Residents of Manitoba Housing at 355 and 357 Kennedy St. are trapped in a nightmare. Their elevators, hallways and stairwells are littered with garbage, broken glass, dirty needles and human waste. I table pictures.

The mailboxes were vandalized over a year ago and still haven't been fixed, forcing seniors, mothers and residents with disabilities to travel across downtown for their mail. These conditions are unacceptable.

Will—when will the minister finally do something to help these residents?

Hon. Bernadette Smith (Minister of Housing, Addictions and Homelessness): Well, I've been in contact with some of those residents at that Manitoba Housing building, and we've been working on fixing up this building. After years of neglect under the previous government, in September 2023, Ted Chartrand, who is a member of—or, resident of this Manitoba Housing building told the media that a decade ago when he first moved in it was clean; there was good management.

But in the last few years things have changed, and he said, I've got good things to say—I've got good—I've got nothing but good things to say about this place now, not like it used to be. And this was under the previous government. They failed to maintain. We're fixing. We're working with—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

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

Mrs. Hiebert: Vandalism, trespassing and open drug use: the building on—at the building on Kennedy Street are out of control. Vile words towards women are written on the walls. Residents say security is a joke. Anyone can walk in, leaving them afraid to leave their own apartments. Criminals run the building while law-abiding tenants are left to fend for themselves.

When will this minister take security concerns seriously and make the Manitoba Housing safe again?

Ms. Smith: And I'll table this document, and again, he said, I've got nothing good to say about this place now. And again, this was under this previous government. They cut maintenance budget by 87 per cent. They sold off housing. It takes seconds to sell off social housing. It takes years to build.

Our government is build, build, building. We are supporting, providing wrap-around supports. It's going to take some time to do that. Under that previous government they were okay with driving out this building while people called bus shelters homes.

We're not okay with that. We're supporting people. We're meeting people where they're at. We're putting supports in place, including in that strip on Kennedy.

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

Mrs. Hiebert: Honourable Speaker, I tabled pictures from yesterday to the minister just in my last question:

the deplorable conditions at the two Manitoba Housing facilities on Kennedy.

I'm also hearing from Manitoba Housing residents across the province about the chaos and despair—disrepair that the minister has allowed under her watch.

Honourable Speaker, this minister has had 18 months to—and cannot manage a coat of paint, new mailboxes and a door for residents on Kennedy.

How can Manitobans across this great province trust this government to ensure—unsure clean living conditions and safety under her watch?

Ms. Smith: Well, last month we painted the walls every other day. We repaired holes in the common spaces; we replaced cameras; we increased carpet sweeps—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Ms. Smith: What did the PCs do? They cut 67 front-line Manitoba Housing staff. They cut security guards.

* (14:20)

We're staffing up. We're putting more tenant service co-ordinators—are working actually with residents. We are putting more money into maintenance. We are building, building, building, that the previous government didn't do. We are actually supporting residents and we are working with them.

This government put these buildings in such disrepair that we're having to come up and clean up after them. We'll take no lessons from members opposite.

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

WRHA Centralization of Home-Care Scheduling Impact of Consolidation on Patients and Staff

Mrs. Kathleen Cook (Roblin): In December, the WRHA announced that home-care scheduling would be centralized into one office at the end of March. The NDP claims this would improve efficiency for patients and families, but instead it has been a complete disaster. Reports sent to my office indicate that nearly half of the scheduling clerks have quit due to the consolidation, including 10 just this past weekend.

I will table an email from a home-care worker that describes the absolute chaos caused by this new system. They describe the situation as a, quote, complete disaster that has home care falling apart like an earthquake that levels cities.

How does the minister plan to fix the crisis they caused with this rushed, cost-cutting centralization of home care before more patients are put at risk?

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care): Honourable Speaker, here in Manitoba we used to actually have the gold standard in home care. Jurisdictions from across Canada would look at our province and say, wow, what's Manitoba doing? We need to do that.

For seven and a half years the previous PC government systematically took that apart piece by piece. They did so much damage to health—to home care, rather, that people were more accustomed to appointments being cancelled than they were being fulfilled.

Our government has done the work of restoring those services. We've worked directly with the WRHA. We have hired hundreds of net-new health-care aides and home-care support workers, which has seen us reduce the cancellation rates to under 1 per cent.

That member did a lot of damage; our government is fixing it.

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

Mrs. Cook: Honourable Speaker, almost half of the scheduling clerks in Winnipeg have quit, including 10 just this last weekend. And front-line staff are now speaking out about this disaster.

Another worker wrote in a social media post that I'll table, quote: This past week has been truly horrendous, and there are so many who want you to know that there are people behind the scenes hurting because we know how bad things are right now and disgusted to know that this was entirely preventable. The chaos is now so severe that hospitals in the WRHA have been advised to hold discharges requiring home care.

Why did the minister allow this reckless transition to go ahead without a proper plan, putting patients, families and staff in harm's way?

MLA Asagwara: Honourable Speaker, the member opposite is wrong; no surprise. She has a habit of standing up in the House and putting information on the record that, quite frankly, fearmongers Manitobans.

What I can tell you is that the transition to this schedule has been happening over time. We know that with change, sometimes there does come some hiccups in that process or some bumps along the way, but they're being smoothed out very, very effectively.

And what I can say is that the issues that were flagged very recently have been resolved. The WRHA is doing a ton of work to make sure that the appointments are being addressed, and we've seen those challenges being resolved very, very quickly.

So I want to thank all the front-line folks who continue to show up for Manitobans in their homes, in their communities. We're listening. We're going to keep working with you to make sure that these services move in a direction that is better for all Manitobans.

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

Mrs. Cook: The minister just admitted that home care is in chaos under their watch. This email that I tabled, which the minister also received on Sunday evening—sounds like they haven't yet read it—it describes a dire crisis unfolding in home care within the WRHA. Its cost-cutting centralization only adds to the NDP's disastrous cuts to the Home Care program that have already been condemned by workers, like forcing nurses to acquire and deliver their own supplies in their own personal vehicles.

This email paints a grim picture: dangerously heavy workloads, unreasonable overtime expectations, rampant use of agencies, staff leaving in droves, unsafe conditions for both patients and health-care workers, total disarray and mismanagement under this NDP government.

Despite repeated cries for help from these nurses, they say, quote, no one is listening.

When will the NDP—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

MLA Asagwara: Honourable Speaker, I have a feeling that what the member opposite was reading were notes from when she was advising the previous government on how to close emergency rooms, cut health care, fire health-care workers and damage the health-care system.

That member is very familiar with everything she just read into the record, because it is her record. It is the work that she did. It is the damage that she's done. On this side of the House, we're fixing and repairing all of that damage. We're hiring hundreds of net-new health-care workers, including hundreds of nurses. Our government is investing a net-new \$1.2 billion in this budget alone, seven hundred and seventy of which is health-care workers' wages, which I'll remind that member, she froze, for many years in opposition.

So I've—I'll say it again, I've said it before: When will that member—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Skilled Labour Shortage in Rural Manitoba Number of Draws from Provincial Nominee Program

Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye): Honourable Speaker, it is clear to see when talking to businesses across our province, including all of the fast-growing rural communities, that skilled labour shortages are of great concern.

According to the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, the ongoing shortage of skilled labour is the No. 1 limitation on sales and production growth for Manitoba small businesses.

Honourable Speaker, with a shortage of skilled workers and a provincial budget claiming to create 18,000 new jobs, what is the minister doing to increase the available skilled labour for our economy?

Hon. Malaya Marcelino (Minister of Labour and Immigration): I thank the member opposite for that question. Our government shares a vision where we have a province across all rural municipalities, and especially our North, contributing to the economic engine and growth of this entire province.

The minister of business will share this vision with me and can perhaps add to it, but on our part, here for the Department of Immigration, we have been very busy working with rural municipalities across Manitoba and getting them to stand up their own regional, strategic initiatives. And this would allow these municipalities to create their own destinies and bring in the own kinds—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

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

Mr. Narth: Honourable Speaker, last year, the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program brought in 9,500 people, but businesses were still struggling—[interjection]—to find the workforce needed to grow their business.

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Narth: Earlier this year, the minister's solution was to issue 12,000 spots to fulfill the skilled labour shortages. But this past week, the minister has had an MPNP draw under the Skilled Worker Overseas stream, and we saw only four spots open up. That's right, Honourable Speaker, only four new skilled workers in an environment of massive labour shortages.

How will this minister come anywhere near fulfilling the shortages when we only see four letters granted in the last draw?

MLA Marcelino: Again, I—last time when I brought this up on March 20, I mentioned that we were able to bring in 9,540 families here to Manitoba—[interjection]—and I failed to mention that this was a record number that we were able to do here in Manitoba.

