



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*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-Third Legislature

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, April 23, 2025

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

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

Please be seated.

MATTER OF PRIVILEGE

Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain): On a matter of privilege.

The Speaker: The honourable member for Riding Mountain, on a matter of privilege.

Mr. Nesbitt: Honourable Speaker, I rise today on a matter of privilege of the most serious nature. I do not do so lightly, but after what has transpired in this House over the last 24 hours, I know there is no alternative.

Yesterday the behaviour of multiple members opposite resulted in unprecedented participation from the Chair and as a result my ability to participate in this House was directly impacted. When I am expected to only ask questions that will not make the members opposite angry, an unreasonable and unattainable standard is set. As per the rules of this House, I'm required to include a substantive motion with these remarks and I will conclude with one.

There are two tests to a matter of privilege, the first being timeliness. This is the earliest possible time that I could rise and address the events of yesterday. This is impossible to dispute, as mere hours have passed in this Chamber since the event occurred and I needed to research, including waiting for Hansard to come out to compare to my own recollection, especially considering members opposite were so excessively loud. The matter of timeliness is addressed.

The second is that it be a *prima facie* breach, that is to say that at first impression there appears to be corroborating evidence of such a breach. This standard has had a controversial definition in this House but I believe you will agree, Honourable Speaker, that my ability to participate and accurately represent the Manitobans that sent me to this Chamber was impacted by the addition of new and non-defined conditions on my speech in this Chamber.

Yesterday, in question period, I attempted to ask the Minister of Finance (MLA Sala) about contracts from his office whose existence were revealed through public disclosure but to which there was no public documentation. There was a sum of money sent out for, and I quote, other professional services to an individual that operates a telecounselling service, and the provider's website advertises that they specialize in anxiety, addiction and relationship issues.

Manitobans have a right to an answer as to the scope of the work covered under that contract. That is not new and it is not, as I have been accused of, quote, inciting people. The government had the information readily available, and rather than answer a straightforward question chose to play political games, and then immediately answer the question in a scrum with media. There is no expectation that government answers questions, but there is an expectation that we, as opposition, are able to question the actions and policy of this government on behalf of Manitobans.

In fact, previous Speakers have upheld that an opposition who is free to question is essential to the operation of our democracy. In the words of Speaker Jerome, and I quote, if the essence of Parliament is government accountability, then surely the essence of accountability is the question period in the Canadian House of Commons. These words are true for our Chamber, as well. The essence of accountability is

question period, and what we saw yesterday was not accountable.

Speaker Bosley set out four principles or rules for question period that define and shape our proceedings even today, namely: (1) time is scarce and should therefore be used as profitably as possible by as many as possible; (2) the public in large numbers do watch, and the House, recognizing that question period is often an intense time, should be on its best possible behaviour; (3) while there may be other purposes and ambitions involved in question period, its primary purpose must be the seeking of information from the government and calling the government to account for its actions; (4) members should be given the greatest possible freedom in the putting of questions that is consistent with the other principles.

Yesterday's theatrics violated every aspect of these principles. Limited time was wasted as ministers actively fought with the Speaker and demanded that they wanted to raise points of order, despite that not being permitted during question period.

We're limited to 40 minutes of question period on any given day. With leaders taking a minute to ask and answer and members and the minister taking 45 seconds, that puts a severe limit on how many questions can be asked and hopefully answered. That is Manitobans' time, where they can expect that this government will answer the hard questions. Unfortunately, that is not the case.

After yesterday's intervention, there appears to be a new fifth principle for question period added by our own Speaker. Speaker Bosley's initial breakdown has been expanded to determine that a question should not be asked that the government does not wish to address.

I cannot abide by that; it is fundamentally undemocratic. If the standard by which acceptable practice is based off is how this government reacts, then this is no longer a deliberative body.

I was seeking information about a government contract, and point 4 codifies my ability to take latitude when asking this minister. The government benches don't have to like the question; nowhere in our rules for this Chamber, nor in the many editions of Bosc and Gagnon does the matter of government liking the question come up. The fact the government was able to immediately answer the purpose of the contract to media shows why opposition needs to be able to ask the tough questions.

What concerns me, Honourable Speaker, is that the subsequent coverage of this exchange in the media has largely focused on your interjection. I quote from Hansard: "I'm not going to scream one more time for order in this House. The member is clearly trying to incite people; he's succeeded. So now let's get back to business and treat each other with some respect."

I was seeking information on a contract to which all that had been publicly revealed was the dollar value and recipient. But now the official record of this House and the public record outside contains an admonishment from you, Honourable Speaker, with the full authority of this Chamber, which is unacceptable, considering you even acknowledged that the government benches were refusing to come to order. Intent has been attributed to my question that didn't exist.

Even more concerningly, Honourable Speaker, you entered into the debate moments later. I read directly from Hansard, and I quote: "An Honourable Member: Oh, this isn't right."

"The Speaker: You're right, this is not right. If you're talking about somebody's personal medical information, that cannot take place in here."

The official record of this Assembly includes the presiding authority interjecting to agree with a heckler as they shout me down. I cannot find precedents for such an exchange.

* (13:40)

No one was talking about privileged personal health information; these were questions about a government contract, an expense paid through a ministerial authority, and that disclosed record was tabled as an official document of this House. We had only the dollar value and recipient; asking what it was for was a matter of public interest.

The fact that the Speaker entered the debate and is on the record agreeing with members opposite in a conversational tone is deeply alarming. I refer to Bosc and Gagnon's 3rd Edition of House of Commons Procedure and Practice, and I quote: When in the Chair, the Speaker embodies the power and authority of the office, strengthened by rule and precedent. He or she must at all times show, and be seen to show, the impartiality required to sustain the trust and goodwill of this House.

Additionally, and I quote: In order to protect the impartiality of the office, the Speaker abstains from all partisan political activity; for example, by not

attending caucus meetings, does not participate in debate.

Yesterday they—was participation and there was a judgment made not on the substance of my question in this Chamber, but how it impacted the government benches.

