



Second Session – Forty-Third Legislature

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Manitoba**

**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report  
(Hansard)**

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



**Vol. LXXIX No. 40A - 10 a.m., Thursday, April 10, 2025**

ISSN 0542-5492

**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Forty-Third Legislature**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
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

Thursday, April 10, 2025

*The House met at 10 a.m.*

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

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

Please be seated.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

**Mr. Derek Johnson (Official Opposition House Leader):** Could you please call Bill 221, The Wildlife Amendment Act, until 10:30, then at 10:30, please call Bill 222, the criminal trespass act and amendments to The Occupiers' Liability Act.

**The Speaker:** It's been announced that we will debate Bill 221, the second reading of The Wildlife Amendment Act, until 10:30, at which point we will then debate Bill 222, the second reading of The Criminal Trespassers Act and Amendments to The Occupiers' Liability Act, until 11.

## SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

## Bill 221—The Wildlife Amendment Act

**Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River):** I move, seconded by the MLA from Riding Mountain, that Bill 221, The Wildlife Amendment Act, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Wowchuk:** I am pleased to rise today as both a legislator and a conservationist to speak to Bill 221, The Wildlife Amendment Act. This bill is about protecting what matters to our identity as Manitobans, to our ecosystems and to future generations. It's about making sure people who intentionally harm Manitoba's most vulnerable protected wildlife face real consequences, not just a slap on the wrist.

Honourable Speaker, on December 2023, a bald eagle, a species sacred to many, majestic to all, was intentionally shot near Grunthal. Despite the best efforts of our hard-working conservation officers and staff at the Wildlife Haven Rehabilitation Centre, the eagle died from its wounds, and the fine that was issued, just \$1,158.

That act and that penalty were demoralizing, not just for the dedicated professionals who tried to save that bird, but for every Manitoban who respects our province's wildlife. That's why I introduce Bill 221. This bill raises the penalties for killing protected species: up to \$100,000 and one year in jail for a first offence, up to \$200,000 and two years in jail for repeat offenders; hunting licence suspensions of two years for a first offence and indefinitely for repeat offenders.

We are proposing changes to bring Manitoba in line with other western provinces—British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan—who are already treating poaching with the seriousness it deserves. I am—proud outdoorsman and I've spent many—my life promoting ethical hunting and conservation education, and I want to be clear, the bill does not target lawful Indigenous harvesters or responsible hunters. What this bill does is sends a clear message: poaching is not hunting, and poachers are not hunters.

Manitoba is blessed with incredible wildlife: bald eagles, cougars, owls, polar bears, bison, songbirds and many more. Many of these species are rare. When one is killed, we can't just replace it; it is lost forever. These species don't get second chances and that's why we work hard to protect them.

Thanks to good policy, public education and years of conservation work, our bald eagle population has rebounded in recent years. But we can't take that for granted and we can't afford to go backward. That's why we need stronger laws that deter poaching and help conservation officers to do their jobs.

I want to thank those conservation officers who do incredibly difficult work. They work long hours, cover vast territories and face real risks to protect our wildlife and our natural resources. They need more tools, more support and stronger legislation. They deserve our support and this bill helps give it to them.

I also want to thank the team at the Wildlife Haven Rehabilitation Centre who tried to save that eagle and who—care and compassion inspire so many Manitobans. When one of their staff says, I can't even think why someone would want to cause harm like that, that should be—that should hit home for all of us.

Honourable Speaker, the legislation isn't about punishment for punishment's sake. It's about making sure that no one thinks they can shoot a protected animal and walk away with a \$1,000 fine. It's about deterrence, it's about respect and about shared responsibility for the conservation of our protected wildlife. We've heard from the public, we've heard from hunters, we've heard from wildlife groups that they want action. Now it's the time for this Legislature to act.

Honourable Speaker, I urge the members to support Bill 221 and ensure its quick passage. Let's stand up for Manitoba wildlife. Let's show that we value conservation. Let's make it clear that in this province if you kill a protected species, you will pay the price.

\* (10:10)

Thank you.

### Questions

**The Speaker:** A question period of up to 10 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed to the sponsoring member by any member in the following sequence: first question to be asked by a member from another party; this is to be followed by a rotation between the parties; each independent member may ask one question. And no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

The floor is now open for questions.

**Hon. Lisa Naylor (Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure):** Thank you to the member opposite for this opportunity to ask some important questions about this bill.

This bill has really important implications for many groups and communities in Manitoba: farmers, First Nations, the wildlife federation. These all—they

all have important voices when it comes to wildlife protections in Manitoba.

So my question for the member is, who did he consult with before writing this bill?

**Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River):** Yes, I thank the member—I know that she has a passion for protecting our wildlife species also. And we consulted with the public, we consulted with wildlife organizations like the wildlife federation. We also took the time to consult with hunters and all Manitobans out there. And they all pointed one message toward us, that they very much want to see these species protected for their future, for their future grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Thank you.

**Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain):** First of all, I want to thank my colleague and friend, the member from Swan River. I know he's a true lover of wildlife and a conservationist and he brings this bill forward with very good intentions.

I would like the member for Swan River to tell the House, what species will be protected under this law?

**Mr. Wowchuk:** Okay, I thank my colleague very much for that really important question because as we were developing this bill many people were asking what species that this legislation would protect and what it would entail.

Species like bald and golden eagles are probably at the top of the list, many of our raptors. There is a number of hawks that are also included. And the owls, we quite often now see our great gray owls and snowy owls sitting on those hydro poles along highways and things like that, and they would definitely have the protection.

There's blue jays, polar bears—which is an icon of the North, and whenever somebody sees one of those polar bears they are quite excited—

**The Speaker:** Member's time has expired.

**MLA Naylor:** Our government has always been proud to protect wildlife in Manitoba. During our previous time in government we increased fines and extended protections to more species.

So I'm wondering if the member opposite can explain to us why he didn't introduce this bill during his seven and a half years in government?

**Mr. Wowchuk:** Okay, I thank the member for that. We made many changes to set the stage for this bill,

and one of the big changes was to equipping our conservation officers who are the boots on the ground every day and who are out there protecting these species.

So we kind of had to take the steps in order. We, you know, provided additional equipment that the officers would have and worked very, very hard to bring our officers so that they would be able to protect these species.

**Mr. Nesbitt:** In the member's speech, he mentioned a \$100,000 fine. I'm just wondering if some people might think it's extreme to fine someone \$100,000 for shooting a bird?

**Mr. Wowchuk:** Okay, I thank the member again, and just kind of in conclusion I wanted to mention about the cougars and the songbirds too, and when I was talking about the species.

Well, we are not in sync with other provinces. And people were looking at this. When you look at it as a slap on the wrist, you know, these kind of things will continue to happen without any type of deterrent. So having these fines increased to come in sync with other provinces like Saskatchewan, Alberta and BC will definitely be a deterrent for anyone who thinks of shooting these species.

So, not at all, it's just being on sync with other provinces in western Canada.

**MLA Naylor:** Earlier I asked a question about consultations and I guess what I'd like to hear from the member opposite is a bit more detail on the consultation process. When did these consultations start? I don't know if he was doing consultations while they were still in government or if this is something he took on after they lost the previous election and were, you know, failed in government.

And I'm also wondering very specific details—which First Nations were consulted with, which other groups were consulted with—are there written records that could be provided to the minister? Were community meetings held? We'd really like to understand what Manitobans think about this issue.

**Mr. Wowchuk:** Okay, I thank the member opposite.

These consultations were going on—they were ongoing over our whole time in government, Honourable Speaker. We were listening to people out there, on the ground.

And I want to be very specific to the member, this does not impact any type of hardy with First Nation—

or any type of harvest with First Nation communities. They have a lot of things where, right now, if an animal on the highway, for example, an eagle gets accidentally hit by a car that's feeding on a roadkill or something like that, which has been happening, these birds are turned over to First Nation communities to fulfill their need for ceremonial practices. So there was—

**The Speaker:** Member's time has expired.

**Mr. Nesbitt:** I know the member knows that during our time in government we did an extensive expansion of the CO service and provided them with more gear, more services so they're better equipped to do the hazardous job they do.

I'm just wondering if the member can tell the House if the CO service is supportive of Bill 221 and what role do they play in this—in the enforcement of poaching and—on animals across the province?

**Mr. Wowchuk:** Yes, I thank it, and I can't say enough about our CO service. They're the boots on the ground. They're the ones out there, daily, protecting our wildlife. You know, it was a little disappointing to see that they were sequestered to the border when we needed them out on the grounds, doing the things that they have been trained to do, and I think that was important.

We made a lot of progress. We invested more in conservation officers, expanded resources. The call centre was a big thing. COs and families didn't know, when they left home at night, were they going to return? Did they have that backup? And that call centre, they were very appreciative, and time over time we heard that while we were in government.

And the equipment we got for them, you know, there was some new units, trucks—

**The Speaker:** Member's time has expired.

**MLA Naylor:** I, too, want to commend the work of our conservation officers in this province. It's quite—it's been, you know, across the public service, it was quite devastating how much—how many positions were cut both within conservation and other departments during the previous seven and a half years in government. We are so proud of the work of COs and appreciate what they do to protect Manitobans and protect wildlife on a daily basis, in sometimes dangerous conditions.

So I'm just going to ask again about consultations. In order to support the work of government on this

issue, I'm wondering if the minister—or the MLA could provide written records of these consultations to the—

**The Speaker:** Time has expired.

**Mr. Wowchuk:** I thank the minister for her kind words on the COs because I keep looking back, and the COs were overwhelmed at the progress that we made in equipping them with the tools that they needed every day to be on the ground, and the vehicles and the appreciation that we showed, and the recognition that we gave time and time again.