I was so proud of our immigration team for being able to do this feat, whereas under the previous government, when the federal government gave them the same allocation, they had to not be able to process 2,178 nominations. They just gave up. They couldn't do it. Member opposite over there, that was the minister of Immigration at the time, said it was just an aspirational goal to be able to process these—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

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

Mr. Narth: Honourable Speaker, we realize that the foreign labour market isn't the only way to fulfill our skilled labour shortage, but this government isn't providing any solutions to training and retaining Manitobans to fulfill those shortages.

First we saw a cut of half the number of apprentices we were able to train in Manitoba, and now we are seeing massive reductions in the provincial nominee invitations. With 30 per cent of the nominee draws now completed and the most recent only including four, we are only at 655 new skilled labourers that have been invited to join our workforce this year. At this time last year, the government had already issued 1,900 letters.

How many nominee applicants can Manitoba—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

* (14:30)

MLA Marcelino: Honourable—[interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

MLA Marcelino: You know, members opposite almost know nothing about this immigration file. It's actually less than nothing: the previous critic, during our Estimates process, couldn't even ask me the proper questions, and I had to even help her with the questions for the Estimates process. We've had previous Immigration ministers who didn't even know the difference between a permanent resident and a tourist.

We've had previous ministers that, again, would not even be able to process 2,178 nominations.

These are 2,178 families—[interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

MLA Marcelino: I will take no lessons from members opposite on how to do my job.

Thank you very much, Honourable Speaker.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order.

Standardized Training for Foster Parents Status of Auditor General Recommendation

MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): The Auditor General recently published a follow-up of previously issued recommendations to ensure the safety of children in care. Recommendation No. 24 states that the department shall work in consultation with the authorities to ensure the minimum supports are made available to all foster parents, including a standardized training. The status update for this recommendation is listed as a work in progress.

Can this government confirm they are working on the recommendation, and when can we expect for it to be completed?

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Minister of Families): I appreciate the question from my colleague across the way. Certainly, our government supports the work of the Auditor General and we're continuing to work on those recommendations. I want folks to remember that that report was released in 2019, and we know that Heather Stefanson and my predecessor Rochelle Squires actually did zero on any of those recommendations.

And those recommendations are actually a record of members' opposite failed time in government. So I can assure the member opposite that we are working on all of the recommendations right now and we've gotten a lot further than any single member opposite.

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

Children in CFS Care Number of Family Reunifications

MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): Honourable Speaker, we need to focus on decolonizing child welfare and reuniting families.

And during this process, children in care still need to have their needs met, and an additional \$2 a day is not enough.

Now, unfortunately, many of the children who have been reunified with their families have now had to re-enter child welfare because of the lack of due diligence.

Can this government share today how many children in care have been successfully reunited with their families in the last 18 months?

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Minister of Families): I appreciate that question from my colleague opposite. I'll have those numbers very, very soon in respect of this last year; all of those numbers come out around the end of March, so I will have those more up-to-date numbers.

What I will share is this, is that—and I appreciate that the member opposite is agreeing with us that it is time to decolonize the child-welfare system. It hasn't been working.

And so, as I've shared many, many times in this House, we have proclaimed kinship and customary care agreements, and I want the House to understand that once an agency and families and kin enter into a customary or kinship agreement, that means that those children are actually not formally part of the CFS system anymore. It is—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

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

Number of Emergency Placements

MLA Lamoureux: This government has stated that they don't plan to implement a recommendation that monitors the number of licensed foster homes in each agency because of the shift towards increased availability and the use of alternative placements.

However, at this very moment, there are a significant number of children who are being forced to live in inappropriate placements such as hotels.

Can the minister share with us how many children in care are currently being housed in emergency placement shelters?

MLA Fontaine: You know, I would just say for the member that it's important that we put accurate information on the record here in the House. And I do want to acknowledge the work of the authorities and the agencies that do good work in respect of ensuring that children are safe and that they are in safe and healthy placements.

I do want to go back just a little bit to talk about since the last 18 months and since I've been appointed

Families Minister, we've increased foster care rates for the first time in 13 years, something that members opposite didn't do. We've updated critical regulations protecting children and youth. We've enhanced information sharing across the system. We've created new agreements, and we're well on the way on the path of jurisdiction—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Rural and Northern Manitoba RCMP Funding Announcement

Mr. Logan Oxenham (Kirkfield Park): Under the failed PC government, crimes rate in Manitoba skyrocketed. As crime got worse, the PCs looked the other way and only took steps to make the situation more dire by freezing municipal funding and cutting police services.

But on this side of the House, we're taking action to prevent crime and provide law enforcement the tools they need to keep Manitobans safe.

Can the Minister of Justice pleased tell the House about the investments announced today—[interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Oxenham: —that will go to support RCMP and increase safety in rural Manitoba?

Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I want to thank the member for that excellent question.

Yesterday, I announced \$3.3 million in new funding to double the RCMP's emergency response team. And today, we announced an additional \$2 million in a new investment to enhance the RCMP's operational communications centre. That's \$5.3 million to improve public safety in rural and northern Manitoba.

Members opposite, of course, they froze rural police budgets for seven and a half years. Rural crime went up under their watch, and they just shrugged their shoulders.

On this side of the House, we're getting tough on crime; we're getting tough on the causes of crime, and we'll never cede any ground when it comes to public safety in rural Manitoba.

Used Needles in Swan Valley Disposal Inquiry

Mr. Wayne Balcaen (Brandon West): Honourable Speaker, quite a difference in attitude by this minister of addictions when it comes to used needles in her community compared to used needles in other areas of the province. A guarantee of a needle-free sidewalk

and greenspaces in Point Douglas while the rest of Manitoba have to tiptoe through the needle tips.

As the snow melts, residents of Swan Valley, like Kevin Brunage, are posting videos about their spring walks. In his post, it's not purple crocuses pushing through the snow, but contaminated needles as far as the eye can see, and I have pictures to table.

When is this minister—or, why is this minister promising residents of Point Douglas a needle-free existence, but for residents outside of Point Douglas, it's a watch-where-you-step existence?

Hon. Bernadette Smith (Minister of Housing, Addictions and Homelessness): I've been in contact with Mayor Jacobson, and Prairie Mountain Health is doing an amazing job. They go out two times a day. They've been making sure that needles have been cleaned up in schoolyards, hotspots. They've been working with the mayor; they've been working with the community, something that members opposite failed to do. The members opposite didn't have any disposal plan at all.

In 2019, they distributed 200,000 needles; 2020—3,000 needles; 2023—500,000 needles, without any disposal plan.

We'll take no lessons from members opposite. They had no plan. We have a plan. We're working collaboratively, and they—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Higher Milk Prices at Walmart Canada Prosecution Inquiry for Price Gouging

Mr. Mark Wasyliv (Fort Garry): This Premier (Mr. Kinew) promised that he would take on the big grocery store chains and force them to lower prices.

On February 13, Walmart violated Manitoba law, price gouged Manitoba families and charged 30 per cent more for the price of milk. When the story broke, the government said that they need to investigate. Well, they now have, and I have—table the letter from the government saying that they've done the investigation, and it's clear that Walmart broke the law. What's unclear is what's going to happen next.

Walmart should be prosecuted for price gouging. Manitobans deserve their money back.

Now, when it comes to poor people stealing from Walmart, this Premier is tough on crime, but when rich corporations steal from Manitoba families, all of a sudden, he's not so tough.

Will this Premier commit to prosecuting Walmart today?

The Speaker: The honourable minister—[interjection]

Order.

* (14:40)

Hon. Mintu Sandhu (Minister of Public Service Delivery): It was my honour to bring a bill—a property-control bill, which is Bill 31. When we open up the market, then there will—the grocery prices will stabilize.

That's why we have brought those—that bill forward; this is where more grocers will come into the market and there will be more competition. There will be more—you know, not only here in Winnipeg, also in rural areas—there's more grocers that will be there.

Thank you.

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

Mr. Wasyliv: The Kinew government has now completed its investigation into what happened and found that Walmart violated the law and were 'prouce'—price gouging Manitobans. When the story first broke, it's reported by CBC that it wasn't the Province who discovered the price gouging, it was the media. Only after the media asked Walmart to comment on the story did Walmart actually lower their prices—and I'll table the article.

Manitobans could be out millions of dollars here, and this Premier has refused to prosecute Walmart. His government is—continues to protect them and his government continues to turn his—their backs on Manitoba families. Without—[interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wasyliv: —prosecution, there is no way to force Walmart to return the money.

Why does this Premier refuse to stand up for Manitoba families?