I was chastised by you, Honourable Speaker, yet I must acknowledge that that it was over a concept that is new to this Chamber. There was no basis for this 'admonation,' and a look through the collected rulings of speakers finds use of the term inciting almost exclusively used in reference to members making matters of debate within a solemn declaration to the House.

I cannot be expected to cater my questions to material that will not cause members opposite to ignore the Speaker and scream. I have no way of knowing what will and will not accomplish this.

That would create a one-sided and unbalanced system. I refer back to Speaker Bosley's 4th point: members should be given the greatest possible freedom in the putting of questions that is consistent with the other principles.

My question was consistent with the other principles. If the minister of a department cannot rise in this House and address contracts from their department, that is indicative of a much greater concern.

My ability to participate in this Chamber is directly and negatively impact if yesterday is allowed to stand and set a precedent. The message was delivered to the government that with enough outburst, they can silent any legitimate question. The message was delivered that long-established rules are negotiable, if they scream loud enough and long enough. The message was delivered: if they ignore calls to order long enough, the Speaker will join them in criticizing me and my colleagues, and the media will pick up on that.

What is well established is that a member may not ignore the instructions from the Chair in keeping with the order of this House, like the member for St. Johns (MLA Fontaine) demanding that she should be allowed to make a point of order as can clearly be heard in the House broadcast that is publicly available.

There is an extensive record of my colleagues, including the Leader of the Opposition, being chastised for even the slightest hint that what they said may be considered arguing with the Chair. That same

standard is not applied to the member for St. Johns, as clearly recorded in the House broadcast for all to see.

This is in line with attempts to intimidate the Chair that have not been captured by this House's cameras but have been seen by every member of this Chamber. This is an inequitable application of the rules.

As to prima facie breach of privilege, I draw your attention to the collected works of Bosc and Gagnon, who wrote, and I quote: By far, the most important right accorded to members of the House is the exercise of freedom of speech in parliamentary proceedings. *[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Nesbitt: They go on to quote the first report of the Special Committee on Rights and Immunities of Members, presented to the House on April 29, 1977, who describe this right thoroughly, and I quote: A fundamental right without which they would be hampered in the performance of their duties. It permits them to speak in the House without inhibition, to refer to any matter or express any opinion as they see fit, to say what they feel needs to be said in the furtherance of national interest and the aspirations of their constituents.

Speaker Bosley affirmed that quote: The privilege of a Member of Parliament when speaking in the House or in a committee is absolute, and that it would be very difficult to find that any statement made under the cloak of parliamentary privilege constitute a violation of that privilege.

Bosc and Gagnon spell the entire process out clearly. In order to find a prima facie breach of privilege, the Speaker must be satisfied that there is evidence to support the member's claim that he or she has been impeded in the performance of his or her parliamentary functions and that the matter is directly related to a proceeding in Parliament.

Honourable Speaker, I am prevented from doing my job and holding this government to account when I have to be concerned about the Speaker presiding over this Assembly, entering into debate and judging the quality of my questions based off the reaction from the government.

The combination of new and unquantified restrictions on speech, and the real threat and intimidation from the government benches prohibited me from making full use of my allocated time in question

period, especially when motive and intent was attributed to my words by the Speaker.

Therefore, I move, seconded by member for Interlake-Gimli (Mr. Johnson)—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Nesbitt: —that this House call for the public apology from the Speaker to myself and the Assembly as a whole.

The Speaker: Matters of privilege are very important pieces of what takes place in this Chamber, and before recognizing any other members to speak on this matter of privilege, I would remind all members to make sure you keep your comments relevant to the matter of privilege that's been brought up.

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Government House Leader): Miigwech, Honourable Speaker, for allowing me to put a couple of words on the record in respect of the matter of privilege that was just raised by the member.

Every day, we get up in this Chamber, day after day, month after month, year after year, some of us in this Chamber for nine years. And having the opportunity to hear, day in and day out, members opposite get up in the Chamber and ask their questions, debate should they want, stall our bills. Members opposite have every opportunity to exercise their rights and privileges as members in this House, including yesterday, Honourable Speaker.

I'll remind the member, because he's trying to distort history here, he did use his three questions. But let's talk about what those three questions were and why there was such a reaction from the government bench, as he's saying.

Let me be perfectly clear. The member opposite yesterday crossed a line—crossed a line when he was trying to imply that a member of our caucus somehow entered into a private contract with a therapist for personal therapy.

As we said yesterday, that is absolutely deplorable that anybody in this Chamber would dare to get up, or think that it was okay to get up and try to discredit, shame a member in this Chamber if they were seeking therapy. Again, if they were seeking therapy, we have the means to be able to do that as MLAs, and nobody should be bringing that up in the Chamber at all.

But the members opposite—not only when they saw their—the reaction to their first question, not only got—not only doubled down once, twice, but three

times. The member could have sat down and said to himself, you know, this question crosses a line. It's inappropriate for me to be making some type of allegation against the Minister of Finance (MLA Sala) for supposedly seeking out therapy. It's deplorable. It's disgusting.

And I stand by the actions that I undertook and all—every single member in our Chamber. We cannot allow such deplorable, disrespectful actions to be taken in this Chamber day after day after day after day by members opposite.

They crossed a line. They know it. And what are they doing today? Instead of the member getting up and saying, you know what, Speaker, government benches, I apologize. I apologize that I put on disrespectful, deplorable language in this Chamber, that we are all so blessed to sit in and so lucky to serve in.

No. The member decided today, with the support of the interim leader for the next 48 hours or how many hours it is, that it was a good thing to get up, waste the time of the Chamber and put forward a fictitious matter of privilege.

He exercised his freedom. He finished his three questions when he shouldn't have finished his three questions. He had an ability to apologize; he hasn't.

* (13:50)

But here's the record of the members opposite: it turns out that that contract was for mental health supports for those that are on the front lines of searching the landfill, the landfill that I will remind Manitobans and every single member over there, including Borderland and whatever the other one's name is that is laughing right now. I think it's amusing that you think talking about the landfill is funny.

Those are for mental health supporters—or, mental health supports for searchers, which I will share with folks: many are students, many are MMIWG2S families. That's what that contract is for. And here we have a former, failed, callous government that formulated their whole political campaign on the murders of Indigenous women that were in a landfill.