And they were one of the main voices in saying that we have got some outdated, you know, legislation in place that we need to bring up and in sync with other provinces across the—across western Manitoba, and that's what worked toward. We worked very hard to trying to fulfill—

\* (10:20)

**The Speaker:** Member's time has expired.

**Mr. Nesbitt:** By the line of questioning from members opposite, it seems to me they're more concerned with consultation than the focus of this bill, which is going to reduce illegal poaching of protected species or, if that happens, the fines are going to increase.

Can the member address the concerns that maybe—be flowing through the heads from the people on the—or the members on the other side of the House? Why is this such an important issue that's facing Manitoba, even though they may think it's not?

**Mr. Wowchuk:** I thank the honourable member from Riding Mountain and my colleague for that great question.

This is about the future. This is about what our children, our grandchildren, our great-grandchildren will be able to share and say that I saw a cougar. I mean, when somebody sees a cougar now, it's all over Facebook in Manitoba, or I saw a bald eagle, or I saw a bald eagle's nest and saw that bald eagle catch a fish and take the fish to its nest.

Really important—I mean, it's about heritage; it's about maintaining biodiversity within our ecosystems. It's about respect, respect for wildlife—

**The Speaker:** Member's time has expired.

### Introduction of Guests

**The Speaker:** Before we move on to debate the bill, there's some guests that are only here for a short time. We have seated in the public gallery, from École Lansdowne, 35 grade 4 students under the direction of Marcus Bellec, and they are guests of the honourable member for McPhillips (MLA Devgan).

We welcome you here today.

\* \* \*

**The Speaker:** In case I didn't say it before, the time for questions has expired.

### Debate

**The Speaker:** The floor is now open for debate.

**MLA David Pankratz (Waverley):** I'm very pleased to be able to stand and put a few words on the record today on this bill that's been brought forward.

You know, and every time that I get to stand up here in this space, I often reflect on my roots here in the province and how deeply they're tied to the land.

My family came over from Ukraine, Molotschna Colony, so they came over looking for a better life, right, and when they arrived in Manitoba, they brought with them what they had, what they could carry and, you know, this deep belief that, ultimately, if you care for the land it would care for you in return, right?

So I'm really happy to be able to speak about this bill and conservation efforts specifically today. You know, and I've got to be honest with you, Honourable Speaker, I'm struggling a little bit this morning because the member opposite is talking about polar bears, and, meanwhile, they're a party whose potential leader is posting pictures of himself riding them out in the wild, right?

And so, you know, we can joke and take shots at each other back and forth, but seriously, if that is actually the sort of stuff that they're putting forward, can we trust them to take conservation efforts seriously as well, right, and, more importantly, looking at actual facts, the opposition, while they were in government, cut the Department of Environment and Climate Change by 70 per cent. It was absolutely absurd, and if we're talking about making changes that will benefit the lands here in Manitoba, how can you justify those decision-making processes when it comes to our animals and our land and our water here in the province?

So, you know, I don't want to take up too much time because I know there are a couple of people that are going to speak on this, but we're also, as a province right now and as a government, we're cracking down on illegal hunting and fishing. We're increasing fines. We've got a great minister working on this, and, you know, we're also—conservation, ultimately, it's not really necessarily just about punishing people, right, it's about protecting the future.

And so, I guess while I'm on the topic of future thinking, Honourable Speaker, I do have to mention something. I also find very curious that the members opposite seem far more interested, particularly recently, in our government's social media accounts than in their government's own environmental record. And don't get me wrong, you know; I know Instagram and TikTok isn't everyone's thing, but I'll say this, if the members opposite had maybe spent a little bit less time cutting conservation budgets, a little bit more time communicating with Manitobans and looking at our Instagram accounts, then maybe we wouldn't be in this mess to begin with.

So, ultimately, we're putting in the work as a government. We're doing it with respect for multiple communities across this province, including families like mine who came here over from Ukraine and farmed the land, Indigenous communities, rural, northern communities.

And those people will continue to protect this land for generations that will come after us because, you know, we on this side believe that we should have a Manitoba where our kids can still paddle down clean rivers, right, and where deer are still grazing at the edge of a forest and where the pickerel are still biting on a calm summer morning, right?

So that's the kind of province that my family came here hoping to find and that's the kind of province that I want to leave behind. And I know that our government is doing the important work to make sure that that's exactly how our province will be left when we leave here.

**Hon. Ian Bushie (Minister of Natural Resources and Indigenous Futures):** Thank you, Honourable Speaker, for the chance to put the—a few words on the record. And I'd like to thank my colleague from Waverley for putting those personal stories on the record as well, as it relates to this.

And it's unfortunate that the member opposite brings forth the Bill 221 but has no speakers to actually back that up as well, too. So we'll take this

opportunity to put a few words on the record to actually talk and ask the questions that they're refusing to ask themselves. *[interjection]*

So again, the member from Riding Mountain is chirping—former minister that didn't do any of this, by the way, who had that opportunity so that—in the question and answer, the thing that was asked for the member from Swan River was about: Why didn't you do anything when you were in government? Why didn't you do this? What did you do? And he talked about seven and a half years, and he talked about hearing many, many times about outdated legislation but yet did nothing about it. *[interjection]*

Seven and a half years—and it's still chirping from the member for Riding Mountain (Mr. Nesbitt), who seconded this as well, too, who was the minister, who had the opportunity to deal with this, who had the chance to do with this, who—*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Bushie:**—had the chance to bring forth legislation to deal with issues such as this, but refused to do so.

Yet he stands there and also diminishes the consultation piece. He says we seem to be, as a government, more worried about consultation. Absolutely, we are worried about consultation. We will consult with Manitobans from every background, from every—for every sector of the province because that is what good government does. Good government will come and constantly have the conversations, have the difficult conversations as well, too.

While we may not agree on everything all the time, we are for sure going to have the conversation just to—how can we be better? How can we do better? How can we do things in a better way? *[interjection]* Not close the door—again, the members are chirping because we're talking about consultation, because we know they don't do that whatsoever. They never have. They never will.

And that is why they are in the opposition benches, because they would not talk to Manitobans, they would not talk about those issues. Instead, there they are promoting their leader wannabe for posting pictures with polar bears in a very detrimental way.

So where are we on this regard? *[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Bushie:** So when we come with this collaboration and consultation that we want to do in a very comprehensive way, we do that. Instead, what do members

opposite do? They bring forth legislation, even narrow it down to, let's have this conversation within 30 minutes; you know, let's have this bigger conversation. Why are they so afraid to have a bigger conversation across all of Manitoba, across both sides of the aisle? *[interjection]*

Again, the member is chirping away, the former Natural Resources minister. He's chirping away because he knows he failed to do any of this. He failed to address these concerns. He—*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Bushie:** —failed to be able to come to the table and say, let's have a conversation across all parties, across aisles and across all of Manitoba, because he absolutely is refusing to do that.

So for us, the consultation piece is important. The engagement is important. And that's a priority for us as government to be able to sit there and say we're having the conversation across all, and we're the one to do that.

But again, seven and a half years, failed to do this. Instead, trying to bring this forth in 30 minutes. Seven and a half years instead of 30 minutes. *[interjection]* Again, nothing got done. And again, still chirping from the member from Riding Mountain, again, because he knows—he knows—he's been called out by members opposite to say, why didn't you do this? When you were the minister, why did you not do any of this? Because he doesn't have an answer for them. He simply doesn't have an answer as to, why didn't you bring this forth? Why didn't you bring forth Bill 221 and the means is what it's trying to do?

We are for sure going to have the conversation about protection of species. We're going to have those conversations across all members of the aisle, across all of Manitoba, because that is what good government does. We are going to get out there and not try to create wedge issues like the members opposite try to do, because they try to do that every single day.

But yet, when we talk about the consultation, they diminish that. They said members—the government is so worried about consultation—

\* (10:30)

**The Speaker:** Order, please. The hour being 10:30, as previously announced, we will now move on to debate—*[interjection]*

Oh, yes, when this matter is again before the House, the honourable minister will have six minutes remaining.

### **Bill 222—The Criminal Trespassers Act and Amendments to The Occupiers' Liability Act**

**The Speaker:** As previously announced, we will now move on to debate Bill 222, The Criminal Trespassers Act and Amendments to The Occupiers' Liability Act.

**Mr. Derek Johnson (Interlake-Gimli):** I move, seconded by the MLA for Brandon West, that Bill 222, The Criminal Trespassers Act and Amendments to The Occupiers' Liability Act, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

### ***Motion presented.***

**Mr. Johnson:** I rise today to present The Criminal Trespassers Act and the Amendments to The Occupiers' Liability Act, or Bill 222.

These legislative changes are not only reasonable, they are necessary. They represent a long overdue correction to an imbalance in our justice system, an imbalance that, until now, allowed criminals to exploit the very people they were harming.

At the heart of this legislation is a simple idea. If you break into somebody's home or business with the intent of committing a crime and you get injured in the process, you shouldn't be able to turn around and sue the person whose rights you were violating. That's not justice, that's absurd. And it's time that we said so loud and clear.

Let's be honest. Manitoba is facing a serious challenge when it comes to crime, especially property crime. Break-ins, theft, vandalism and violent incidences are rising. Families, farmers, business owners and seniors are telling us they don't feel safe.

And while this government continues to struggle with meaningful solutions to reduce crime in our communities, the very—at the very least we could do is make sure the victims of these crimes aren't being revictimized by a legal system that is supposed to protect them.