MLA Sandhu: I think the member is talking about the affordability. I want to thank our Finance Minister for a wonderful budget that he's just delivered. There are 25 ways to save money: permanent relief for 10 per cent of the gas tax, Hydro rate freeze, increasing the homeowner's affordability tax credit, free birth control including Plan B, a cut to the payroll tax, increasing the rental tax credit to \$625, creating a new security rate for businesses, more financial aid for post-secondary education.

That's only seven; there's 25 ways to save. Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

The Speaker: Order.

The time for oral questions has expired.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: And, we have some more guests in the gallery. We have seated in the public gallery, from Morning Glory School, 18 grade 11 students under the direction of Simon Fast and Walter Wiebe. And this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen). We welcome you here today.

PETITIONS

Opposition to Releasing Repeat Offenders

Mr. Wayne Balcaen (Brandon West): I wish to present the following petition.

To the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, the background of 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—[interjection]

The Speaker: Order, please.

I'd ask members to kindly take their conversations to the loge or out in the hall because I'm having a real hard time hearing the member who's got the floor. So if you would please do that, I would appreciate it greatly.

And I would remind members that when the Speaker is standing and speaking, they should remain seated and they should also remain quiet.

Mr. Balcaen: Sorry—the offender was free to roam the streets, and to 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 of their 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 into 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 'howd'—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 petition has been signed by Carol Lee, Adam [phonetic] McBride, Gloria Hill and many, many other fine Manitobans.

Phoenix School

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

Mrs. Rachelle Schott, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

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.

* (14:50)

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 Terry Einarson-Mollot, K.M. Payne, Curtis Sellors and many, many other Manitobans.

Opposition to Releasing Repeat Offenders

MLA Jeff Bereza (Portage la Prairie): 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 to ultimately claim Kellie's life. This tragedy was entirely preventable.

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

(4) Other provinces have taken proactive steps to strengthen bail reform—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 into 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 and to address serious deficits in enforcement by using all available provincial mechanisms to strengthen warrant enforcement, increasing bail supervision, and opposing release of offenders, thus ensuring that repeat 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 condition-conditioned victimization of law-abiding Manitobans while granting repeat offenders additional rights.

This is signed by Lindsey Bergen, Kiaran Knox, Kathy McCartney and many more Manitobans.

New Neepawa Health Centre

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 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.

(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:

(1) 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 Alan Hunstad, Inna Artiukh and Justin Gcholski.

Thank you.

Opposition to Releasing Repeat Offenders

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Leader of the Official Opposition): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly, and 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 to 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 of 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 into our communities without proper safeguards.

* (15:00)

(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 petition is signed by Angelynn Nicholls, Kurt Hodge [*phonetic*], Marcy Flamand, and many other wonderful Manitobans, honourable deputy acting Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): The honourable official leader—honourable Official Opposition House Leader.

My apologies. The member-honourable member for Interlake-Gimli.

Provincial Road 210

Mr. Derek Johnson (Interlake-Gimli): 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, or PR 210, is a 117.3 kilometre, or a 72.8 mile highway in the eastern 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.

(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; and

(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 was signed by Teresa Davey, Billy Hall, Pascal Tetrault, and many, many other fine Manitobans.

Funding Crime Cost Mitigation for Small Businesses

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) Small businesses are vital in supporting their local economy and the provincial government has a responsibility to act and support them.

(2) The recent increase in vigilantism shows that Manitobans do not trust this provincial government to fulfill its responsibility.

(3) More than half—54 per cent—of small businesses in Manitoba are impacted by crime. Property damage, theft, littering and public intoxication are some of the crimes that affect most businesses, according to the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. There has been a 44 per cent increase in shoplifting incidents over the last year.

(4) In order to combat this rise of crime, small businesses try, unaided, to implement various out-of-pocket security measures and safety training for their staff and they face increasing costs when they incur property theft—property damage or theft.

(5) Vandalism, break-ins and other senseless acts cannot be accepted as a cost of doing business for businesses throughout Manitoba, and the provincial government must do more to ease the burdens small businesses are carrying with its catch-and-release justice system.

(6) Failing to support small businesses is failing the Manitoba economy, failing Manitoba families and failing Manitobans' dreams.

(7) The security rebate program in place for homeowners and small-business owners—and small businesses does not cover the real costs impacting businesses, such as vandalism, property damage and repairs.

We urge the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to support Manitoba small businesses through specific funding to reimburse the expenses and insurance deductibles that they incur as a result of crime.

This petition has been signed by Marg Reimer, Barb Adair, Ann Wolfe 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.

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

* (15:10)

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

(4) 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 an approved capital project, 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 be hindered in all of the southern—all of southern Manitoba.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba 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 stability 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 advocate the Morden—to advance, sorry, 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 Edgar Mark Sandrarich [*phonetic*], Jean Motheral and Theo—sorry, Theo Allen and many, many other Manitobans.

Provincial Road 227

Mr. Trevor King (Lakeside): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, and the background to this petition is as follows:

(1) As part of ongoing strategic infrastructure investments to the provincial highway network, it was announced in August 2022 that almost \$70 million would be spent on upgrades to provincial road PR 227.

(2) Over 72 kilometres of PR 227 were to be paved along with the repair or replacement of three bridges and multiple drainage works.

(3) Reeves, mayors, councillors and residents of the surrounding municipalities, cities, towns and villages were ecstatic and overwhelmingly supportive of this plan.

(4) The planned PR 227 was to connect Highway 16 with Highway 6, thus creating an alternative route to Highway 1.

(5) PR 227 was to be part of Manitoba's trade and commerce grid initiative, an expanded grid of highways that can accommodate heavy commercial loading that will attract new industrial activity, reduce transportation costs and optimize supply chain efficiency, which will benefit all Manitobans.

(6) The 2023 multi-year infrastructure investment strategy is a five-year, \$4.1-billion investment in Manitoba's roads, highways, bridges, airports and flood protection. The paving of PR 227 was part of this strategy.

(7) The Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure has cut the PR 227 project, notwithstanding that the project appears in the multi-year infrastructure investment strategy and listed on Manitoba's Transportation and Infrastructure website as an active project.

(8) Additional keystone projects in the 2023 multi-year infrastructure investment strategy were the Winnipeg One Million Perimeter Freeway Initiative, the Lake St. Martin and Lake Manitoba outlet channels and the twinning of the Trans-Canada Highway to the Ontario border. The actions of the NDP government now bring into question whether any of these projects will be completed as planned.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure to immediately restore funding to the PR 227 paving project.

(2) To urge the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure to commit to Manitobans to carry out all of the projects as outlined in the 2023 multi-year infrastructural investment strategy in their totality, to the same scope and in accordance with already stated timelines.

This petition has been signed by Yvonne Fleury, Rachael Davies and Riley Janke and many, many other Manitobans.

Thank you.

Vocational School in Ste. Anne

MLA Bob Lagassé (Dawson Trail): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

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

(1) In March of 2023, a much-needed new vocational school was planned, budgeted for and announced to be completed and operational for the 2027 school year.

Hundreds—(2) Hundreds of families have participated in outreach done by the Seine River School Division, expressing a strong need for vocational training in the community.

(3) The current provincial government paused the project upon taking office, and work has not resumed in spite of the Deputy Minister of Education admitting to trustees: You definitely need a new school.

(4) Every delay prevents students in Ste. Anne and surrounding communities from having the skills programming to which they are entitled and that they deserve.

(5) Seine River School Division trustees have identified areas of focus for this school of real, local demand, such as health care and daycare, which are greatly needed.

(6) The current high school is just not suitable for the limits on programming that can be offered, as 400 students currently share a single three-stall boys' washroom and a single three-stall girls' washroom.

(7) This planned school was to be—was to include daycare spaces that the community greatly needs. At present, the lack of available spaces has limited the availability for some parents to return to the workforce, which hurts both families and the local economy.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to immediately begin work on the new Ste. Anne vocational school and allocate necessary resources to meet the original 2027 timeline that residents were expecting.

This petition has been signed by many Manitobans.

House Business

Mr. Konrad Narth (Deputy Official Opposition House Leader): On House business.

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): The honourable member for La Vérendrye, on House business.

* (15:20)

Mr. Narth: Could you please canvass the House for leave to transfer the sponsorship of private member's resolution 1, Calling on the Provincial Government to Reverse Recent Amendments to the Teaching Certificates and Qualifications Regulation, currently standing in the name of former member for Spruce Woods, to the honourable member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko).

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): Is there leave to transfer the sponsorship of private member's resolution 1, Calling on the Provincial Government to Reverse Recent Amendments to the Teaching Certificates and Qualifications Regulation, currently standing in the name of the former member for Spruce Woods, to the honourable member for Lac du Bonnet?