They offered, 18 months later, the most insincere apology, still have refused to meet with the families and then get up in the Chamber under the guise of attacking one of our colleagues for seeking out therapy, when really they were attacking the searchers and families of the landfill.

And they're blocking a bill that would ensure any of the advertisements that we saw in 2023 would

never happen again and would be held accountable. That's their record. That's what they should be getting up in the House today, on a matter of privilege, and saying, you know what? We're so sorry that we don't know how to do our job properly. We're sorry to Manitobans, we're sorry to MMIWG2S families and we're sorry to the Minister of Finance (MLA Sala).

But no, they want to waste our time. And also, they want to make sure that none of us can talk about this again, talk about the deplorable, disrespectful actions of the member opposite. He should be apologizing.

The Speaker: There are no other members wishing to discuss the matter of—the honourable member for Fort Garry.

Mr. Mark Wasyliv (Fort Garry): I just want to put a few comments on the record. What we saw yesterday was absolutely shameful and it was unnecessary. I understand the government's point of view that they were upset and angry, but the deputy leader of the government was more than capable in answering and defending the government's position.

What was troubling to see was the Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe) and the Minister of Families (MLA Fontaine) losing control in this House, screaming and shouting and drowning out the opposition MLA who was just trying to get a question out. It was disrespectful to the deputy leader, it was demeaning and it was completely unnecessary.

And I've been in this Chamber long enough when that exact conduct resulted in the expulsion of a member. And that did not happen yesterday; not only were they not called out, they were not expelled from the Chamber.

And that is a deeply troubling precedent. This place is toxic enough; it is, you know, dysfunctional enough, and where you give an impression that there are different rules for different people, it is definitely troubling.

So I hope that this Chamber does better in the future.

Thank you.

The Speaker: No other members wishing to debate? Give me a minute, please.

Order, please.

So in regards to the matter of privilege, I already had a statement that I was going to read at the top of orders of the day this—today. So I will do that.

Speaker's Statement

The Speaker: So, first, at one point during the questions from the member for Riding Mountain (Mr. Nesbitt), I stated: If—*[interjection]*—so I shouldn't try and ad lib.

I have a statement regarding the events which occurred during oral questions yesterday in the House.

First, at one point during the questions from the member for Riding Mountain, I stated: If you're talking about someone's personal medical information, that cannot take place here.

I was mistaken in this statement, and I apologize to the member for Riding Mountain for that mistake, as I apologize to all members if I've made a mistake, which, in this case, I clearly made a mistake. All members of this House are protected by parliamentary privilege during our proceedings, and one of our most important privileges is the freedom of speech.

Even though other members may be offended by what a member says in this place, you all have the right to speak freely here, within the boundaries of the rules and practices of this Assembly.

Second, during the same exchange in question period yesterday, decorum in this House was absolutely awful. At one point the government front bench was yelling so loudly that I had to shout to be heard.

That is unacceptable.

I understand that government members strongly disagreed with the line of questioning from the member for Riding Mountain, but, as I just indicated, the member had the right to ask those questions.

Government members also had the right to respond to those questions in the normal flow of question period, and the Deputy Premier (MLA Asagwara) did respond.

* (14:00)

Yesterday was not the only example of bad decorum I've seen in this House recently, but it was most assuredly the worst. I would remind members that the public watch what happens here, either in the gallery or online. This is not the behaviour people watching our proceedings should be subjected to.

With this in mind, I'm giving notice to the government benches, and to all members, that I will not tolerate that kind of behaviour in this House. In the future, if members persist in disregarding the authority of the Chair, I will not hesitate to exercise

my authority as your Speaker and have members removed from this Chamber.

I hope that I will not need to do this because I hope we all truly take this statement to heart. We should be doing better for the people of Manitoba.

And in direct relation to the matter of privilege, as the member asked for an apology, I have apologized, so I believe this concludes the matter of privilege.

* * *

Mr. Nesbitt: Well, Honourable Speaker, I want to thank you very much for that statement of the House and those wise words, and I want to thank you very much for the apology.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 226—The Health System Governance and Accountability Amendment Act (Reporting When Timely Care Not Available)

Mrs. Kathleen Cook (Roblin): I move, seconded by the honourable member for Springfield-Ritchot (Mr. Schuler), that Bill 226, The Health System Governance and Accountability Amendment Act (Reporting When Timely Care Not Available), be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mrs. Cook: Today I rise to introduce Bill 226, or as it will be known, Debbie's law, a common sense bill that puts patients first by mandating transparency and accountability when our health-care system cannot deliver timely life-saving care.

This legislation is named for Debbie Fewster, a Manitoban who tragically died while she waited in vain for urgent medical care. It's for her family and for the many other Manitobans who deserve answers.

I urge all members to support this compassionate, common sense legislation. Let's put patients ahead of politics and make our system more transparent, more accountable and, ultimately, more just.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Committee reports? The—sorry.

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

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development First Report

MLA Jennifer Chen (Chairperson): Honourable Speaker, I wish to present the first report of the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development.

Clerk (Mr. Rick Yarish): Your Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development—

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

The Speaker: Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development presents the following as its First Report.

Meetings

Your Committee met on April 22, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building.

Matters under Consideration

- **Bill (No. 6)** – *The Public Schools Amendment Act / Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques*
- **Bill (No. 16)** – *The Municipal Councils and School Boards Elections Amendment and Public Schools Amendment Act / Loi modifiant la Loi sur les élections municipales et scolaires et la Loi sur les écoles publiques*
- **Bill (No. 17)** – *The Public Schools Amendment Act (Nutrition Equality for Lasting Learning Outcomes) / Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques (équité alimentaire pour un apprentissage durable)*
- **Bill (No. 18)** – *The Public Schools Amendment Act (Indigenous Languages of Instruction) / Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques (enseignement en langue autochtone)*
- **Bill (No. 19)** – *The Public Schools Amendment Act (Safe Schools) / Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques (milieu scolaire sûr)*
- **Bill (No. 20)** – *The Community Child Care Standards Amendment and Education Administration Amendment Act / Loi modifiant la Loi sur la garde d'enfants et la Loi sur l'administration scolaire*

- **Bill (No. 39) – The Public Schools Amendment Act (Campaign Financing for School Trustees) / Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques (financement des campagnes électorales pour les élections scolaires)**

Committee Membership

- Mr. BLASHKO
- Ms. BYRAM
- MLA CHEN
- Mr. EWASKO
- Hon. Min. SCHMIDT
- Mrs. SCHOTT

Your Committee elected MLA CHEN as the Chairperson.