This bill is a small but powerful step in the right direction. Let me walk you through the legislation and what it actually does. So, first, under the criminal trespassers act, if someone aged 12 or older trespasses on private property with the intent to commit a crime and gets injured in the process, they cannot sue the property owner unless the owner has acted in a way



that is wilful or grossly disproportionate and extreme enough that results in a criminal conviction under the Criminal Code of Canada.

In other words, this bill does not give property owners a free pass to use dangerous force. This does not allow anyone to set traps or act recklessly. It does not encourage violence or to—someone to become a vigilante. In fact, it very clearly upholds the existing rules under the Criminal Code and common law regarding the use of force, self-defence and the protection of property.

But what it does do is restore a little common sense. The goal is to no longer see stories where a home-owner gets broken into and then ends up facing a lawsuit because the criminal hurts themselves while committing a crime or, in most cases, multiple crimes. That is not justice; that is exploitation and Manitobans know this.

This law ensures that the burden doesn't fall unfairly on the backs of victims. It protects good, law-abiding citizens from civil lawsuits filed by people who were actively in the process of committing crimes. That shouldn't be controversial, that should be common sense.

Now, let me address a few concerns that I've heard during my consultations. Some would say this bill might encourage homeowners to take the law into their own hands. But that's not what this legislation is about. If a property owner behaves recklessly or violently and crosses the line, they can still be held criminally responsible and 'criminy' liable. Nothing in this legislation prevents that. In fact, the bar for liability is very clear and very high. The property owner must have acted wilfully, grossly disproportionately and must actually be convicted by a court of law.

So let's also be clear, this is not a stand-your-ground bill. It does not excuse violence. It simply ensures that someone who breaks in—breaks the law doesn't get to use the civil courts to punish their victims.

Some will say, but what about the children? Well, the law applies to those who are 12 years of age or older. Why? Because at that age individuals are considered, by law, to have enough understanding to know right from wrong and know that breaking into someone's property is not just illegal but also dangerous. So this age limit is consistent with how other laws treat criminal responsibility.

Others had questions about the delay in litigation periods. But again, this is about fairness. If a property owner is charged with a criminal offence, the civil case must wait until the criminal matter is fully resolved. That ensures due process for everyone involved. It's a logical step that avoids conflicting rulings and protects the integrity of our justice system.

Now, let's talk about The Occupiers' Liability Act amendment. The change reinforces the principle that if you're on someone else's property without permission the owner does not owe you the same duty of care as they would to an invited guest.

Again, this is common sense. When you break into a business, a home, a farm or a shop, 'youse' assume the risk of being in a place you have no right to be. This doesn't mean occupiers can act dangerously or create unsafe conditions deliberately—no booby traps, this isn't about that. But it does mean that they shouldn't be held to the same standard of care as if someone has been invited into your home or onto your property.

This is not a radical idea. It's something courts and judges and occupiers have been calling for across Canada for years. Judges themselves have said that laws need clarity and with this legislation, we are delivering that clarity.

Let me be absolutely clear, this—not-bill is not about promoting violence, it's about protecting victims. It's about ensuring that when criminals are injured while committing crimes they don't get to twist the law to use the law as a weapon against the people that they victimize.

This is about restoring balance. This is about saying to homeowners, farmers, small-business owners, hard-working Manitobans [*phonetic*], we've got your back; if you're following the law, if you're not acting recklessly or violently and someone trespasses in your property to commit a crime, you shouldn't have to worry about being sued by this person who violated your space. This is what this bill accomplishes.

Now, will this bill stop crime overnight? Of course not. But it sends an important signal that our laws should protect the victims, not punish them. It restores faith in a justice system that too often seems tilted in favour of the offenders.

\* (10:40)

And it gives law-abiding citizens the assurance that their rights, their property and their safety are

being taken seriously. We've heard from communities and community leaders. We've heard from judges. We've seen real-life cases across this country that show an urgent need for a bill like this. Now is the time to act.

So I ask this House to support this legislation, not just because it's smart policy, because it's the right thing to do. Let's stand up for fairness. Let's stand up for common sense. And, most importantly, let's stand up for the rights of victims across Manitoba.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

### Questions

**The Speaker:** A question period of up to 10 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed to the sponsoring member by any member in the following sequence: first question to be asked by a member from another party; this is to be followed by a rotation between the parties; each independent member may ask one question. And no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

The floor is now open for questions.

**Mrs. Rachelle Schott (Kildonan-River East):** Honourable Speaker, Manitobans are protected when police forces have the resources to do their job. That's why our NDP government brought in a 28 per cent increase in their first budget for all municipal law enforcement organizations, with regular increases going forward. It's needed relief after the former, failed PC government froze funding for their entitlement—entire time in government.

My question for the member opposite is why he refused to protect Manitobans and their property and instead decided to freeze funding for all law enforcement in Manitoba during his time in government?

**Mr. Derek Johnson (Interlake-Gimli):** Well, obviously, we've seen a recent rise in crime lately, and I do agree that this bill will not stop crime overnight. But what it will do is it will empower property owners to not have to go through legal action of being sued when somebody violates them.

This is about protecting homeowners, property owners, farmers, ranchers. And I think if the member would take some time to go knock on some of their doors, they would see that this is very important and wanted by Manitobans.

**Mr. Wayne Balcaen (Brandon West):** I would really like to thank the member from Interlake-Gimli for bringing this important legislation forward. You

know, it's timely when we see what's happening in rural Manitoba and the knee-jerk reactions that are happening from this NDP government as a result of that. This is proactive legislation, Honourable Speaker.

So I'm wondering, how does this legislation ensure that property owners, particularly in rural and agricultural areas, are not held responsible for injuries sustained by those unlawfully entering their land?

**Mr. Johnson:** Of course that we know rural and agriculture property owners often deal with trespassing incidents that put their land, their livestock and even their livelihoods at risk. This legislation limits their liability, ensuring that they are not responsible for injuries sustained to those who knowingly and unlawfully enter their property to commit a crime.

It recognizes the unique challenges faced by farmers in rural communities that provide them with a greater legal certainty. A farm can be an inherently dangerous place, and can be difficult, if not impossible, to manage all those risks.

I think because we drive by many farmyards in the rural areas we see lots of—

**The Speaker:** Member's time has expired.

**Mrs. Schott:** Under our NDP government, there are more police officers on the streets. We're recruiting new officers after the former, failed PC government let 55 police officers go through their cuts and in-action.

My question for the member opposite is why he refused to protect Manitobans and their property and instead decided to get rid of 55 police officers?

**Mr. Johnson:** Well, obviously, the member hasn't read the bill, because this is about protecting property owners and their rights when somebody intentionally enters their property to commit a crime. This prevents that criminal from being able to sue that property owner if they step on a nail, if they slip on some ice.

If somebody's invited on your property, you know they're coming. You can salt your sidewalks. Somebody—it rains at 2 in the morning, sidewalks are icy at 3 in the morning when somebody is illegally entering your property, they slip and break their leg on that same ice; you don't know they're coming. It is not fair to the property owner for that person, that criminal, to sue the property owner.

**Mr. Balcaen:** I really want to compliment the member from Interlake-Gimli on bringing forward this very proactive legislation.

He mentioned something in his opening remarks about common sense legislation, and this really is common sense as we look at protecting individual rights but also, those that are involved in this as property owners.

So what measures are in place to ensure that property owners are only held liable in extreme cases where their actions are wilful, grossly disproportionate and lead to a criminal conviction?

**Mr. Johnson:** Yes, this legislation isn't about make-my-day law or stand your ground or whatever some of those terms are to our neighbours to the south of us. This legislation sets a high threshold for liability, requiring—requiring that a property owner must have acted with intent in a matter that is grossly disproportionate to the situation and must also have been criminally convicted for their actions.

This ensures that only truly defiant cases can result in liability, preventing frivolous claims from coming against property owners, farmers, ranchers and those that are acting in good faith to protect their homes and businesses. Again, this does not allow somebody—

**The Speaker:** Member's time has expired.

**Mrs. Schott:** Our NDP government brought back an expanded—a critical ankle monitoring program that is keeping Manitobans safe.

My question for the members opposite is why he cancelled the ankle-monitoring program and why he thought his cuts would protect Manitobans and their property?

**Mr. Johnson:** Yes, that's a similar question to asking somebody why they got rid of their horse and buggy and bought a car. Technology always increases and gets better and this—the new ankle monitoring technology that's there, with GPS and locations, absolutely something that I wish we had decades ago, never mind just years ago.

**Mr. Balcaen:** Again, common sense legislation that is being brought forward by the member for Interlake-Gimli (Mr. Johnson), and I'm looking forward to full-party support on this bill. As was previously mentioned, if the members opposite were out door-knocking, they would learn that the constituents really want to see this pass.

How does the amendment to the limitations act protect the legal rights of the injured party?

**Mr. Johnson:** Yes, this amendment extends the time frame for filing a lawsuit against a property owner until after criminal charges against them have been resolved. So, if the home owner is charged and convicted, then that does allow the trespasser—or the criminal, the violator—to press charges. This ensures that if the property owner's actions have only been deemed to be criminal in nature, the injured party will still have the full suit of legal remedies available to them.

So, if a trespasser goes into a booby trap that a property owner set up, they will have rights for a civil suit.

**Mrs. Schott:** Honourable Speaker, under the former, failed PC government, the court system didn't have the resources they needed to ensure Manitobans get justice. Positions were left unfilled and there weren't enough Crown attorneys to support true public safety.

Now, under our NDP government, we've hired 35 new Crown attorneys to ensure our justice system can protect Manitobans.