Is there leave? [*Agreed*]

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—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.

(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 Helen McEllen [*phonetic*], John Hiebert, John Thunder and many, many other Manitobans.

Breast Screening

Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Due to the evolving scientific evidence, the Canadian Cancer Society, CCS, is now urging all provinces and territories to lower the starting age for breast screening to 40.

(2) Based off 2023 treatment standards, it is estimated that screening women annually for breast cancer starting at age 40 will save the Canadian health-care system \$460 million annually.

(3) After non-melanoma skin cancers, breast cancer is the most common form of cancer among Canadian women. One in eight Canadian women will be diagnosed with breast cancer during their lifetime, and one in 36 will die from it. This is 30,500 diagnoses and 5,500 deaths every year, and 84 diagnoses and 15 deaths every day.

(4) Early detection of breast cancer will lead to better outcomes in patients, with better odds of survival and less severe cases. Women in their 40s who have access to mammograms have a 44 per cent lower mortality rate from breast cancer than those who don't receive screening.

(5) Every other province and territory in Canada has already lowered the breast cancer screening age, or announced their intentions to do so. Other provinces in Canada have already commenced the work of expanding screening programs and hiring additional technologists into their public health-care system.

(6) Manitoba is currently behind the rest of the country and has no formal plan to increase its screening capacity or lower the breast cancer screening age.

(7) Lowering the breast cancer screening age to 40 in Manitoba will reduce long-term costs to the health-care system because the cancers that are caught earlier are typically less complicated to treat.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to immediately put forward a plan to increase breast cancer screening capacity and lower the breast cancer screening age to 40.

Honourable acting deputy Speaker, this petition has been signed by many, many, many, many, many Manitobans.

Thank you, acting honourable deputy Speaker.

Teaching Certification

Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland): I wish to present the following petition.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Ensuring that teachers have a robust background in the subjects they teach is essential for maintaining high-quality education and fostering well-rounded learning experiences for all Manitoba students.

(2) The recent amendments by the Province of Manitoba to the Teaching Certificates and Qualifications Regulation under The Education Administration Act have significantly lowered the standards for subject-area expertise required for teacher certification.

* (15:30)

(3) These amendments eliminated all subject-area requirements for teacher certification, including major and minor teachable subjects and subject-specific requirements for early/middle years streams.

(4) Specifically, the amendments removed: senior years credit requirements in an approved teachable major and minor; early/middle years credit requirements in an approved teachable major and minor; and early/middle years credit requirements for specific subjects, including: math; physical or biological science; English or French; and history and/or geography.

(5) Key stakeholders, such as parents, post-secondary educators outside the faculties of education and business partners were not consulted about the changes.

(6) The removal of subject-specific requirements undermines the educational quality in Manitoba schools by permitting teachers to enter the classroom without sufficient training in core academic areas, thereby compromising the education that Manitoba students receive.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning to reverse recent amendments to the Teaching Certification and to reinstate teachable majors and minors and early/middle year requirements which are essential for ensuring teachers have strong knowledge in core subject areas.

(2) To urge the provincial government to address teacher shortages through alternative measures that uphold rigorous subject-area standards, which are critical for providing quality education to all Manitoba students.

This is been signed by Crystal Malenko, Lori Shroeder, Pat Schmidt and many, many more Manitobans.

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Ensuring that teachers have a robust background in the subjects they teach is essential for maintaining high-quality education and fostering well-rounded learning experiences for all Manitoba students.

(2) The recent amendments by the Province of Manitoba to the Teaching Certificates and Qualifications Regulation under The Education Administration Act have significantly lowered the standards for subject-area expertise required for teacher certification.

(3) These amendments eliminated all subject-area requirements for teacher certification, including major and minor teachable subjects and subject-specific requirements for early/middle years streams.

(4) Specifically, the amendment removed: senior years credit requirements in an approved teachable major and minor; early/middle years credit requirements for specific subjects, including: math; physical or biological science; English or French; and history and/or geography.

(5) Key stakeholders, such as parents, post-secondary educators outside the faculties of education and business partners were not consulted about the changes.

(6) The removal of subject-specific requirements undermines the educational quality in Manitoba schools by permitting teachers to enter the classroom without sufficient training in core academic areas, thereby compromising the education that Manitoba students received.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning to reverse recent amendments to the Teaching Certificates and Qualifications Regulation that weaken subject-area requirements for teacher certification and to reinstate teachable majors and minors and early/middle years requirements which are essential for ensuring teachers have strong knowledge in core subject areas.

(2) To urge the provincial government to address teacher shortages through alternative measures that uphold rigorous subject-area standards, which are critical for improving quality education to all Manitoba students.

Honourable deputy Speaker, this petition has been signed by R.D. Omeniuk, Dylan Bell, Luke Lovenjak and many, many, many, many, many more Manitobans.

Breast Screening

Mr. Doyle Piwniuk (Turtle Mountain): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

And the background of this petition is as follows:

(1) Due to evolving scientific evidence, the Canadian Cancer Society, CCS, is now urging all provinces and territories to lower the starting age of breast screening to age 40.

(2) Based on—the 2023 treatment standards, it is estimated that screening women annually for breast cancer starting at the age of 40 will save the Canadian health-care system over \$460 million annually.

(3) After non-melanoma skin cancers, breast cancer is the most common form of cancer among Canadian women. One in eight Canadian women will be diagnosed with breast cancer during their lifetime, and one in 36 will die from it. This is about 30,500 diagnoses and 5,500 deaths every year, and 84 diagnoses and 15 deaths every day.

(4) Early detection of breast cancer will lead to better outcomes in patients, with better odds of survival and less severe cases. Women in their 40s who have access to mammograms have a 44 per cent lower mortality rate from breast cancer than those who don't receive screening.

(5) Every other province and territory in Canada has already lowered the breast cancer screening age, and has announced that their intention to do so. Other provinces in Canada have already commenced the work of expanding screening programs and hiring additional technologists into their public health-care system.

(6) Manitoba is currently behind the rest of the country and has no formal plan to increase its screening capacity or lower the breast cancer screening age.

(7) Lowering the breast cancer screening to age 40 in Manitoba will reduce long-term costs to the health-care system because cancers that are caught earlier are typically less complicated to treat.

* (15:40)

We position the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to immediately put forward a plan to increase breast cancer screening capacity and lower breast cancer screening to age 40.

This has been signed by Glenn Vercaigne [*phonetic*], Darryll Breemersch [*phonetic*] and Garry Serruys and many, many other Manitoba citizens.

MRI Machine for Portage Regional Health Facility

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield-Ritchot): 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 Portage regional health facility is well under way. The facility and surrounding community would greatly benefit from added diagnostic machinery and equipment, but specifically the addition of a MRI machine.

(2) An MRI machine is a non-invasive medical imaging technique that uses a magnetic field and computer-generated radio waves to create detailed images of organs and tissues in the human body. It is used for disease detection, diagnosis and treatment monitoring.

(3) Portage la Prairie is centrally located in Manitoba and is on the No. 1 Highway in the Southern Health/Santé Sud Health Authority. Currently there is only one MRI machine in the RHA.

(4) An MRI machine located in the Portage regional health facility will reduce transportation costs for patients as well as reduce the burden on stretcher service and ambulance use. It will bring care closer to home and reduce wait times for MRI scans across the province.

(5) Located around Portage la Prairie are the Dakota Tipi, Dakota Plains, Sandy Bay and Long Plain First Nations reserves. Indigenous peoples in Canada disproportionately face barriers in access to services and medical care. An MRI machine located in the Portage regional health facility will bring care closer to their home communities and provide greater access to diagnostic testing.

(6) Located in close proximity to the new Portage regional health facility is the Southport airport. This aerodrome has a runway length that is more than adequate to support medical air ambulance services. This would provide the opportunity to transport patients by air from more remote communities to access MRI imaging services.

(7) The average wait times for Manitobans to receive an MRI scan is currently six to eight months. Having an MRI machine in the Portage regional health facility will help reduce these wait times for patients and provide better care sooner.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to support the investment and placement of an MRI machine in the Portage regional health facility in Portage la Prairie, Manitoba.

This is signed by Jacquelyne Henry, Robin Lapratte, Bridget Rumanuk [*phonetic*] and many, many other Manitobans.

Opposition to Releasing Repeat Offenders

Mr. Jeff Wharton (Red River North): 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) 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 to 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 its 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 into 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, that ensuring that repeat violent

offenders are held accountable and that public safety is prioritized over leniency; and

* (15:50)

(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 petition is signed by Barbara Ingram, Jill Verwey, Lorraine Hawkins and many, many, many, many, many, many more Manitobans.

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): The member for Swan River. You were recognized.