Your Committee elected Mrs. SCHOTT as the Vice-Chairperson.

Public Presentations

Your Committee heard the following one presentation on **Bill (No. 17) – The Public Schools Amendment Act (Nutrition Equality for Lasting Learning Outcomes) / Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques (équité alimentaire pour un apprentissage durable)**:

Kevin Rebeck, Manitoba Federation of Labour

Your Committee heard the following seven presentations on **Bill (No. 39) – The Public Schools Amendment Act (Campaign Financing for School Trustees) / Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques (financement des campagnes électorales pour les élections scolaires)**:

Paul Moist, Manitoba Federation of Union Retirees

Kevin Rebeck, Manitoba Federation of Labour

Adrian Challis, Private Citizen

Tom Simms, Private Citizen

Jordan Bighorn, Community Education Development Association

Elizabeth Ambrose, Just Elections

Kate Kehler, Social Planning Council of Winnipeg

Bills Considered and Reported

- **Bill (No. 6) – The Public Schools Amendment Act / Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques**

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

- **Bill (No. 16) – The Municipal Councils and School Boards Elections Amendment and Public Schools Amendment Act / Loi modifiant la Loi sur**

les élections municipales et scolaires et la Loi sur les écoles publiques

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

- **Bill (No. 17) – The Public Schools Amendment Act (Nutrition Equality for Lasting Learning Outcomes) / Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques (équité alimentaire pour un apprentissage durable)**

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

- **Bill (No. 18) – The Public Schools Amendment Act (Indigenous Languages of Instruction) / Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques (enseignement en langue autochtone)**

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

- **Bill (No. 19) – The Public Schools Amendment Act (Safe Schools) / Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques (milieu scolaire sûr)**

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

- **Bill (No. 20) – The Community Child Care Standards Amendment and Education Administration Amendment Act / Loi modifiant la Loi sur la garde d'enfants et la Loi sur l'administration scolaire**

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

- **Bill (No. 39) – The Public Schools Amendment Act (Campaign Financing for School Trustees) / Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques (financement des campagnes électorales pour les élections scolaires)**

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

MLA Chen: Honourable Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Kildonan-River East (Mrs. Schott), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs Fourth Report

MLA Carla Compton (Chairperson): Honourable Speaker, I wish to present the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs.

Clerk: Your Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs—

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

The Speaker: Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs presents the following as its Fourth Report.

Meetings

Your Committee met on April 22, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. in Room 254 of the Legislative Building.

Matters under Consideration

- **Bill (No. 3)** – *The City of Winnipeg Charter Amendment and Planning Amendment Act / Loi modifiant la Charte de la ville de Winnipeg et la Loi sur l'aménagement du territoire*
- **Bill (No. 4)** – *The Planning Amendment Act / Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'aménagement du territoire*
- **Bill (No. 14)** – *The Insurance Amendment Act / Loi modifiant la Loi sur les assurances*
- **Bill (No. 15)** – *The Real Estate Services Amendment Act / Loi modifiant la Loi sur les services immobiliers*
- **Bill (No. 27)** – *The Income Tax Amendment Act / Loi modifiant la Loi de l'impôt sur le revenu*
- **Bill (No. 28)** – *The Manitoba Hydro Amendment Act / Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Hydro-Manitoba*
- **Bill (No. 37)** – *The Manitoba Financial Services Authority Act and Amendments to Various Other Acts / Loi sur l'Autorité des services financiers du Manitoba et modifiant diverses autres lois*

Committee Membership

- Mr. BRAR
- MLA COMPTON
- Mr. KING
- Hon. Min. MOROZ
- Hon. Min. SALA
- Mrs. STONE

Your Committee elected MLA COMPTON as the Chairperson.

Your Committee elected Mr. BRAR as the Vice-Chairperson.

Substitutions received during Committee proceedings:

- *Hon. Mr. SIMARD for Hon. Min. SALA*

Public Presentations

*Your Committee heard the following two presentations on **Bill (No. 4)** – The Planning Amendment Act / Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'aménagement du territoire:*

*Duane Nicol, City of Selkirk
Dan Diachun, Private citizen*

Written Submissions

*Your Committee received the following three written submissions on **Bill (No. 3)** – The City of Winnipeg Charter Amendment and Planning Amendment Act / Loi modifiant la Charte de la ville de Winnipeg et la Loi sur l'aménagement du territoire:*

*Kathy Valentino, Association of Manitoba Municipalities
Larry McInnes, Urban Development Institute of Manitoba
Luanne Diachun, Private citizen*

*Your Committee received the following two written submissions on **Bill (No. 4)** – The Planning Amendment Act / Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'aménagement du territoire:*

*Kathy Valentino, Association of Manitoba Municipalities
Larry McInnes, Urban Development Institute of Manitoba*

Bills Considered and Reported

- **Bill (No. 3)** – *The City of Winnipeg Charter Amendment and Planning Amendment Act / Loi modifiant la Charte de la ville de Winnipeg et la Loi sur l'aménagement du territoire*

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

- **Bill (No. 4)** – *The Planning Amendment Act / Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'aménagement du territoire*

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

- **Bill (No. 14) – The Insurance Amendment Act / Loi modifiant la Loi sur les assurances**

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

- **Bill (No. 15) – The Real Estate Services Amendment Act / Loi modifiant la Loi sur les services immobiliers**

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

- **Bill (No. 27) – The Income Tax Amendment Act / Loi modifiant la Loi de l'impôt sur le revenu**

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

- **Bill (No. 28) – The Manitoba Hydro Amendment Act / Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Hydro-Manitoba**

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

- **Bill (No. 37) – The Manitoba Financial Services Authority Act and Amendments to Various Other Acts / Loi sur l'Autorité des services financiers du Manitoba et modifiant diverses autres lois**

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

MLA Compton: Honourable Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Kirkfield Park (Mr. Oxenham), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker: No further reports—or, yes. Ministerial statements—I did not say tabling of reports. Tabling of reports?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Spring Flooding Update for Western Manitoba

Hon. Lisa Naylor (Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure): I rise today to update the House on this spring's overland flooding in the western part of the province. Spring runoff continues in central, western and northern Manitoba with rising temperature water basins—sorry. With the rising temperatures, spring runoff continues in central, western and northern Manitoba. There have been some localized overland flooding, and there's three municipalities which have declared states of emergency: Grandview, Gilbert Plains and Russell Binscarth.