My question for the member opposite is why he funded—underfunded our justice system and why he thought his cuts would protect Manitobans and their property.

**Mr. Johnson:** I would like to make note to the member opposite that they are ignoring judges, lawyers and courts that are asking for this legislation. Why are they going unheard? Being ignored by this NDP government for their whole entire term that they've been in here—ignored.

\* (10:50)

The Justice Minister is laughing at the moment and he doesn't care what judges are saying. This is important legislation being asked for by judges in courts across the country.

**Mr. Balcaen:** My question for my colleague is simple: What feedback have you received from property owners, farmers and rural communities in support of this legislation?

And I ask this in the wake of extensive rural crime that is happening under this NDP watch and this Minister of Justice's (Mr. Wiebe) lack of foresight on rural crime and the safety of Manitobans.

It's disappointing that the member for Kildonan-River East (Mrs. Schott) toes the party line and asks questions that have nothing to do with this legislation.

I would like to hear more about this legislation.

**Mr. Johnson:** Well, I've—obviously, besides the judges and the courts that are asking for this, I've heard strong support from farmers, ranchers, business owners, homeowners right here in the city of Winnipeg who've been concerned about the rising number of trespassing incidents and crimes against them. Many have expressed that they feel vulnerable to both crime and potential legal repercussions, through no fault of their own.

This legislation responds directly to the concerns and provides them with greater certainty. Some members that I've contacted were actually astounded that a criminal could sue them if they got hurt on their property while they were perpetrating a crime—

**The Speaker:** Member's time has expired. The time for questions has expired.

And before we move on to debate, I just want to take a moment to remind all members that I would ask all members to please quit speaking while the Speaker is speaking. Thank you. I'd remind all members to make sure they're directing their comments through the Chair, not to a specific member across the way.

**Mr. Johnson:** On House business, please, Honourable Speaker.

### House Business

**The Speaker:** The honourable Opposition House Leader, on House business.

**Mr. Derek Johnson (Official Opposition House Leader):** Honourable Speaker, pursuant to rule 34(8), I am announcing that the private member's resolution to be considered on the next Thursday of private members' business will be the one put forward by the honourable member for La Vérendrye (Mr. Narth). The title of this resolution is recognizing Providence university college and theological 'seminary' 100th or centennial anniversary.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

**The Speaker:** It has been announced that, pursuant to rule 34(8), that the private member's resolution to be considered on the next Thursday of private members' business will be the one put forward by the honourable member for La Vérendrye. The title of the resolution is Recognizing Providence University College

and Theological Seminary's 100th (Centennial) Anniversary.

### Debate

**The Speaker:** So now we will move on to debate on Bill 222.

The honourable member for—I'm having a bad day, can't remember—Kirkfield Park.

**Mr. Logan Oxenham (Kirkfield Park):** It's always an honour to get up and speak in this Chamber. And, you know, there's a lot of folks that I talk to that live in Kirkfield Park who are law enforcement officers. They're either police officers, they're corrections, they're sheriffs. They're really proud of the work they do. I am very proud of the work they do.

Honourable Speaker, the PCs had seven and a half years to address crime. And when crime exploded under the former PC government, they decided to do nothing. In 2018, they froze, froze, froze; in 2019, they looked around and decided that municipal forces didn't need their help; in 2020, no increase to funding for municipal law enforcement whatsoever; in 2021, still nothing; 2022, when police forces were asked for the resources they needed after years of 'freezing' funding, still nothing from the members opposite; and, in 2023, they approached the election, they still decided police officers weren't worth their time.

So what did we do in 2023? Manitoba's vote—Manitoba voters decided the PCs and their soft-on-crime approach wasn't worth their time. Honourable Speaker, I worked in the Department of Justice and I saw the austerity in the cuts to Justice, the frozen funding, the drop in morale. But what a refreshing change, to have an NDP government that is taking crime seriously, not like some washed-up failed PC caucus playing woulda, coulda, shoulda now while in opposition.

So speaking of liability, Honourable Speaker, our government introduced the ankle monitoring system and it was endorsed by the National Police Federation. This program tracked chronic offenders, auto theft, those who were stealing vehicles. I remember Winnipeg police placing these ankle monitoring bracelets onto offenders and it was a very successful program. But you know what? The PCs cut that program.

Why? Why would you cut a program that was working? Why would you cut something that was successful? It's beyond me. We invested \$2.9 million in the electronic ankle monitoring system and we

expanded the program access across Manitoba. So this is, you know, actual work that we're doing for our province to ensure that there's safety and checks and balances.

We're investing \$2 million to expand Manitoba's operational communications, to strengthen law enforcement's ability to respond to violent crime. I know few folks who work at the command centre there who are dispatchers and they do an incredible job for the province. They're under tremendous amount of stress, and I'm so pleased to see our government adding and investing in the workers at the operational communications centre in Manitoba.

Honourable Speaker, we're also investing in 24 new Winnipeg police officers for community policing; 12 hit the streets in November, 12 more are coming in the spring. That's really exciting. Again, I recall working at the Winnipeg Remand Centre and seeing the change in government and seeing police resources being stretched far beyond the point that was manageable. And really, really pleased that our government is actually investing in law enforcement and investing in our communities, making them safer for folks.

And you know what? Municipalities are really happy with how we're tackling crime. In fact, the president of AMM, Kathy Valentino said: the Association of Manitoba Municipalities, AMM, welcomes the provincial government's investment to strengthen the RCMP's capacity and help ensure a more effective response to crime across Manitoba. With front-line officers dealing with repeat, prolific offenders and expanded responsibilities that extend beyond traditional law enforcement, these additional resources are both timely and essential.

So, Honourable Speaker, we're getting the work done to protect Manitobans and their property. I'd like to take this opportunity to just give a few shout-outs to our police here in Winnipeg and around the province who are doing work in their collaboration with our incredible Justice Minister. Thank you to them for their openness and willingness to work with our government.

I also want to have to shout-out the correctional officers who are always working hard, who are working overtime, who are tackling the root causes of crime and who are using all of the tools on their duty belts to keep Manitobans safe.

So, Honourable Speaker, I'd like to thank you for your time.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

**MLA JD Devgan (McPhillips):** Honourable Speaker, it's so ironic that the defund-the-police radicals on the other side have come forward with this bill. What did they do in their time of government? They cut police officers in Winnipeg—[interjection]

**The Speaker:** Order.

**MLA Devgan:** —they underinvested in police and today they have the gall to tell us to invest into police and law enforcement?

This government, this Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe) is doing that hard work; we're going to keep Manitobans safe.

\* (11:00)

**The Speaker:** The hour being—[interjection]

Order, please.

The hour being 11 o'clock, the time for private members' resolutions is finished. We now move on—sorry, private members' bills.

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member will have nine minutes—10 minutes remaining.

The hour being 11 o'clock—[interjection]

Order, please. Order, please.

I just admonished people about when the Speaker is standing and speaking, they should sit down and be quiet. So I'd appreciate if that took place now.

## RESOLUTIONS

### Res. 7—O Canada

**The Speaker:** The hour being 11 o'clock, we've now—move on to private members' resolutions. The resolution before us this morning is resolution 7, O Canada.

**Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River):** I move, seconded by the MLA from Riding Mountain,

*WHEREAS tariffs imposed and threatened by U.S. President Donald Trump threaten Canada's sovereignty and economic security; and*

*WHEREAS the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba stands united in defending the province, its workers and its industries against Trump's tariffs and threats; and*

*WHEREAS each sitting day of the Manitoba Legislature opens with a Prayer and Land Acknowledgement; and*

*WHEREAS a Leger Marketing poll found 86 per cent of Manitoban respondents were proud to be Canadian; and*

*WHEREAS "O Canada" was proclaimed Canada's national anthem in 1980, a century after it was first sung in 1880; and*

*WHEREAS the singing of "O Canada" at public events has become a strong symbol and outlet for Canadian pride; and*

*WHEREAS Manitobans love Canada, and Manitoba will never become the 51st state.*

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba be urged, as a permanent symbol of collective Canadian pride, to refer to the Rules committee for the proposal to sing O Canada each sitting day after the daily prayer and land acknowledgment.

**The Speaker:** Order, please.

***Motion presented.***

**Mr. Wowchuk:** Bar none, Canada is the most beautiful country on earth. Though not perfect, there is no place that comes close to Canada. I truly believe that and I know most Manitobans feel that way too.

Since President Donald Trump announced his unjustified tariffs and began suggesting he'd annex Canada, we've seen an influx of similar sentiments in our province and across the country.

People are coming together, and as Manitobans increasingly seek opportunities to unify, it's on us as legislators to set an example of what that can look like.

Manitobans want to see more unity among their elected officials. That is why, today, our Progressive Conservative team is introducing this resolution to sing our national anthem in these Chambers every sitting day as a daily unified demonstration of our love for Canada.

O Canada reminds us of a common higher purpose that we share as Canadians to our country. Beyond political divisions and partisan lines, it celebrates the mutual history and identity held by Canadians that differentiates us from anywhere else.

The resolution responds to a growing demand for strong expressions of Canadian patriotism. Following recent years of national 'tride'—pride being actively frowned upon across Canada, including by this very NDP, who tore down Canadian flags and led rallies to cancel Canada Day. Progressive Conservatives will

always put Manitoba and Canada first. But for the past two months, the NDP have shamelessly questioned this side of the House on our loyalty to Canada, yet the NDP can't even take what they dish out.

Yesterday, the Premier (Mr. Kinew) was asked to show his love for Canada by supporting this resolution and immediately reacted with anger and at the idea of his partisan being put into question.