MRI Machine for Portage Regional Health Facility

Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River): 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 service plan, construction for the new Portage regional health facility is well under way. The facility and surrounding community would greatly benefit from added diagnostic machinery and equipment, but specifically the addition of an MRI machine.

(2) An MRI machine is a non-invasive medical imaging technique that uses a magnetic field and computer-generated radio waves to create detailed images of organs and tissues in the human body. It is used for disease detection, diagnosis and treatment monitoring.

(3) Portage la Prairie is centrally located in Manitoba and is on the No. 1 Highway in the Southern Health/Santé Sud Health Authority. Currently, there is only one MRI machinery-machine in the RHA.

(4) An MRI machine located in Portage regional health facility will reduce transportation costs for patients as well as reduce the burden on stretcher service and ambulance use. It will bring care closer to home and reduce wait times for MRI scans across the province.

(5) Located around Portage la Prairie are the Dakota Tipi, Dakota Plains, Sandy Bay and Long Plain First Nations reserves. Indigenous peoples in Canada disproportionately face barriers in access to services and medical care. An MRI machine located in the Portage regional health facility will bring care

closer to their home communities and provide greater access to diagnostic testing.

(6) Located in close proximity to the new Portage regional health facility is the Southport airport. This aerodrome has a runway length that is more than adequate to support medical air ambulance services. This would provide the opportunity to transport patients by air from more remote communities to access MRI imaging services.

(7) The average wait times for Manitobans to receive an MRI scan is currently six to eight months. Having an MRI machine in the Portage regional health facility will help reduce these wait times for patients and provide better care sooner.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to support the investment and placement of an MRI machine in the Portage regional health facility in Portage la Prairie, Manitoba.

This petition is signed by many, many, many, many, many, many, many, many, many, many Manitobans.

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): Are there are any further grievances—or petitions?

Seeing none, any grievances?

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Government House Leader): Can you please call second reading of Bill 40, An Act respecting "O Canada" and Other Observances and Land and Treaty Acknowledgements in Schools (Education Administration Act and Public Schools Act Amended), followed by Bill 18, The Public Schools Amendment Act (Indigenous Languages of Instruction), followed by Bill 16, The Municipal Councils and School Boards Elections Amendment and Public Schools Amendment Act.

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): It has been announced that this afternoon we will consider second reading of bills 40, 18, and 16.

SECOND READINGS

Bill 40—An Act respecting "O Canada" and Other Observances and Land and Treaty Acknowledgements in Schools (Education Administration Act and Public Schools Act Amended)

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): Therefore, I will now call second reading of Bill 40, An Act respecting "O Canada" and Other Observances and Land and Treaty Acknowledgements in Schools (Education Administration Act and Public Schools Act Amended).

Hon. Tracy Schmidt (Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning): I move, seconded by the Minister of Municipal and Northern Relations (Mr. Simard), that Bill 40, An Act respecting "O Canada" and Other Observances and Land and Treaty Acknowledgements in Schools (Education Administration Act and Public Schools Act Amended); *Loi sur les activités scolaires* soulignant notamment l'« Ô Canada » et la reconnaissance des territoires et des traités (modification de la Loi sur l'administration scolaire et de la Loi sur les écoles publiques), be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

MLA Schmidt: It is my pleasure and honour to rise for second reading of Bill 40. This bill makes changes that modernize and streamline The Education Administration Act and Public Schools Act. This includes dissolving the advisory board, which has been inactive for many years.

The bill repeals two associated board regulations: the religious exercises in school regulation and the schools patriotic observances regulation.

* (16:00)

This bill will make it so that the requirement to sing God Save the King will not be continued and will no longer be reflected on Manitoba's education statutes or required in public schools. This requirement has not been enforced for decades. This change will bring provincial law in line with what has been common practice in Manitoba schools for at least the past 25 years.

The bill further amends The Public Schools Act to remove provisions mandating religious exercises that were found unconstitutional by the Court of King's Bench here in Manitoba back in 1992.

So I'd like to thank the many Manitobans who advocated for this bit of what you could call spring cleanup of these acts, and thank those who took the time to write in to our office. We very much—and value and are listening to your feedback.

Bill 40 also creates a requirement for school boards to establish and implement a written policy respecting land acknowledgements and treaty acknowledgements. We know that land and treaty acknowledgements have become common practice in many schools—most schools, and these amendments will ensure that school divisions have policies in place to guide their use.

The inclusion of treaty acknowledgements and land acknowledgements in school activities aligns with the direction in *Mamāhtawisiwin: The Wonder We Are Born With*, Manitoba's Indigenous education policy framework in the K-to-12 system. The introduction of land acknowledgements and treaty acknowledgements in public schools demonstrates our government's commitment to advancing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action that are related to education.

And I would suggest, honourable assistant deputy Speaker, that perhaps nowhere are land acknowledgements and treaty acknowledgements more important and relevant than in our education system, given the context and the colonial history that we have here in Manitoba, the history of the residential school system, the guiding principle that every child matters.

And I think often, when I think about this bill and when I think about other bills that our department and our government is introducing in this session, I think about the words of the departed, late honourable Senator Murray Sinclair who said that it is education that got us into this mess and that it is education that will get us out.

Bill 40 also amends The Public Schools Act to incorporate the obligations regarding O Canada, Remembrance Day and citizenship exercises that were previously in the repealed regulations. We know the importance of honouring Canada's veterans. Under the current legislation, schools are required to have their Remembrance Day activities on the last day of school before November 11.

So Bill 40 changes this so that these observances can take place on any day between November 4 and November 10. This is a change that legions and others in the community have been requesting for quite some time, as it can be difficult to find enough veterans to

participate in all of the schools' ceremonies that make that request when it's required to be observed only on one day.

Bill 40 also retains requirements to play O Canada in schools each and every day, because now more than ever, we need to take pride in being Canadian and stay united as one Manitoba. I can only imagine the singing of O Canada taking place in schools across Manitoba these days; I'm sure that the kids are singing loudly and proudly, and we join them in that.

The department will continue to engage with our partners as we—as well as the sector to clearly communicate and implement all of these changes.

So with that, honourable assistant deputy Speaker, I conclude my remarks on the bill.

Thank you. Merci. Miigwech.

Questions

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): A question period of up to 15 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed to the minister by any opposition or independent member in the following sequence: first question by the official opposition critic or designate; subsequent questions asked by critics or designates from other recognized opposition parties; subsequent questions asked by each independent member; remaining questions asked by any opposition members. And no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Leader of the Official Opposition): So to the minister: in her opening statement on second reading, she mentioned the many Manitobans. So if she can let the House know, who did she consult with?

Hon. Tracy Schmidt (Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning): We've been listening to Manitobans right across this great province of ours when it comes to all of our bills that we're putting forward in this session, and particularly Bill 40.

I think it's also important to note, as I mentioned in my opening comments, that Bill 40 largely is—again, can be characterized as a bit of a spring clean-up. And I think it's very important to note that many of the changes that we're making are just bringing our legislation in line with what is common practice in schools across Manitoba for decades and decades and decades, including rulings that have been made by the courts.

So our government is always here to listen. We're listening to Manitobans and we will always be here to

deliver for Manitobans when it comes to education and across all departments.

Mr. Ewasko: The question was, who did the minister consult with on Bill 40?

MLA Schmidt: Again, we've consulted with many, many Manitobans from across the province, and we're very proud of Bill 40. We fully expect the members opposite to support our bill.

Thank you.

Mr. Ewasko: Just waiting for the answer. If I can just get a specific, just name a few. Which people in Manitoba did she consult with on Bill 40?

MLA Schmidt: Again, our government, on this bill and on every piece of legislation and on every policy that we've implemented in our wildly successful first 18 months in government, has been done in consultation with Manitobans across the province.

We are a listening government, unlike the previous failed PC government under the leadership of Heather Stefanson and Brian Pallister, who closed their doors on the day after they were elected and refused to listen to Manitobans, refused to listen to anyone in the education sector; refused, in fact, to listen to their own department.

On this side of the House we are a listening government; we are here to serve Manitobans and we know that Manitobans are very excited about Bill 40.

Mr. Ewasko: So, honourable deputy Speaker—acting Speaker—*[interjection]*

Honourable assistant deputy Speaker, thank you. So this is not meant to be a confrontational type of question. If the minister doesn't know who she consulted with specifically, she can just say that. I'm looking at, you know, she mentioned the great document *Mamāhtawisiwin*—great. So I'll give her an easy one. I'm assuming that she had consulted with the Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre. Can she name any others?

MLA Schmidt: Again, we know that Bill 40 is something that Manitobans have been asking for. This is clean-up that is long overdue. This is clean-up that is decades old. This bill brings our legislation in line with what has been common practice across Manitoba schools for decades, at least 25 years, honourable Speaker.