The Manitoba Emergency Management Organization has activated the Manitoba Emergency Coordination Centre to a level 1, and is co-ordinating support and sharing of information across governments. Local authorities are carefully assessing water levels to determine next steps.

Staff from my department are inspecting and monitoring drains, highways and bridges to ensure stability, and two provincial roadways, PR 579 and PR 584, have been closed to ensure public safety, and repairs are—will be happening to one bridge that has sustained some ice damage. Residents can check highway status on Manitoba 511.

An overland flood watch was put into place for western and southwestern Manitoba due to the weather system that's expected to bring some precipitation—rain or snow—over the next few days. Further, a flood watch on the Assiniboine River from the Shellmouth Dam to the city of Brandon remains in place from last week.

We want Manitobans to be safe and urge everyone to stay away from the rivers right now. I encourage all Manitobans to stay informed on the latest flood conditions by visiting Manitoba's flood information website. Local governments are the first line of defence in any natural disaster, and our government is ready to assist local authorities whenever they need it.

I'd like to take a moment to thank the Manitoba Emergency Management Organization for supporting local authorities and for being on standby for what-ever is needed.

Fortunately, the gradual warming we have experienced has meant that spring flood conditions have been favourable for most parts of the province. We are keeping a very close eye on the current weather system and are ready to respond as needed.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye): I'd like to thank the minister for that update.

It is crucial that good flood forecasts are made available for homeowners, businesses and our farmers that are working hard to put seed in the ground.

I'd like to thank all the experts in the department that work to provide us with these flood updates. I know a lot of monitoring and scientific analysis goes into developing our annual flood forecasts. For all Manitobans, these flood forecasts assist in planning to protect their homes and their properties.

I want to again thank the workers at EMO, as well the work to protect Manitobans from flooding and mitigate the impacts each year.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

* (14:10)

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: Prior to members' statements, there's some guests. Unfortunately, I think some of them just left.

I draw attention of all honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us today Emily Bennett, Tara Bennett, Cole Bennett, who are guests of the honourable member for Morden-Winkler (Mrs. Hiebert).

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

We have—we had seated in the public gallery, from River East Collegiate, 31 grade 9 students under the direction of Anita Stepaniuk. They're guests of the honourable member for Rossmere (MLA Schmidt).

And further, we have François LaRochelle from Quebec City, who is a guest of the honourable member for St. Boniface (MLA Loiselle).

And we welcome you all here today.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Thompson Festival of the Arts

MLA Eric Redhead (Thompson): I hope my member statement helps cut some of the tension in the House and lift everyone up today.

I rise today to shine a spotlight on the incredible volunteers, artists, musicians, storytellers who bring the Thompson Festival of the Arts to life each year. Now in its 59th season, the festival is a true Northern tradition, one that thrives because of a dedicated volunteer committee whose tireless efforts set the stage for—quite literally, for the Northern talent to shine.

Since its humble beginnings, the festival has faced its fair share of challenges. But through it all, it has remained committed to a powerful idea: that everyone in our community, especially our youth, deserve the freedom to share their talents and be celebrated by our community.

This year, event saw over 300 entries and nearly 1,000 participants bravely stepping into the spotlight to share their passion, creativity. Esteemed local

judges from Thompson and others who have travelled from Winnipeg, Brandon lent their time and expertise, offering thoughtful feedback and encouragement that will stay with these young artists for years to come.

At the heart of it all is our local sponsors, who—whose generosity and community spirit keep the festival alive, year after year.

I am personally looking forward to exploring exhibits, discovering new voices, celebrating the next generation of Northern artists. The pride I feel in supporting this event is something I care about deeply, and I know I'm not alone.

Today, I ask all members in the House to join me in recognizing and celebrating the Thompson Festival of the Arts. *[inaudible]*

An Honourable Member: Over the past year, I've had the honour of speaking—

The Speaker: Sorry. The honourable member for Fort Whyte.

Vision for Manitoba

Mr. Obby Khan (Fort Whyte): Over the past year, I've had the honour of speaking with Manitobans from every corner of our great province. From the North to the south, east and west, one message has come through clearly: Manitobans are passionate about their communities, and they're looking for real solutions from the challenges they face.

They care deeply about being able to access health services in a timely manner, about safety in their neighbourhoods, the rising cost of living and ensuring their children have every opportunity to succeed.

To those Manitobans, I say: I have heard you; we hear you on this side of the House. We understand your concerns and we share your hopes for a brighter future.

That's why our Progressive Conservative team is focused on delivering real results. Whether it's my colleague from Midland advocating for the removal of trade barriers; my colleague, MLA for Roblin for championing early breast care cancer screenings; MLA from Portage la Prairie and MLA from Brandon West, advocating for tougher conditions on bail reform; or the MLA from Morden-Winkler working to eliminate red tape that is holding back Manitoban farmers, we are taking actions that reflect the priorities and concerns of Manitobans.

We believe in a province where your hard work is rewarded, families feel secure and young people see a future full of promise, including the dream of home ownership. They aren't just political goals; they're deeply personal values shared by myself, members of the PC Party and members on this side of the House, Honourable Speaker.

We will continue working every day to ensure Manitobans can access quality, timely health-care services, while we fight to make our communities safer, life more affordable and our economy stronger.

Because we all deserve a better Manitoba, nothing less.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

University of Winnipeg

MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): Today I rise to recognize the University of Winnipeg, an institution that holds a special place in my heart, and I know many of my colleagues as well.