Let me be clear: Progressive Conservatives have been encouraging and advancing a pro-Canadian environment in Manitoba from the very beginning. Unlike the NDP, our patriotism does not hinge upon Donald Trump.

It was PCs who invested tens of millions into our tourism sector to encourage the world to experience Manitoba and Canada. That began in 2016 with the first boost to Travel Manitoba in a decade. It was PCs who helped fund hundreds of local Canada Day celebrations, reconciliation projects, community heritage museums, monuments and other pro-Canada initiatives across Manitoba through programs like the A-S-C-S fund, which was scrapped by the NDP.

It was PCs who invested millions into boosting our national sports teams, like the Blue Bombers and the Sea Bears. That's why Winnipeg is hosting both the Grey Cup and CEBL championships this year.

It's the PCs who supported numerous initiatives to honour Canadian history, like installing the statues of Louis Riel and Chief Peguis on our legislative grounds, the latter of which has since been delayed by the NDP.

In fact, PCs are so proud to be Canadian that we pioneered this country's Provincial Nominee Program to increase opportunities for people across the world, to make Canada their home and become fellow patriots. Every year, thousands of immigrants in Manitoba realize their dream of becoming Canadian citizens. Myself and my colleagues have had the honour of witnessing many citizenship ceremonies over the years, where new and long-time Canadians alike proudly sing O Canada. This country is made of nearly 5,000 ethnocultural groups and over 600 First Nation communities who speak over 200 languages. The unifying thread is Canada.

Commemorating Canada is not a matter of simply holding on to the past; it's an affirmation of our responsibility to make this country the best it can be. It is a commitment to reconciliation, a recognition of our treaties and an acknowledgement of those who came before. We need to ensure Manitobans feel

hopeful in Canada. Canada represents hope to people around the world who come from ways away to pursue a better life for themselves and their families.

In conclusion, to sing O Canada is to honour all those who've embraced Canada as their home. To sing O Canada is to celebrate that which brings together the diversity of people we represent every day in this Legislature. To sing O Canada, paired with the land acknowledgement, is to celebrate the full inclusion of Indigenous peoples in the prosperity of Canada. To sing O Canada is to offer hope.

We respect—or we expect our children to sing O Canada at schools. We expect Jets fans to sing it at every game. If we expect O Canada from Manitobans, Manitobans have a right to expect it from us.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

### Introduction of Guests

**The Speaker:** Order, please.

Prior to moving on, I want to introduce former member Shannon Martin who was the member for McPhillips. He's seated in the loge to my left.

### Questions

**The Speaker:** And now a question period of up to 10 minutes will be held and questions may be addressed in the following sequence: the first question to be asked by a member from another party; any subsequent questions must follow a rotation between the parties; each independent member may ask one question. And no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

The floor is now open for questions.

**MLA Jelynn Dela Cruz (Radisson):** Honourable Speaker, on this side of the House, we understand patriotic responsibility. We love Canada. That member opposite and their failed government had seven and a half years to get this done. He had seven and a half years to open up his government phone and use it for something productive, like sending one email requesting this to the Rules committee.

So, Honourable Speaker, my question to the member is: If he, quote unquote, doesn't—you know, his patriotism doesn't hinge on Donald Trump, why didn't he do something as patriotic as this in his seven and a half years, and what was he using his phone for instead?

\* (11:10)

**Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River):** Oh, man, some pretty high words there.

We—we're talking about a minute. A minute and 14 seconds. I would've thought this member and the NDP would be overwhelmingly to support it. I'm shocked that the idea of singing O Canada is even an issue.

**MLA Jeff Bereza (Portage la Prairie):** I'd like to thank the member of Swan River, my colleague, for bringing this forward, that I think is very important for us to talk about here today.

Can you please tell us about a time that impacted you while you were singing O Canada?

**Mr. Wowchuk:** Sorry, Honourable Speaker. I thank the member from Portage, my colleague for this very important question.

I look back and I remember back in the 1960s, which was a very long time ago, in a small little one-room schoolhouse in Cowan, Manitoba, where the first day of school, we walked in there, and it was pretty frightening as a toddler, I guess you could call it. And we sang O Canada and I kind of looked at the grade 7 and 8s, and we just followed suit and I just kind of moved my lips.

But that immediately said: this is the right thing to do. This is what living in Canada, living in Manitoba is all about. And from then on, it's just been such an important thing.

Thank you.

**MLA Dela Cruz:** Honourable Speaker, members opposite need to take a long, hard look in the mirror and have some hard conversations around the caucus table.

While their leadership race-as-establishment candidate was saying thank you to Donald Trump for his attack against our country, we were rallying and reclaiming our flag on April 6 with thousands of Manitobans and even saying O Canada together, Honourable Speaker.

Because their potential leader is so out of touch, I think we all deserve to know: Do the other members opposite with—side with the member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Khan) thanking US President Donald Trump for his tariffs, or do they stand with the rest of Canada and Manitoba?

**Mr. Wowchuk:** I thank the member again for a question.

Honourable Speaker, this is an opportunity to unite Manitoba and all Canadians against Canada to become a 51st state. I'm shocked it's even a debate, and this member is questioning our patriotism during these times where Donald Trump is trying to impose tariffs and trying to divide the country. This is where we have to come together and become one.

Thank you.

**Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz):** I want to also thank my colleague, the member from Swan River, for introducing this resolution here this morning, and it is a great resolution.

And I just want to ask the member: Can he tell us how this will encourage patriotism here in our province of Manitoba?

**Mr. Wowchuk:** I thank my colleague from Agassiz for a very important question.

And we, every day, you know, we see singing in schools, O Canada, arenas. We go to a Jets game now, and that true north strong and free and everybody in unison stands and is very unified. And that's what we want to become.

It's quite important for us. It's become an icon of Canada to be able to sing, to unify the country, bring us together. So—and especially now, this is probably the most important time for us to show that unification, both across the House with the members and on this side of the House. And I hope that they will pass this today and truly show—

**The Speaker:** Member's time has expired.

**MLA Dela Cruz:** Honourable Speaker, thank you for that recognition. I'm really glad that members opposite are finally getting on board with patriotism.

That member opposite and his failed government team have a track record of sending our precious Canadian dollars out of province. Now in opposition, they're saying that they should—we should keep lining the pockets of people like Elon Musk, but Manitobans are clear they don't want their government dollars going to Elon, Honourable Speaker. They want us to buy Canadian.

So I have a simple question for the members heckling me across the way: Does the member opposite agree with the member for Midland (Mrs. Stone) when she says our government should be—keep sending money to Mr. Musk, our hard-earned dollars, Honourable Speaker, or do they stand with the rest of Canada and Manitoba?

**Mr. Wowchuk:** I thank the member opposite and I very hope the member opposite is able to convince the fakes on the other side of the House to come on board with us and to be able to show—or truly show their patriotism toward Canada, because we know many of them, they kind of show something that's not really there. We want them to show it every morning, and then we will believe that they are truly patriotic to this country.

**MLA Bereza:** Again, when it comes to patriotism, I have to thank the member from Swan River, my colleague, for bringing this forward because it is so important here. Rick, you being an—sorry—

**The Speaker:** Order, please.

Two things of note is, first, we don't call members by their names. We use their constituency or their ministerial title. And secondly, you address questions through the Chair and not directly to members.

**MLA Bereza:** Honourable Speaker, thank you for the reminder.

Can you tell—or can you tell us about a time that impacted you during—

**The Speaker:** Order, please.

I just reminded the member to direct his questions through the Chair, so he should do that.

**MLA Bereza:** Honourable Speaker, can the member from Swan River tell the House about a time during the teaching career that he was embarrassed—

**The Speaker:** Member's time has expired.

**Mr. Wowchuk:** Thank you to my member and I think the embarrassing part now is coming—listening to the opposition coming from across the floor right now. I mean, there is resistance, there is heckling, there is holes—we're just asking them for something very simple today, Honourable Speaker. We're asking them to come on board to share the glory, the great things that this country, this province, has to offer.

And let's stand united against a person like Donald Trump. We say that every day. They question that and they're just trying to find ways to try to divide and cover their fake—

**The Speaker:** Member's time has expired.

**MLA Dela Cruz:** Honourable Speaker, I am glad that members opposite are here, finally wearing their red after they were wearing blue on April 6 and there're only a few of them. We didn't get to sing O Canada



with many of the people across the way that day, but public health care is a core value of ours as Canadians.

Honourable Speaker, public health care is the reason my family came from—of the fragmented state of the Philippines to contribute to this workforce, instead. Meanwhile, the PCs betrayed this idea at every turn possible by cutting capacity and selling off every piece that they could.

So it is concerning to me that the member for Borderland (Mr. Guenter) has said in this Chamber that becoming the 51st state and taking—the 51st state, taking on the US-style health care was no problem.

Therefore, a simple question again, Honourable Speaker: Does that team agree with their member for Borderland's wish to become the 51st state or do they stand with the rest of Canada and Manitoba?

**The Speaker:** Member's time has expired.

**Mr. Wowchuk:** I'm just going to reiterate it once again. This member, I appreciate, you know, her patriotism, what she is saying. So can she convince her colleagues to give one minute and 14 seconds a day to bring this province and this country together?

**Ms. Byram:** Again, it is with great Canadian pride that I stand here today in support of my colleague, the member from Swan River, to support him in his resolution here today.

I, too, grew up in a—well, I grew up in rural Manitoba, went to school in a classroom where we stood every day and we sang O Canada. That's how we started our day. That's how we started our mornings, every day. We entered that classroom and were patriotic and sang the Canadian anthem.