So we're doing what the previous government couldn't get done. We're listening to Manitobans. We've consulted with Manitobans across the pro-

vince, and we are very proud about—to stand behind Bill 40.

My question to the member opposite is: Will they support this important bill?

Mr. Ewasko: Just checking to make sure that my mic is on, acting deputy Speaker. Is it working, everything's okay?

Okay, so honourable acting deputy Speaker, it's unfortunate that the new Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning does not know who she or her department has consulted with. I know that he—her predecessor, the former MLA for Transcona, Nello Altomare, would have been able to tell me who he consulted with.

But I'll ask her another question: As of right now, before this bill gets passed on to committee and to third reading, can students today sing O Canada at their schools?

* (16:10)

MLA Schmidt: Absolutely.

Mr. Ewasko: So that's why, honourable acting deputy Speaker, that's why this is interesting that the minister is bringing forward this bill, because she, in her own speech, started talking about things that apparently is now going to be able to happen, but yet she just confirmed that some of the things that she's already said is already able to happen.

So it's interesting that this new Education Minister is bringing this forward. So I'll ask her, are legions or schools able to host—not legions, but are schools able to host, right now, Remembrance Day services, not necessarily on November 11?

MLA Schmidt: What I find incredibly interesting, honourable assistant deputy Speaker, is that their Education critic resigned two and a half weeks ago, yet they have not yet appointed a new critic on education and, clearly, by the questions that he is asking, the member opposite—the leader of the failed opposition—has clearly not read the bill.

There are important parts of this bill about O Canada, and there's important parts of the bill that govern Remembrance Day. So the current legislation, to answer his question: no, would not allow, technically, for Remembrance Day to be observed on any other day other than the last day before November 11.

This bill changes that. I encourage the member opposite, and all members opposite, to care about education—

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): Member's time has expired.

Mr. Ewasko: Honourable acting deputy Speaker—I'll get that soon, thank you.

Wow. That's quite the answer coming from the minister.

Again, this is not confrontation time, this is question-and-answer time. I'm asking her questions about the bill, Bill 40, which is a—obviously, a very important piece of legislation to this minister, concerning—we've got Trump tariffs going on and China tariffs.

But, so I don't know if she's—when the last time she's been in a school, but there's actually been Remembrance Day services not held on November 11.

So can she clarify her last answer to the House, to Manitobans and the hundreds of Manitobans who are watching today, acting assistant deputy Speaker.

MLA Schmidt: Again, had the member opposite—if the members opposite, if the opposition had bothered to appoint an Education critic, if the member opposite had bothered to read the bill, if the member opposite had bothered to listen to my opening comments, he would know that this legislation is important to bring what our practices that are going on in schools into line with the legislation on the books here in Manitoba; something that the previous government slept on, something that the previous government failed to do.

Our government is listening to Manitobans and we are going to get the job done.

Mr. Ewasko: To ask the Minister of Education, who, unfortunately, I guess, the former Education critic, Grant Jackson, is still living rent-free in her head and can't get over the loss of Grant moving over to the federal government, where her boss, the Kinew government, wants to go on to federal politics.

So if a local school board wants to include God Save the King 'alongsaid' O Canada and a land acknowledgement, why is the NDP government overriding that autonomy?

MLA Schmidt: On this side of the House, we respect educators, we respect school divisions and we respect the practices that they put into place in their schools.

Bill 40 seeks to do exactly that, is to give the autonomy to school divisions to decide what is the best practice to serve their students and their community, to make sure that all students and their community feel safe and respected and heard.

Mrs. Kathleen Cook (Roblin): If a local school board wants to include God Save the King alongside O Canada and a land acknowledgement, why is the NDP government choosing to override that local autonomy?

MLA Schmidt: There's absolutely nothing in Bill 40 that overrides local autonomy. If school divisions and school boards decide that they want to have their students sing God Save the King in their classrooms, they absolutely have the autonomy to make that choice.

We would, however, encourage all school boards to always think about all of the members in their community and make sure that their practices reflect their communities and, again, make sure that all of the students and families that they serve feel respected, included and valued in the practices that they take part in in their schools.

Mr. Ewasko: So if the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning (MLA Schmidt) actually was a teacher, she would know that in schools, school divisions, schools administration, teachers, staff absolutely do respect the various different cultures and backgrounds of various different students that come into the building. And there are avenues put in place so that if students want to or do not want to participate in these activities or these ceremonial activities, they absolutely can get out of that.

So I encourage the minister to consult with some of her actual teachers on her side—

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): Member's time has expired.

Order. Order.

We're just going to check with Hansard. We believe there might have been an issue with the mic. So we'll just check for a moment. We pause the clock. Thank you.

The honourable Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning. You'll just have to repeat your previous answer. Hansard didn't capture that.

MLA Schmidt: Unfortunately, we didn't get to a question, because this is what the opposition does.

They have no plan for Manitobans. They don't care about improving education. What they are—what—all they've got, and this is what the Premier (Mr. Kinew) has said many times: When you don't have anything of substance to bring, you results—to personal attacks.

The member opposite—he's obsessed with the fact that I'm not an educator. I happen to work with some

of the best educators across Manitoba who inform the work of our team. We work as a team. And I happen to be the daughter of two lifetime educators, two of the best educators that have ever taught in this province. I learned about education every single day at the dinner table, and I will take not one lesson from the failed previous Education minister, and I will not have him mansplain to me any longer.

Mr. Ewasko: It is interesting on antibullying day that the minister stands up in her anger. I'm just pointing out the fact that, by profession, she is not a teacher. She is not a teacher. I'm not talking down to her. I'm just saying she's not a teacher.

There was many other choices in the backbench that were educators and—long-time educators. It's unfortunate that she stands in her place and talks down to the former Education minister, Nello Altomare—rest his soul.

I'd like to know if the minister can—[interjection]

Assistant deputy Speaker, I don't know what's going on over there, but I think the member for Keewatinook (Mr. Bushie) wants to ask some questions.

So—

* (16:20)

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): The member's time has expired.

MLA Schmidt: While the members opposite continue on their personal attacks and their division, because that's all they've got, they don't have a hot clue about education. They are so out of touch with Manitobans. He hasn't taken the time to read the bill.

On this side of the House, we are here to work on behalf of Manitobans to deliver on education, and that's exactly what Bill 40 does. And we're going to continue to do it, despite the personal attacks and the division and the hate being spewed from the other side of this room.

I am so proud of this bill. I am so proud of this team. And I'm ashamed to sit in this Chamber with that failed previous Education minister.

Mr. Ewasko: Assistant deputy Speaker, it is interesting that the Education Minister stands in this House and spews that hate.

She will go ahead and she'll clip her statements here—whatever else, and she wants me to ask the question. Well, I continue to ask the questions, but the minister fails to answer any of them.

So here we go: Who has the minister consulted with on Bill 40, honourable assistant deputy Speaker?

MLA Schmidt: In drafting this bill, this important piece of educational administrative work, we have consulted with many, many Manitobans. That is something that our government values and something that we put into practice every single day, and something that, quite frankly, the members opposite could learn from, which is listening to the community.

We listen to Manitobans, and by the way, since we've introduced Bill 40, our phone has been ringing off the hook from people in the community that are saying thank you so much, thank you for putting treaty and land acknowledgments into legislation here in Manitoba. Thank you for respecting the diversity of all voices here in Manitoba, not just the friends of the Tories. We listen to all Manitobans and Bill 40 delivers on that.

We're going to continue—we're going to continue delivering for Manitobans despite what the failed—

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): Member's time has expired.

The time for question period has expired.

Debate

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): The floor is open for debate.

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Leader of the Official Opposition): Thank you, assistant deputy Speaker, for an opportunity to ask another question; again, not confrontational. Just asked some questions, not getting any answers.

So, how does the Premier (Mr. Kinew) and this Education Minister justify handing out dozens of King's Coronation Medals in December and presently to honour Manitobans, and introduce a bill erasing Canadian history and heritage about not allowing to—school divisions to allow God Save the King to be sung?

The Speaker in the Chair

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order. Order. Order.

So, question period has ended. The assistant deputy Speaker told you the question period has ended so the floor is now open for debate.

Mr. Ewasko: I was under the impression, deputy Speaker—and this is not a challenging to the Chair or

anybody else. The fact is, is that the time was a little fluctuating throughout that question period and with the amount of yelling from across the way—as usual—especially on antibullying day, it's unfortunate that I couldn't necessarily hear the assistant deputy Speaker.

But I appreciate your guidance. Thank you, and here we go on Bill 40 bill debate, An Act respecting "O Canada" and Other Observances and Land and Treaty Acknowledgements in Schools (Education Administration Act and Public Schools Act Amended).