I've had the pleasure of meeting with the university's leadership and student representatives, and I continue to be impressed by the strong sense of community and academic excellence on campus.

It should be highlighted that 92 per cent of graduating students report being satisfied with the quality of their education; it's a true testament to the dedication of faculty, staff and students alike.

UWinnipeg consistently ranks among the top 10 primarily undergraduate universities in Canada. It is known nationally for its academic standards, small class sizes, commitment to the environment and inclusion-inclusive campus culture. We're lucky that it's located just a few blocks from the Manitoba Legislature.

U of W is one of few inner-city universities in Canada. It has a blend of historic charm and modern facilities and it remains one of the most accessible post-secondary institutions in the country.

As mentioned, the U of W's strong commitment to inclusion, especially in supporting Indigenous and international students, sets an example for institutions across Canada. Just last month, U of W launched its first-ever Ph.D. program in bioscience and policy. However, despite these successes, the university is facing significant financial pressures.

They continue to receive a disproportionately low level of provincial funding. They receive the lowest per-student funding in post-secondary institutions

across Manitoba, and these challenges are forcing tough decisions about programs, classes and student services at a time when concerns about safety, racism and affordability are also on the rise.

Honourable Speaker, we should be proud of what the University of Winnipeg has accomplished and we must ensure that it receives the support that it needs to thrive.

In closing, I'd like to take a moment to recognize some U of W students who have joined us here today: Tomiris, Chhavi, Hriday and Oladayo.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Emily Bennett

Mrs. Carrie Hiebert (Morden-Winkler): Today I would like to acknowledge an incredibly remarkable young woman from my constituency of Morden-Winkler.

Emily Bennett, a recent graduate from Northlands Parkway Collegiate in Winkler, was preparing for the next chapter in her life at Brandon University when she received a difficult diagnosis of Hodgkin's lymphoma.

In the face of adversity, some individuals rise above their challenges to make a difference in the lives of others. Emily is one such individual. During her own battle with cancer and treatment in the GD6 ward of Health Sciences Centre, Emily discovered a simple yet profound source of comfort: heated chairs. This insight ignited a passion within her to ensure that others undergoing cancer treatment could experience the same warmth and solace that she found.

Recognizing that many patients could benefit from this simple comfort, Emily and her mom Tara teamed up with the Boundary Trails Health Centre Foundation. Together, they embarked on a mission to bring heated chairs to the BTHC cancer care unit. The vision was clear: to create a more welcoming and soothing environment for those facing the challenges of cancer.

With determination, they were able to secure a generous donation of \$45,000 from the Morden thrift store, allowing them to purchase 10 heated massage chairs. With roughly 200 treatments taking place each month at Boundary Trails, these chairs are making a positive impact on many cancer patients' lives.

Cancer treatment is often a long and difficult journey. The heated chairs that brought Emily comfort

during her treatments in Winnipeg will now provide a sense of warmth and relief for many southern Manitoba cancer patients.

When asked what it meant to Emily to have this community support, she said: I was given lemons, but somehow find a way to make lemonade. I've already created a legacy through a simple addition that will help comfort hundreds of others like me.

I'd like to thank Boundary Trails Health Centre Foundation and the Morden thrift store, and I'd like to thank Emily for what she has done to raise support and do the take care of the people in her community.

* (14:20)

Would you please join me as Emily is in the gallery.

The Speaker: The honourable member for Fort Garry (Mr. Wasyliw).

An Honourable Member: Point of order.

Point of Order

The Speaker: The honourable First Minister.

Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier): Just on behalf of the Province of Manitoba, I want to say: Great job, Emily, and thanks for what you do to make this great province an amazing place.

The Speaker: I'd just point out, while the First Minister's comments are appreciated, it's not a point of order.

Black Seniors Support Inc.

Mr. Mark Wasyliw (Fort Garry): Black Seniors Support offers physical, emotional and psychosocial care to Black seniors residing in Manitoba or visiting their children and grandchildren here.

When seniors move to Manitoba—they join their families, they often discover that their children and grandchildren have busy lives filled with work and school commitments. For newcomers, this can result in feelings of isolation and disconnection.

Black Seniors Support aims to bridge this gap by providing resources and opportunities for seniors to engage with the broader community, focusing on physical activity and social interaction. Their goal is to foster a supportive, empowering environment where Black seniors in Manitoba can lead fulfilling, healthy lives while contributing to the community through volunteer services.

Based out of the Fort Garry Community Centre, Black Seniors Support is a registered non-profit in two—2023. They've organized opportunities for physical

fitness such as workouts, their walk for life program, which ran on Saturdays last summer, and their information sharing sessions on aging gracefully.

As they grow and gain a deeper understanding of the community's needs, they plan to offer a variety of workshops and information sessions on wellness, diet, cooking and safety. They're also excited to help seniors navigate the health-care system through a program called me and my health care, and offer my will is my wish seminar explore complex personal decisions.

Black Seniors Support looks forward to offering many future activities, encouraging seniors to live life to its fullest, including city rides and excursions. By engaging with others and the world around them, seniors help foster better social outcomes for both current residents and newcomers to our province.

Through these programs, Black Seniors Support is actively engaging the quality of life for seniors.

Please join me in recognizing the vision of Oyekunle Oyediran, founder and resource co-ordinator of Black Seniors Support. Through the efforts and commitment of Oyekunle and others in the organization, the bonds between our neighbours and ourselves and our community will be strengthened and we all have more opportunity to grow.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Proposed Hydro Transmission Line to Nunavut Construction Costs—Impact on Hydro Rates

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Leader of the Official Opposition): Honourable Speaker, Bipole III transmission line, which was completed in 2018, the NDP said that the cost of it would be \$2.2 billion in 2007. But by 2018, Manitoba Hydro said the total estimated cost was over \$5 billion. That is more than double the original estimate.

Bipole III's route cut through approximately 1,300 kilometres of forest, farmland and fields. Now, the NDP want to see if they can top their last boondoggle with a 1,200-kilometre transmission line to Nunavut.

What assurances will the Premier offer Manitobans if Bipole IV won't be another multibillion-dollar boondoggle like his mentor, Greg Selinger?

Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier): My mentor was Murray Sinclair, a great man. And what he had in mind was building this country, and that's what this team right here is all about: building up Canada.

Now we know that the people of Canada are going to have their chance to have their say in the federal election. I was pleased to see that a record number of people turned out in the advance vote, and whoever you choose as your next Prime Minister, we will be there to build up this country with great, nation-building projects.

A transmission line to Nunavut, a corridor that connects the western Canadian provinces and empowers the Port of Churchill so that we can access that European Union market, an ability to create jobs and economic opportunity undreamed of when the miserly PCs were in office, that's what we want for the future of our province.

We're going build, build, build the greatest country on Earth, which is Canada, Canada, Canada.

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

Mr. Ewasko: Honourable Speaker, nation building is an important part of our pushback to Trump's tariffs. However, even nation building has to be financially—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Ewasko: —responsible. During their last mandate, the NDP tripled Hydro's debt. Bipole III east was the lowest cost option to address risk but was rejected by the member of—member for Fort Rouge's mentor, Greg Selinger.

Now the Premier's imposing double-digit rate hikes because of past NDP failures. How much higher is the NDP prepared to raise Hydro rates because this Premier wants a national profile?

Mr. Kinew: Newsflash to the members opposite: We froze Manitoba Hydro rates. It was in this year's budget. It was in a budget that they voted against. They didn't want a Hydro rate freeze; they wanted higher Hydro rates. And now they come running to the House trying to double down on a terrible strategy from yesterday.

Trying to draw more attention to the fact that, when the member for Dawson Trail (MLA Lagassé) stands up to talk about men's mental health, they stand up and applaud with the glee of the guilty conscience. Because yesterday, they came in here and tried to throw shade at my colleague, completely spurious, completely untrue, completely detached from reality.

But I think that's the slogan of the leadership race candidate, the member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Khan),

isn't it? Because he comes in here today to talk about health care—you should've talked about health care in the last election. Instead, you attack the families of the victims of a serial killer. What were you thinking? What do you think on a daily basis?

Here's what we think: we're—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order. Order. Order.

I would remind the First Minister to direct his comments through the Chair.

Mr. Ewasko: Honourable Speaker, the—*[interjection]*

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order. Order.

Mr. Ewasko: Honourable Speaker, unfortunately, the Premier never listened to his teachers and followed rules then; he's still following that same practice today.

The Premier makes bold pronouncements, but too often they end up with him asking Ottawa for a helping hand. The Premier's favourite motto is, and I quote: I will take the credit if someone else pays for it, end quote. That's the member for Fort Rouge.

Manitoba Hydro rate application noted that what is required, and I quote, is time for recovery of Manitoba Hydro's financial health and financial matrix to proactively position ourselves as financially resilient, to respond to the emerging needs and expectations of our customers, end quote.

Can the Premier explain how much more he will borrow from Manitoba Hydro to pay for this major capital project, and can he explain what funding the federal government has committed for the Nunavut transmission line?

Mr. Kinew: Well, when you read that general rate application for Manitoba Hydro, what we're trying to repair is the years of damages under Heather Stefanson and the PCs in government. They didn't build a single megawatt. They didn't build one watt, not one joule. There's more power in a Tim Hortons doughnut as potential energy than they ever added to the electrical grid in the province of Manitoba.

And yet, Honourable Speaker, do you know what the most valuable thing in the world is right now? It is baseload electrical power. Baseload power powers AI. It powers the economy of today and the future. If they were in charge, there would be no economic future here in Manitoba, so we're repairing the damage, and here's the best part: We get along with the federal

government; we get along with the federal opposition; we get along with the federal NDP.

Whoever you choose to send to Ottawa next week, we'll work with them to build up this great country and keep the lights on for generations that come. With us, we're getting a lot done—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

And I would remind the First Minister that when the Speaker stands up and says your time's up, it's time to sit down and quit speaking. And I would also ask the Premier to quit responding in such manner.

Legalization of Home-Grown Cannabis Impact on Police Resources

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Leader of the Official Opposition): As Manitobans are seeing, the Premier can't answer a simple question, much like his Cabinet ministers could not answer a simple question yesterday, Honourable Speaker.

* (14:30)

The Premier promised to fix crime, but under his watch, violent crime has gone up. Just yesterday, a 15-year-old shooter at Polo Park, Honourable Speaker. Deplorable.

Now, instead of taking serious action, this NDP government is allowing Manitobans to grow up to four cannabis plants in their home starting May 1.

Can the Premier tell Manitobans, will police resources now be used to monitor cannabis plants, or will they be focused on going after violent criminals and keeping our communities safe?

Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier): I don't know; did the member opposite smoke weed? Did the world come to an end? Cannabis has been legal for years. That society continues to go on. The sun rises in the east yet again, Honourable Speaker.

When it comes to crime, what are we doing? While they're trying to play gutter politics attacking my colleague, or trying to use the same old distractionary tactics that got them sent to the opposition benches, what are we doing? We're hiring more police officers. They cut 55 police officers. They cut 55 police officers in the city of Winnipeg alone. They froze the funding across the province.

We're repairing that damage, too. And you know what? We're taking that work off of the police officers' plate, just like our bail reform measures are helping, just like the steps that we're taking to ensure that mental health supports are there in the community are helping too.

But the members opposite need to explain this to the people of Manitoba: Why is it that they never have a solution, only the criticism? And why are they going to elect a leader—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Mr. Ewasko: Honourable Speaker, this is rich, coming from this Premier, who him and his front bench walked and protested to defund our police system. Deplorable. He should apologize.

Manitobans, Honourable Speaker, are worried about their safety. With violent crime on the rise, how can the Premier justify focusing—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Ewasko: —on cannabis policy instead of presenting a real plan to deal with repeat offenders, gang activity and, of course, the growing number of violent incidents on our streets?

And now, with no—new rules allowing cannabis plants in homes, will police officers be expected to spend their time inspecting homes to ensure the proper number of plants and that they're locked up safe from children, or instead, are they going to be focusing on violent crime and keeping our communities safe?

I question, on a day-to-day basis, Honourable Speaker, how much this Premier is smoking on a day-to-day basis.