\* (11:20)

I'm also very proud—Canadian. We—

**The Speaker:** Member's time has expired.

**Mr. Wowchuk:** I understand where my colleague—and I thank her for the question because ever since the times, those people in rural Manitoba and various places within, you know, this province, and especially the rural—that's where our roots are, is in rural Manitoba.

And that's the way we were brought up and that's the way that we want to continue, and what better way than in this Legislature, every day to continue that tradition and showing our patriotism toward this province and this country?

So let's get on board, let's pass this resolution and get on with things.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Order, please.

The time for questions has expired.

### Debate

**The Speaker:** The floor is now open for debate.

**MLA David Pankratz (Waverley):** Just before I get going, I was looking through the whereas clauses here, and I noticed it says: Whereas a Leger marketing poll found 86 per cent of Manitoban respondents were proud to be Canadian. I was just thinking: I think that, if some of the members opposite were to leave, that number would go up significantly, actually, based on what I have been hearing from them recently here in the Chamber.

You know, and—but before I begin, I do just want to—I want to say this: "O Canada! / Our home and native land / True patriot love in all of us command. / With glowing hearts we see thee rise, / The True North strong and free / From far and wide, / O Canada, we stand on guard for thee. / God keep our land glorious and free / O Canada, we stand on guard for thee. / O Canada, we stand on guard for thee." *[interjection]*

So I wanted to read that before I started speaking about this resolution today, and, you know, I appreciate members opposite were heckling while I tried to read the lyrics of our national anthem. It's really unfortunate, but to be honest, it doesn't surprise me, based on the rhetoric I've been hearing from that side of the Chamber over the last few weeks. It's been incredibly disappointing, frankly.

And so, yes. We're thrilled to stand up and speak in support of Canada, of our country as we have done consistently since these threats from Trump, these tariffs have started to be implemented. We have all done this work. So, you know, we debate this resolution today, and I'm so reminded of the values that have always made this country so special, and that I see, in that song specifically, in our shared commitment to kindness, to unity, to lifting each other up no matter our background or where we come from.

You know, I'm particularly proud, I've got to say, when we speak of patriotism in Canada, of a team here in the government side of the benches, that truly embodies so many of those values. In this government, we're more than a collection of individuals, right? We're a team that are really tightly connected

by our passion for this country and for this province, for service and our commitment to building a brighter future for Manitoba and Canada.

And you know, as I said, when I think of patriotism and this song, O Canada, a true love for our country, I think of this team that we've got here in Manitoba, and I think of folks like the Minister of Families (MLA Fontaine), for example, who's been a tireless advocate for young people, for marginalized communities, for women, for Indigenous youth. Her leadership is, you know, already creating a foundation for the next generation of great Canadians, and I lift her up for that incredible work that she does and the leaders that she will shape for our future here in Canada.

When I think of patriotism and O Canada, I also think of the Minister of Education who brought forward some great legislation yesterday that also will enshrine some of these things within schools in our country. You know, and is carrying on the legacy of Nello Altomare who has fearlessly advocated for the education and well-being of our young minds here in Canada.

You know, and I can't help but say also that when I think of O Canada and patriotism and what this country means and the empathy and the caring that we show to newcomers, for example, I think of the Minister of Housing, Addictions, Homelessness (Ms. Smith) who, through their experience, through their empathy that I was speaking of, they've created an environment where people can feel heard and supported and seen as part of that shared Canadian story that continues to move forward.

You know, and, of course, just before I move on from this train of thought, I have to mention our incredible Premier (Mr. Kinew), who is a leader who does not just talk about Canadian values; he actually lives them every day, right? And our Premier, he leads with heart. He stands up for fairness, stands up for justice, for the things that make this country really wonderful.

And this is a province that raised me so, you know, I really feel like he speaks to so many of those great qualities that I have seen in this province as I've grown up. And that leadership is just such a constant reminder of the values I know we are all here to defend and promote, and I'm sure that the opposition would agree with me in that assessment.

So I could go on and on about each one of these folks on this team, every one of my colleagues, who

do such incredible work for Manitoba. You know, our team is so filled with passionate and dedicated individuals who are really putting in the work every single day for Manitoba and for Canada.

And they're the values, ultimately—you know, I'm in a role as special envoy for military affairs, as well, and I can't help but mention that this is the week that we are commemorating the battle at Vimy Ridge, right? And these values of unity, of community and of service to others. Let's just remember that those values—they truly are not just words.

And I know the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Ewasko) wants to heckle me as I talk about the Canadian military here, which is unfortunate. It's an important week—*[interjection]* It's an important week and we can have a conversation later, if he would like. I'd be happy to have that conversation.

But, you know, it's a way of life that we're so proud to uphold here for our veterans, for our Canadian Armed Forces who do such incredible work every single day on our behalf. And it's such an important legacy that we're determined to pass on to the next generation, to my kids.

And, you know, speaking of that legacy that we're passing on, I do have to say there is so many young folks who came to the Legislature this past weekend to celebrate with us at the Rally for Canada, which was such an amazing, galvanizing event. We sang O Canada right at the very beginning. It was such a wonderful bonding experience for people from across different cultures and groups, coming together to celebrate this amazing country.

And I do just personally have to say, I was so thrilled that—and I'm fortunate enough to call him a friend—Fred Penner was here as a real Canadian treasure to perform for us. And it was one of those things that, you know, looking up on stage, watching him perform for the kids, for the adults, I feel like he goes across generations. He really embodies so many of those Canadian values, as well. And you know, when I was reading O Canada, the lyrics, so many of those words just seem to fit in the way that he lives his life every single day.

I actually remember clearly going to his house for one of his famous Christmas parties back in the day, and it's musicians from all across the province, get together to celebrate and, you know, when I think of it now, it was this really patriotic moment with everyone just being shared through song and stories and our connected values that we have as Canadians

and Manitobans. And I look back fondly on that, and I want to just thank Fred for being there on Saturday to sing O Canada with us. And specifically around this resolution, you know, and the reason why I'm here speaking today, he's really embodied those values.

So, you know, I would say that today's a great opportunity for us to really think about what O Canada means to us and to continue to have these conversations about what it means to be patriotic; to really stick up for our country, particularly here on the government side.

And ultimately, I would just say that it means every person has a voice, right? Every community is valued. We're all united in that shared commitment to the greater good, and that's certainly the Canada that's—I believe in. I know that's the Canada that my family and friends believe in, and that this government and our incredible team believe in. And it's the Canada that, as I said, it stands on guard for all of us, right, and a Canada that rises together, no matter where we come from or what we've been through.

So we will always be the true north, strong and free.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

**Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz):** Again, it is with great Canadian pride that I rise here today to speak to this resolution brought forward by my colleague from Swan River and the importance of this.

\* (11:30)

And you know, like I was saying before, we live in a great country where we are able to celebrate very much diversity and culture here in our great country and our province of Manitoba.

I have, for many years, been able to attend many July 1st celebrations and that is very patriotic. There's quite often, across our country, and here, specifically in the province, many communities, whether they're large or small, get to celebrate Canada Day, whether it's with family barbecues, activities and quite often, a beautiful display of fireworks.

And I think it's important that, you know, families get together to celebrate, whether it be their culture, but especially on Canada Day, and whether they're newcomers to our country, or we've been lifelong residents, I think we can all embrace the patriotic—embrace all of that here in our country.

Again, I support the member of Swan River and I support this private member's resolution and I just

ask that may we all stand together to honour and celebrate our country, O Canada.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** The honourable minister of sport, culture and heritage.

**An Honourable Member:** Honourable Speaker, fellow legislature—fellow legislators and fellow Manitobans—

**The Speaker:** Oh—sorry, the honourable Minister of Municipal and Northern Relations.

**Hon. Glen Simard (Minister of Municipal and Northern Relations):** All right. Honourable Speaker, we both get a do-over.

Fellow legislators and fellow Manitobans, let me begin with one simple truth: Manitobans are strong, Canadians are proud, and together we are unshakable.

Just last weekend, we stood together in front of this very building, the people's building, to send a message loud and clear: We are Canadian and we will never be the 51st state.

We sang O Canada with full hearts. We celebrated our music, our culture, our families. We stood together in unity and pride and in defiance of those who would rather bow to foreign interests than lift up their own people.

Les Manitobains et Manitobaines sont forts et fortes. Les Canadiens et Canadiennes sont fiers et ensemble, nous sommes inébranlables. Dimanche dernier, nous étions des centaines — des centaines rassemblés devant cet édifice pour peuple, pour envoyer un message fort et clair : nous sommes Canadiens et Canadiennes, et nous ne serons jamais le 51<sup>e</sup> état.

Nous avons chanté « Ô Canada » à pleins poumons. Nous avons célébré notre musique, notre culture, nos familles. Nous étions unis par la fierté et la volonté de défendre ce qui nous appartient.

#### **Translation**

*Manitobans are strong, Canadians are proud, and together, we are steadfast. Last Sunday, hundreds of us gathered in front of this building of the people, to send a loud and clear message: we are Canadians, and we will never be the 51st state.*

*We sang O Canada at the top of our lungs. We celebrated our music, our culture, our families. We were united by pride and the will to defend what is ours.*

**English**

Canada is more than just a place on a map. It's a mosaic of languages, cultures, histories and dreams. It's a place where we stand shoulder to shoulder, no matter where we came from, what we believe, or who we love.

That's what we celebrated at our rally for Canada: local musicians, food trucks, families playing street hockey and the beautiful sound of our national anthem echoing across the Legislature grounds. Singing the anthem lets us proclaim that we love our country, we're proud of who we are and we will always stand up for Canada.