So this is being brought forward by the new Education and Early Childhood Learning Minister who, simply I had asked a few times on the record, Honourable Speaker, to just name who she had consulted with with the bill.

And, whether she couldn't—or wouldn't—started yelling at me for asking that question, didn't provide me any answers. So I actually asked her if she had, by any chance, consulted with the Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre.

To me, Honourable Speaker, I could list off probably—being a former Education minister—and knowing her predecessor would've rattled off a whole list of education partners or stakeholders that would've had something to say, if she indeed actually went and consulted with anybody.

But the amount of rage that was coming from the minister—which, as an Education Minister is unbecoming—and again, I appreciate the fact that the minister is coming in with a profession as a lawyer, absolutely—I just stated the fact that this Education Minister—Education and Early Childhood Learning Minister—was not a teacher; that's simple.

And—unless she is a teacher, you know, then I stand corrected, but I don't believe that she is. And that's okay, and it's unfortunate that this Education and Early Childhood Learning Minister takes that as an attack of some sort. And I don't know if she's raging on the camera to later on clip it and put misinformation out to the public, as I've seen other NDP MLAs do so, Honourable Speaker.

So, we take a look at Bill 40. We take a look at Bill 40 and we think about what is happening today, in this day and age, right now: today, April 9, which just so happens to be Vimy Ridge Day. We think about what is happening, and the minister decides to call this spring cleanup day, and as far as I'm concerned, I'm a little insulted as a former Education minister, that a bill that the Education Minister—Education and Early Childhood Learning Minister—would

bring forward would be characterized as just spring cleanup.

So I guess, why would the minister—again, this day and age and what's happening in the world, Honourable Speaker—why this would be the—one of the No. 1 priorities of this NDP Kinew government. There's tariffs happening: on-again, off-again Trump tariffs from the States; there are tariffs coming from China.

I asked a simple question: Can students today, if Bill 40 happens or does not happen, can students sing O Canada today? And her answer was yes. Exactly.

Can students today—well, maybe not today, but closer to Remembrance Day—can they show their respects and do Remembrance Day services not necessarily on November 11? She said no. I basically stood up and just corrected her that she should be maybe staying in touch with some of those education partners.

And, you know, Honourable Speaker, this is a good day because I know that a lot of the teachers that are on the NDP side—and even on our side—we always talk about doing your homework. And the nice lesson that's being—that's going to happen today, is that the minister will actually, next time there's a bill—and there's a few bills that she's bringing forward—next time she brings forward a bill, she will have an answer to who did you consult with.

* (16:30)

And I'll tell you, Honourable Speaker: Honourable Speaker has been in this Chamber for a while. Many of us have been in this Chamber for a while. Matter of fact, the MLA for Elmwood has been here for quite some time. Probably one of the top three questions that you should be prepared for when it comes to any type of sponsoring of a bill, whether you're a minister or an MLA, a representative sponsoring a bill, one of the top three questions. These are just canned questions. Who did you consult with when you bring forward this bill?

I don't know, and couldn't answer it, besides many Manitobans. Well, okay. Couldn't name one, but many Manitobans. And they were apparently crying and calling out for this legislation. I don't think so, Honourable Speaker. But you know what? We'll take this new Education and Early Childhood Learning Minister's word for it.

So I take a look at this. We take a look at Bill 40 and, in my humble opinion, Honourable Speaker, and many, many, many Manitobans, because I actually

have consulted with some of our education stakeholders and partners throughout this great province of ours. And they're sort of asking the similar question to what I'm asking, and what I'm going to put on the record here again: What is Bill 40 doing? Because it doesn't seem to be improving education.

Some people have said it's about erasing symbols of Canadian heritage and traditions that don't fit the NDP's ideological agenda. Even though, as I've stated in my question—one of my questions to the minister, they on—the NDP bench and the NDP Kinew government, and we on the Progressive Conservative side, and the Liberal, have all taken it upon ourselves to basically hand out the King's medals just recently.

Matter of fact, this past Monday, April 7, many of us had guests in room 200, which, Honourable Speaker, if you take a look in room 200, it is probably the most prestigious room we have here—besides the Chamber; I would like to say the Chamber is pretty cool—in the Manitoba Legislature.

And who do we have as far as portraits hanging in room 200? The Queen, the King, past monarch—monarchy. Former monarchy. And what are we seeing this Education Minister do? Trying to overstep her bounds and, by the sounds of it, has not consulted with Manitoba School Boards Association about these changes that she's bringing forward in this bill, with the fact that we just finished handing out the King's Coronation Medals.

She could have even said—and I'll give her another, I think, somebody that would have been very easy to talk to and has been easy to talk to in many of the ceremonies and things that we've been so privileged and honoured to participate in as elected MLAs. Could have just said, hey, I picked up the phone or had a chat with the Lieutenant Governor; maybe talk to the Lieutenant Governor. What was her thoughts to the fact that the Minister of Education is trying to get rid of singing God Save the King?

It's a royal anthem, a constitutional and cultural symbol that reminds students they live in a democratic constitutional monarchy and not a republic, Honourable Speaker. But I think that's where this is going. That's where this is going; that's why the NDP have made it very important on their agenda, important bill agenda, to bring this forward, this Bill 40 forward, is to start kiboshing a lot of those times. And whether a school division or a school decides to sing God Save the King or not, it's up to them.

Now, I'll tell you, the minister brought forward the—and mentioned it—but of course, you know, she stands in her little bit of a tirade rage and talks about former governments and doing or not doing certain things. But yet she quoted Mamāhtawisiwin, which is: The Wonder We Are Born With—An Indigenous Education Policy Framework.

Who was that—what was that document, when was it created? Honourable Speaker, 2022, by Education and Early Childhood Learning and, just so the minister is aware, and other NDP backbenchers and the people who want to be Education minister and Early Childhood Learning ministers, it was myself. With the hard work of myself, our government and the many incredible partners and stakeholders that we had right through this great province of ours. *[interjection]*

Yes, absolute consultations on this document. Elders and knowledge keepers, I'd like to bring acknowledgements to many of these individuals. Oliver Boulette, Ann Callahan, Ivy Chaske, Mary Courchene, Nelliane Cromarty, Rita Cullen—there's one for you. Myra Laramée, Victoria McLeod, the late Don Robertson, Dan Thomas, MFNERC.

I mean, the list can go on and on and on. And I have to say, it was a sheer honour and a privilege to work as the Education and Early Childhood Learning minister on behalf of all the students, all the teachers and staff, anyone who works in our great education system here in the province, including all of those hard-working men and women in the Department of Education.

And for this minister to stand up on a day of anti-bullying—*[interjection]* And she's still talking from her seat.

Honourable Speaker, I would like to propose something for the future, for our Rules committee. Whether it's Bill 40, whether it's any type of debating, that when the minister has had the opportunity—and may I say, has had the opportunity to stand up on second reading with unlimited time, and then when it is question-and-answer time—when it is—*[interjection]*

She's still talking from her seat, yelling across the Chamber, Honourable Speaker.

But that's okay. On antibullying day we know the NDP are full of Broadway bullies. And she's not quite leading the pack, but she's learning, she's learning, Honourable Speaker. So—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order, please.

The Minister of Education should quit hollering across the way and the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Ewasko) should perhaps quit trying to inflame. You should be able to have a respectable debate without trying to get under people's skin.

So the honourable Leader of the Opposition has vectored off from the bill itself. So I would ask him to bring his comments back to the bill we're here debating.

Mr. Ewasko: So in regards to inflaming, the only one today that's been trying to inflame this debate is the Education and Early Childhood Learning Minister, who stood up in her place and continuously yelled across the Chamber and on camera, Honourable Speaker.

* (16:40)

So when we're trying to talk about Bill 40, we're talking about land acknowledgements as well. And I've been talking about Mamāhtawisiwin: The Wonder We Are Born With, the good life.

And I will recite some of our land acknowledgements that, again, what does Bill 40 do to improve the education in our province, Honourable Speaker, besides the fact that the minister stands in her place and calls it spring cleaning? What? I know that the department, some new department officials—I'll let you do your research—new department officials have actually said that education is less or lower than fifth on the list of priorities for this Kinew NDP government. That's their record.

I'm scared, Honourable Speaker, to think that we're going back, which we are—we're going back to the dark days of the Selinger government. We're seeing Greg Selinger government 2.0 with this Kinew government. We are seeing that the standards in our school system here in Manitoba are sliding due to this Kinew government, and I hate to say it—she's going to have to wear it—the new Education and Early Childhood Learning Minister.

We talk about land acknowledgements, and I think something for the new Education Minister, if she would've consulted with some of her own members on that side of the Chamber that are teachers, even the ones who are not teachers; I know that everybody has attended school at one time. So there could be something where instead of actually getting all the school divisions to recreate a land acknowledgement—which, I have to say, Honourable Speaker, the majority of school divisions and schools in this great province of ours have already developed and are using land acknowledgements. But if the minister wanted to actually put something in legislation or a regulation—

something—she could've actually given a template to all the school divisions and said, here's the template of things that we'd like to see acknowledged on a day-to-day basis or whenever that school division and principal in schools, whatever, sees fit—and school boards, of course.

But she didn't do that because she really, according to the question-and-answer period, didn't consult with anybody. The nice thing is, Honourable Speaker, is that moving forward on anything else that's going to be coming up from this Education Minister—Education and Early Childhood Learning Minister—she will have that answer. She will know who the department, obviously, has consulted with, because I don't think there was a whole lot of consulting there.

So one of my favourites that I would use, and, again, Honourable Speaker, the land acknowledgement that we use in the Chamber here is very encompassing and very inclusive. And it's followed by our prayer. And so what we have—and I'll read into the record just quick—so on Bill 40 when we're talking about—and the minister mentions, you know, the prayer and mentions O Canada and mentions God Save the King, mentions land acknowledgement, which I hope, and I'm looking across the way and I'm seeing some nods in the positive, that tomorrow morning when we bring forward a resolution, since this minister wanted to hear the fact of, you know, why, in her words it's like she's saying, like, why are we holding up students from being able to sing O Canada, which is totally false, and we've proven that already.

Tomorrow morning at 11 o'clock a.m., on April 10, 2025, we're going to be bringing forward a resolution that right here in this Chamber, Honourable Speaker, we're going to be able to debate the fact that we, members of the Chamber, are going to be able to sing O Canada each and every day when session is going to be on. And I look forward to—and let me answer the question before the question is asked tomorrow. Hundreds of Manitobans have been consulted and hundreds of Manitobans are in favour of seeing us—joined together—thousands of Manitobans, I've been told, have been—want to see us, in this great Manitoba Legislature, sing O Canada. Because never in the history—not in the history, I'm not going to say that—but for quite some time—again, things that we could be debating or things that the government could be bringing forward to battle the on-again, off-again Trump tariffs, the China tariffs: we're not talking about that today. We're talking about Bill 40.

A spring cleaning bill—and that's what the minister said: a spring cleaning bill. And it's unfortunate, but here we go. Not unfortunate, here we go. I want to talk about, in the Legislature right now—so I'm not sure where we're going to put O Canada once it passes unanimously, because I asked the Premier (Mr. Kinew) today about singing O Canada. Considering we're also going to be talking about O Canada in Bill 40, asked him if we were going to pass it unanimously. And I didn't hear a no. I didn't hear a no, Honourable Speaker. So I'm hoping that tomorrow we'll see unanimous consent to that resolution.

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

And I appreciate, Honourable Speaker, the fact that you read that each and every day, and I must say, if I can comment a little bit, you're going a great job.

Land acknowledgement: the land acknowledgement that—this too. I think it was a little tough at first, I have to say, from listening; from being in here, listening 'intently' to much of everything that you say.

And this is how it goes: We acknowledge we are gathered on Treaty 1 territory and that Manitoba is located on the treaty territories and ancestral lands of the Anishinaabeg, Anishinewuk, Dakota Oyate, Denesuline, Nehethowuk nations. And 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 the treaty making and remain committed to working in partnership with First Nations, Inuit and Métis people in the spirit of truth, reconciliation and collaboration.

Again, Honourable Speaker, good stuff and, you know, again, I know at first, when we change over land acknowledgements and that, I know that there's always some words that are a little bit tough to pronounce, but I think you're doing a bang-up job there and you're knocking it out of the park.

One that I—

The Speaker: Order, please. Order, please. Order.

The honourable Leader of the Opposition—I've cautioned him before about bringing the Speaker into the debate. I shouldn't have to caution you again. And I also shouldn't have to caution you to quit talking back to the Speaker. It's disrespectful. You can disrespect me as a person all you want, but I will not allow you to disrespect the position of Speaker in this Chamber.

* (16:50)

Mr. Ewasko: Well, Honourable Speaker, I appreciate your advice, but I have never once disrespected the Speaker—

The Speaker: Order, please. Order, please.

You, in fact, are disrespecting the Speaker presently by commenting on a ruling that the Speaker just made. I've asked you to not do that. So I would please ask you to respect that.

Mr. Ewasko: It's disappointing. It's disappointing that as I was going to read the land acknowledgement that I have shared for many years, and something that I think could possibly expand our reach in this Legislature, and I promise the Speaker that I will not bring you into the debate any longer, whether that's a congratulatory message that I'm sending or not.

It's upsetting, though, as a member here in the Manitoba Legislature that after things that I have witnessed, whether it's Bill 40 or yesterday's bill debate, that I have had to stand here and take the abusive, toxic work environment that I have had to put up with members from the NDP government.

I've been reprimanded for speaking to Bill 40 and other things in this Chamber. I've done so with the utmost—tried to—respect of all members in this Chamber, and I can't help the fact that, led by the Premier of the Kinew government and some of his toxic ministers who have proven records—I'm not talking about the Premier's record, just for the record—proven records of abusive language, toxic work environments in their own departments.

And in regards to Bill 40, an act respecting O Canada and other observances, it is interesting, Honourable Speaker, that things have been let go. And this is not a judgment on you; this is just a judgment about the Chamber in its entirety.

And I really do think that—I'm hoping that—according to your advice, Honourable Speaker, from prior to Christmas or the winter break, that myself, as Leader of the Opposition, had taken it back to our caucus—your advice—and asked for decorum where we have

seen various different things in this Chamber, just in these last few days, that are part of the reason of the toxic environment here in the Chamber.

Simple question and answer and debate, which again gets to the democratic right of myself and all other 56 elected members here in the Manitoba Legislature to be able to stand up and put words on the record without being bullied, yelled at, shouted down from the members of the NDP Kinew government, Honourable Speaker. It is absolute shameful.

We know—we know, Honourable Speaker, that not all, I must say, not all the NDP Kinew government are part of that toxic regime, not all of them. But some of the ringleaders absolutely were professional protesters and activists.

The Speaker: Order, please.

I would ask the member to please keep his comments relevant to the bill we're discussing. He's vectored off pretty far, so please keep your comments relative to the bill we're discussing.

Mr. Ewasko: No, no, you know what, I'm taking a look at Bill 40. I've mentioned the Bill 40 multiple times, talked about the land acknowledgments, talked about O Canada. I've talked about the fact that the Kinew government and many of the members disrespect not only members on our side of the House but also members on their side of the House, but also, people of higher authority in these so-called Chambers.

There's been absolute dressing down, and what that—what I mean by that dressing down is the fact that there's been confrontations being had, and I'm sorry. And I'm not apologizing because I'm doing it; I'm apologizing to those individuals that, on the NDP benches, even when we're debating Bill 40, something in regard to respecting O Canada and other observances, that they don't feel that they can stand up to their leader and have enough will to go against the enormous ego that we see on that side of the Chamber, Honourable Speaker.

And day in and day out, we on this side of the House, and I'm pretty certain in behind those NDP caucus walls—I'm sure there's more things that are going to come out as time rolls along, Honourable Speaker.

Now, many Canadians, Honourable Speaker—and, again, especially now with the on-again, off-again Trump tariffs—are feeling more enduring to the monarchy than ever—than for quite some time, of all political stripes. Swearing allegiance to the King is a legal requirement for all MLAs and trustees, and it's not really that radical to expose students to the same anthem that reflects that oath. And this Education and Early Childhood Learning Minister wants to take that away.

And instead of debating or having a conversation about how we're going to protect Manitoba's economy, businesses, jobs, economy, affordability, this is what we're debating today, something, Honourable Speaker, that, again, is not necessarily going to be improving the education quality here in Manitoba. But I am a big supporter of singing O Canada, having the option to sing God—or God Save the King and, of course, land acknowledgments.

And as I was going to say earlier, so I was rudely interrupted by the NDP Kinew government, I would like to acknowledge that we here in Manitoba reside on Treaties 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 lands, and through the communities who are signatories to Treaties 6 and 10, which are the traditional territories of the Anishinaabe, Cree, Ojibway Cree, Inuit, Dakota and Dene peoples and also the homeland of the Red River Métis nation.

I feel that's a very all-inclusive—

* (17:00)

The Speaker: Order, please. Order, please.

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Ewasko) will have unlimited time remaining.

The hour being 5 o'clock, this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, April 9, 2025

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