This bill suggests anthem singing is how we demonstrate patriotism. While I would never suggest otherwise, there is no clearer demonstration of patriotism than continuing to the ongoing project of building a better Canada. And that's what we are doing. We are building one Manitoba: a province where every person matters, where every voice counts and where every community has a place at the table.

Patriotism isn't just about this proposed bill. It's about people; it's about families; it's about facing uncertainty with unity, strength and purpose.

We're Trump-proofing our economy by investing in our own, supporting local businesses, helping workers adapt and providing tax 'aferrals' for those facing hardship due to American tariffs.

We're building a resilient future with new investments in post-secondary institutions, a renewed Washington trade office and a bold forward-thinking approach to critical minerals, energy and agriculture.

And when it comes to health care, we are restoring public health care, not selling it off to the highest bidder. Because in Canada, health care is a right, not a privilege to those who can afford it.

Être fier de notre pays, ce n'est pas juste une chanson. Nous construisons un Manitoba uni, une province où chaque personne compte, où chaque voix est entendue, et où chaque communauté a sa place à la table.

Notre budget 25 ne parle pas que des chiffres : il parle des gens, des familles, de notre avenir commun. Nous rendons notre économie à l'épreuve de Trump en soutenant nos propres entreprises, en accompagnant nos travailleurs, et en reportant les impôts sur ceux touchés par les tarifs américains.

Nous préparons l'avenir avec des investissements dans l'enseignement postsecondaire, un bureau de représentation à Washington, une stratégie audacieuse dans nos minéraux critiques, l'énergie et l'agriculture. Et en santé, nous rebâtissons notre système de santé publique. Nous le vendons pas au plus offrant, parce qu'au Canada, les soins de santé sont un droit, pas un luxe réservé à ceux qui peuvent se le permettre.

Et maintenant, parlons de l'alternative. Parce que pendant que nous étions dehors à célébrer le Canada, à chanter « Ô Canada », à soutenir nos communautés, les députés d'en face remerciaient Donald Trump de nuire à notre économie. Oui, vous l'avez bien entendu : des membres ont remercié Trump pour les tarifs, voulaient envoyer plus d'argent public à Elon Musk. Il y en a qui ont suggéré que le Manitoba devrait devenir américain.

Soyons très clairs : nous ne serons jamais le 51<sup>e</sup> état. Alors que nous investissions ici au Manitoba, les conservateurs envoyaient des chèques à l'entreprise étrangère. Pendant que nous ouvrons les hôpitaux, ils ont fermé les urgences. Ils ont même vendu, pour 5 millions de dollars, un contrat de laissez-passer de parcs provinciaux à une entreprise texane – une entreprise du Texas.

Nous avons annulé ce contrat, et cet été, nos parcs provinciaux seront gratuits pour tout le monde, parce que c'est ainsi qu'on bâtit la fierté, pas le profit.

**Translation**

*Being proud of our country is not just a song. We are building a united Manitoba, a province where every person counts, every voice is heard and every community has a seat at the table.*

*Our Budget 2025 is not just about numbers: it is about people, about families, about our shared future. We are making our economy Trump-proof by supporting our own businesses, standing by our workers and deferring taxes for those affected by American tariffs.*

*We are preparing for the future with investments in post-secondary education, a representation office in Washington and a bold strategy for our critical minerals, our energy and our agriculture. In health, we are rebuilding our public health-care system, we are not selling it to the highest bidder: because in Canada, health care is a right, not a luxury reserved for those who can afford it.*

*And now, let's talk about the alternative. Because while we were out celebrating Canada, singing O Canada and supporting our communities, the*

*members opposite were thanking Donald Trump for hurting our economy. Yes, you heard it right: some members thanked Trump for the tariffs, they wanted to send more public money to Elon Musk. Some suggested that Manitoba should become American.*

*Let's be very clear: we will never be the 51st state. Whereas we are investing here in Manitoba, the Conservatives were sending cheques to foreign companies. Whereas we are opening hospitals, they were closing emergency rooms. They even sold a \$5-million contract for provincial park passes to a Texas company.*

*We cancelled that contract, and this summer our provincial parks will be free for everyone, because that is how you build pride, not profit.*

### **English**

I can appreciate the desire to somehow, with this bill, enshrine patriotism. But it is not in our—but is it not in our concrete actions and what we do?

Funding health care is a core Canadian value. I ask you, was this patriotic? Firing nurses, shutting down ERs; sending Manitobans across the border for surgeries—surgeries that could have been done right here at home. We are reversing that damage. We are rebuilding our capacity. And we are keeping health care public, accessible and Canadian, because your health should never depend on your wallet, it should depend on your needs. And under this government, it always will.

Canada isn't just a song in the Legislature. It's an idea. Canada is not a melting pot, it's a mosaic. We don't ask people to erase who they are. We lift each other up and celebrate what makes us different, while embracing what unites us all. This government stands for inclusion, compassion and Canadian unity.

Le Canada n'est pas un creuset, c'est un kaléidoscope vivant. Nous ne demandons pas aux jeunes et aux gens de renoncer à qui ils sont. Nous célébrons nos différences, et nous nous rassemblons autour de ce qui nous unit, parce que ce gouvernement défend inclusion, la compassion et l'unité canadienne.

### **Translation**

*Canada is not a melting pot: it is a living kaleidoscope. We do not ask youths or anyone to give up who they are. We celebrate our differences, and we come together around what unites us, because this government stands for inclusion, compassion and Canadian unity.*

### **English**

This bill is perhaps suited as a discussion with the Rules committee of the Legislative Assembly. We, as a government, are more about actions in the community. Small businesses are the heart of Manitoba's economy. They're also the soul of our communities. At our rally for Canada, we didn't just invited—just didn't invite them, we centered them. We gave them a platform, a voice, a place in the celebration. Because that's what local leadership looks like, not sending cheques to billionaires, not outsourcing to foreign companies, but investing in our people, in our neighbourhoods, in our future.

\* (11:40)

We are at a crossroads. One path leads to division, privatization and a submission to foreign powers. The other path leads to unity, investment and pride in our nation. That's the path we are walking, together.

To every Manitoban worried about their job, their health care, their children's future: we are in your corner.

To every small business trying to stay afloat: we hear you and we are with you.

Nous sommes à la croisée des chemins. Un chemin mène à la division, à la 'privatisation', à la soumission des puissances étrangères : c'est le chemin que les conservateurs ont choisi. L'autre chemin mène à l'unité, à l'investissement et la fierté nationale : c'est celui que nous empruntons, des soins de santé, et on fait ensemble.

À petit – à chaque petite entreprise qui tente de survivre : on vous entend, et on est avec vous.

À chaque famille qui était avec nous le six avril, chantant « Ô, Canada », les larmes aux yeux : merci. Vous nous avez rappelé qui nous sommes. Nous sommes Canadiens et Canadiennes. Nous sommes Manitobains et Manitobaines. Nous sommes forts et fortes, libres et unis, et nous ne cesserons jamais de nous battre pour cette province. Nous ne cesserons jamais de nous battre pour votre et notre pays.

### **Translation**

*We are at a crossroads. One path leads to division, privatisation and subservience to foreign powers: that is the path the Conservatives have chosen. The other path leads to unity, investment and national pride: that is the one we are choosing, with health care and joint efforts.*

*To every small business trying to survive: we hear you, and we are with you.*

*To every family who was with us on April 6, singing O Canada with tears in their eyes: thank you. You reminded us of who we are. We are Canadians. We are Manitobans. We are strong, free and united, and we will never stop fighting for this province. We will never stop fighting for your and our country.*

### **English**

To every family who stood with us on April 6, singing O Canada, with tears in their eyes: Thank you. You reminded us who we are. We are Canadian. We are Manitoban. We are strong, free and united and we will never stop fighting for this province and we will never stop fighting for our country.

Merci. Thank you. Miigwech.

**MLA Jeff Bereza (Portage la Prairie):** The title O Canada, what does it mean to me? It's a song of pride, reflection and unity. It's a great honour to stand here before you today and speak about something that is woven into the fabric of our national identity.

Our national anthem, O Canada—whether you sung it in a packed hockey rink, at a quiet school assembly, or while watching fireworks on Canada Day, that simple act connects all of us in a powerful way.

Why do we sing O Canada? It reflects our nation's journey, including our proudest moments and our deepest scars and how it continues to evolve alongside the story of this country. I was honoured—I will not sing today. I was honoured to sing O Canada down in the States at the SARL convention when we were asked if the Canadians would like to do anything special. And I said: You bet.

But I was really—I didn't have anything patriotic to wear. I didn't have my bowtie. I didn't have my red pin. I didn't have my flag. But I did have a bag that says Canada on it and I know I can't use it as a prop and I won't use it as a prop, but I carry a bag with me every day, a brown leather bag and in the bottom of that bag is that red Canadian bag; that bag that I carry so proudly.

And any time—any time that anyone wants me to break into song and talk about this great, amazing country that my parents brought me up in, that my grandparents emigrated to here, I am so proud to do it every day.

I want to once again thank the member from Swan River for bringing this important decision through, to sing O Canada, to talk about O Canada that is so important to us and to unite us. Sometimes in this House, we're—it gets a little heated in here. We can always come back to that great song, O Canada. And it doesn't just mean about moving our lips or not singing it; it means to sing it, loud and proud.

Thank you so much, Honourable Speaker.

**MLA Billie Cross (Seine River):** I'm really thrilled to have the opportunity to stand up and speak to this resolution.

I love Canada. I'm a proud Canadian and there is no country I would rather be a member of than this one; to raise my family in, to see my friends prosper and to be who we really are.

Member opposite who brought this resolution forward said that we're questioning their patriotism. I think what we're questioning is their sincerity. We're questioning their understanding of what it really means to be a Canadian and a patriot. I'm questioning if they understand what it means to be a true elected representative.

It's not superficial symbols or beliefs on who we are. There was once this beer commercial that we all probably loved quite dearly and we all remember, where it said: I'm not a lumberjack or a fur trader. I don't live in an igloo or eat blubber or own a dog sled. I don't know Jimmy [phonetic], Sally [phonetic] or Suzie [phonetic] from Canada, although I'm certain they're really nice. I have a Prime Minister, not a President. I speak English and French, not American. I pronounce it about, not 'aboot'. I can proudly sew my country's flag on my backpack. I believe in peacekeeping, not policing; diversity, not assimilation. And that the beaver is a truly proud and noble animal. A toque is a hat. A chesterfield is a couch. And it's pronounced zed, not zee, zed. Canada is the second largest land mass, the first nation of hockey, the best part of North America.

Those are symbols of what it might mean to be a Canadian, but they're superficial symbols. What Canada really means and what we all need to understand is that we live in a democracy and that's the core of our identity; a democracy which believes in inclusion, accountable governance, peaceful pluralism and respect for diversity and human rights.

Democracy is not just a system of government. It's a societal system. It should embrace inclusion and equality and can facilitate an environment that

respects human rights and fundamental freedoms. In this system, people exercise free will. This includes decisions that affect how they choose to live.

Democracy will lead to a better life, a better quality of life, a more equitable, gender-equal and inclusive society, greater security and stability, both nationally and globally. It's a path to prosperity.

Canada believes in an inclusive approach to democracy. We want people to participate in our decision-making processes and institutions that impact all areas of our lives. This includes women in all of their diversity, young people, vulnerable and marginalized groups.

Canada is a society where we believe in resilience and we're active—an active, civil society, where we have independent media, Internet freedom, political participation and include women in decision-making processes; free, fair and inclusive electoral processes, diverse, inclusive and pluralistic legislatures and other representative bodies. And if you look at the Manitoba NDP government right now, that is exactly what you see.

We believe in the rule of law, the promotion and the protection of human rights, which leads me to what I'm about to talk about.

Members opposite have been working really hard to frame us as the Broadway bullies; that we create a culture of toxic behaviour in this room. But members opposite don't seem to understand one simple thing: when they exclude Manitobans, when they ostracize people for who they are, how they identify, they are doing it to the members in this room.

As an Indigenous woman, during the 2023 campaign, members opposite have no idea that they didn't just hurt citizens, they hurt the members that they share this Chamber with and have never apologized. Members opposite calling us bullies go completely against what it means to be a Canadian and what patriotism means. Our forefathers, our veterans, our people in the military fight for these rights every single day.

\* (11:50)

As a teacher, I taught my students what it meant to be an upstander. And I'm going to talk a little bit about what that means in this space. It means giving voice to those that don't have one. It means standing up and speaking out to the wrongs that people are inflicting on others.

I will always stand up and speak against what is wrong. What—when members choose to exclude people from our society, from our one Manitoba, that is completely wrong and we're going to stand up and we're going to use our voices to give voice to those that don't have the ability to speak for themselves, or the opportunity.

I wonder if members opposite consider when they got elected, that means that it is their responsibility to put aside their ideological beliefs, to have a growth mindset and to represent every single person in their constituency, regardless of how they identify, who they are, where they come from, or what they believe in.

Because as the representative for Seine River, regardless if they are an NDP supporter, Liberal supporter, a PC supporter, I represent them all. And I represent them all in the same way. I respect everybody in this Chamber and their beliefs. But for some reason, folks on the opposition choose to make personal attacks, and I don't think they even understand that they are at times.

They need to do some work in the area of anti-racist, anti-oppressive education, so that they understand sometimes the language that they're using—the heated, loaded language—and I do believe some members understand that it's racist and that it's attacking people for who they are and how they identify. They should know better. They should be setting an example.

So when someone brings forward a resolution to sing O Canada every day, I find it insincere when they don't actually believe in what they're saying, when they don't demonstrate it on a daily basis, when they don't act out those beliefs on a consistent basis. Our job as elected representatives is to represent everyone and do our very best.

I just talked about what it means to be in a democracy. That is the core of our Canadian identity, nothing less. We've had great times as Canadians, we've had low times. But I think it's important that—I've heard members opposite say things like: get over the past; stop talking about that. And I'm talking about in terms of reconciliation, past harms, the true history of Canada. And I'm saying it again, that if we don't look to our past so that we can have a growth's mindset for our future, we're never going to be successful as a one Manitoba, as a one Canada.

I love Canada. I'm happy to sing O Canada every single day if I need to, if I want to, if I'm asked to. I do it with pride.

As a Red River Métis person, I have the unique ability to almost walk in two worlds. I have my Indigenous side of my family and I have my Ukrainian side of the family. I understand what that means; I understand what it means to look at the harms of the past and reconcile that with my future and where I am today.

What I'm respectfully asking is that members opposite take a little bit of time and think about the questions they pose, how they pose them, how they attack Canadians. And the next time they dare to stand up and call us bullies, they need to remember one thing: we are far from bullies. We are the upstanders in this province and we will always use our voice to protect all Manitobans. That is the No. 1 thing you can count on from our government.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

**Mr. Trevor King (Lakeside):** Thank you for the opportunity to get—stand here in the House today and put some words on record.

This is one topic that I find very easy to speak from—deep from the bottom of my heart, on how patriotic I am to our country and our province, and the singing of O Canada.

You know, I go back to, as a young boy, in school, every day we sang O Canada and God Save the Queen, and growing up as a child, many of my colleagues know, I was—I come from a family that loved to sing and play music. And my mom and dad, they played for a number of dances. They had an orchestra right from the—when the time they were married. And as myself and my brother and three sisters grew up, we joined their band and just about every dance we played at, we would start with the singing of O Canada and end the night with God Save the Queen.

So I took a lot of pride in that over the years, growing up. And yes, we travelled all over the Interlake doing those kinds of things.

My eight years on the AMM board with—and my friend from Dauphin—colleague from Dauphin would remember this, that every convention I was asked to lead the singing of O Canada. Again, took great pride in that and having the opportunity to lead a convention of thousands of people to sing our national anthem.

So those are some great memories of mine over the years singing O Canada. And when we get the

opportunity in this Chamber to do it, with the signing of bills or of whatnot—assembling, I really feel the pride when we can stand together and sing our national anthem.

So I truly hope that we can all come together here, today, united and support this resolution: that we can sing O Canada every day in this Chamber before we get to work.

I'm surprised the members opposite—how they have filled the full 10 minutes with just a few of their members. We thought really there would be an opportunity for each of them to give a couple of minutes of speaking about their pride and how they think this is a great idea. But I guess there's just not enough of them on the other side to have that pride in doing so.

But going forward, I certainly hope all of us, as members of the legislator can set an example moving forward for future generations.

Why did we have to wait for Donald Trump to make this happen? I'm not sure. But it's an opportunity for us moving forward to set that example for future generations.

On that, Honourable Speaker, I thank you again for the opportunity, and I encourage all of my colleagues on both sides of the House to support this resolution.

Thank you.

**Mr. Derek Johnson (Official Opposition House Leader):** Is there leave to not see the clock until everybody who wishes to have spoken to this resolution speaks and it comes to a vote?

**The Speaker:** Is there leave for us to not see the clock until every member who wishes to speak to this resolution has had the opportunity to speak until it comes to a vote? Is there leave?

**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

**An Honourable Member:** No.

**The Speaker:** No, I hear a no.

Is the House ready for the question?

**Some Honourable Members:** Question.

**The Speaker:** Then the question before the House is the resolution 7, O Canada.

Is it the will of the House to adopt the motion?  
[Agreed]



The motion is accordingly—the resolution is accordingly passed.

**Recorded Vote**

**Mr. Derek Johnson (Official Opposition House Leader):** A recorded vote, please.

**The Speaker:** A recorded vote has been called, call in the members.

\* (12:00)

**The Speaker:** Order, please.

The question before the House is the resolution brought forward by the honourable member for Swan River (Mr. Wowchuk).

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba be urged, as a permanent symbol of collective Canadian pride, to refer to the Rules committee the proposal to sing O Canada each sitting day after the daily prayer and land acknowledgement.

**Division**

*A RECORDED VOTE was taken, the result being as follows:*

**Ayes**

*Asagwara, Balcaen, Bereza, Blashko, Brar, Bushie, Byram, Chen, Compton, Cook, Corbett, Cross, Dela Cruz, Devgan, Ewasko, Fontaine, Guenter, Johnson, Kennedy, Khan, King, Lagassé, Lamoureux, Lathlin, Loiselle, Maloway, Marcelino, Moroz, Moyes, Narth, Naylor, Nesbitt, Oxenham, Pankratz, Perchotte, Piwniuk, Sala, Sandhu, Schmidt, Schott, Schuler, Simard, Smith, Stone, Wharton, Wowchuk.*

**Deputy Clerk (Mr. Tim Abbott):** Ayes 46, Nays 0.

**The Speaker:** I declare the resolution passed.

\* \* \*

**The Speaker:** And the hour now being past 12 o'clock, this House stands—is recessed and stands recessed until 1:30 this afternoon.

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA**

**Thursday, April 10, 2025**

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Devgan	1177		

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