Mr. Kinew: I don't smoke weed at all. Guess what? I don't drink, either. I don't even use Tylenol. But that's not the point.

The point is that the member opposite's 1950s reefer madness mentality, it just doesn't work, because when they were in office they didn't fund police. They defunded police. That's why there's negative 55 police officers. They defunded education, so it's harder for young people. They defunded health care, so it's harder for all people.

The only thing we're trying to defund is defund the PC Party of Manitoba. And the good thing is, if you look at the donations, the people of Manitoba agree. Nobody supports the tired nonsense that they continue to peddle.

What people want is people are going to come together with solutions. We're investing in health care. We're investing in school nutrition. We're investing in law enforcement so everybody can come together with a comprehensive solution to make Manitoba more prosperous, healthier and safer.

Timely Access to Life-Saving Health Care Request for Support for Debbie's Law

Mrs. Kathleen Cook (Roblin): Debbie Fewster's story is heartbreaking. A Manitoban who did everything right, she sought urgent medical care but was failed by a system that didn't respond in time. Her family is now left, not only with the pain of her loss, but with too many unanswered questions.

Debbie's law is about ensuring that no other family has to experience that same silence and uncertainty. It would require that patients be informed when care cannot be provided in time, that they are given information about out-of-province options when waits here are too long and that families receive clear communication when delays have serious consequences.

Will the NDP commit today to supporting Debbie's law and standing with families who deserve honesty, transparency and timely care?

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care): Honourable Speaker, we are taking action so that every Manitoban can get the surgery and the care that they need when they need it.

The previous PC government that was being advised by the member for Roblin dismantled the Cardiac Centre of Excellence. It was a beacon of what can be done in cardiac care right here in Manitoba.

I want to make really clear: we're not waiting for any legislation. We have already taken action, and I gave very clear directives to the health system to address the concerns laid out in the spirit of Debbie's law. First, directed St. Boniface to add additional surgery slates and staffing; directed St. Boniface to restore communication protocols that were cut by the previous PC government; and directed the health system to publish the data of patients who die while waiting for surgery so that we can be informed and take steps to rectify that moving forward.

We are not waiting for legislation—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

The honourable member for Roblin, on a supplementary question.

Mrs. Cook: When people like Debbie are forced to wait for medically urgent or even life-saving care, it is essential that they and their loved ones are informed about the risks, the options and the realities that they're facing.

Debbie's law would require timely and honest communication from health authorities, and it would

ensure that patients are told about out-of-province options when timely treatment isn't available here in Manitoba. We've heard from Debbie's family, and from many Manitobans, that they are willing to do whatever it takes to get care that might save their loved ones. They deserve to know what their options are if care here at home will take too long.

We are bringing Debbie's law forward for debate tomorrow. Will the NDP do the right thing and pass it at second reading without delay, and move it forward to committee?

MLA Asagwara: I want to take this moment to thank Debbie's family. I've had the opportunity to speak with them, to meet with them. These folks are grieving. Their family's experienced something that no family should ever have to, and yet they are showing up with an incredible amount of generosity and working directly with our government and experts to make sure we're moving cardiac care in the right direction.

Our government is going much further than what is proposed in Debbie's law. We have actually enlisted the expertise of the experts in Manitoba who established the Cardiac Centre of Excellence so we can not only re-establish it in Manitoba, but go even further, particularly in the area of women's cardiac health.

Our government is not taking this lightly. We're working with that family, with other families, to do right by Debbie and her family, to do right by all Manitobans who depend on cardiac care.

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

Mrs. Cook: The death of Debbie Fewster made painfully clear how devastating care delays can be. Her family had no way of knowing how dire the situation truly was; no formal notification; no accountability; and no public record of what went wrong.

And yet, her family has done something remarkable. They've spoken out about what happened to their mom and are calling on all of us to support common sense health-care reform so no one else has to go through the same thing.

This bill honours Debbie's memory. It's about making our system more transparent, more accountable and more just for every Manitoban. We are calling on all members of the Legislature to support this patients-first legislation.

Will the NDP support and pass Debbie's law, yes or no?

MLA Asagwara: I want to be very, very clear: our government is not only taking immediate action, we are going even further than what is proposed in that legislation. The spirit of Debbie's law, we wholeheartedly agree with, and we've taken immediate steps to enact what's being asked.

We are going further. We are working with the experts who understand this area of care to restore the Centre of Excellence that was taken apart piece by piece by the former PC government, which was advised by the member for Roblin.

What we're seeing happen in cardiac care is a direct result of that callous and irresponsible approach. We are dedicated to standing it up again, making it better for all Manitobans, no matter where you live in this province.

Provincial Deficit Balanced Budget Concerns

Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland): On countless occasions—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Stone: —this Finance Minister has told Manitobans he'll balance the budget by the end of this term, but with no plans to do so. Unfortunately for taxpayers, the NDP have shown they cannot rein in their spending, and they cannot stick to their budget plans.

Now, the International Monetary Fund, in its World Economic Outlook, projects that Canada's economy will not expand as they previously projected. I table that for the House.

Rose-coloured glasses will not balance this budget. Fiscal discipline and a strong economy will. Does this minister still believe that despite a deficit of almost \$2 billion alone this year, on top of his uncontrolled spending, he'll somehow manage this miracle?

Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister of Finance): This team will balance the budget in the final year of our mandate. And we're going to do that against the challenge that the members opposite set for us and set for Manitobans when they left us a \$2-billion hole to climb out of; \$2-billion hole, Honourable Speaker, and that's because the members opposite didn't have a clue how to budget responsibly and how to ensure transparency with Manitobans on how they were budgeting.

* (14:40)

We know that we had MNP, an independent accounting firm, do an assessment of their budgetary

decision making, and that independent accounting firm identified, without question, that they had made decisions that constituted high budgetary risk that left us in the hole that we were left in.

We're going to deliver on our commitments that we made to Manitobans, and we're going to do that while we continue to invest—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

The honourable member for Midland, on a supplementary question.

Canada's Economic Forecast due to Tariffs Request for Support for Manitoba Businesses

Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland): This minister's budget failed to set any realistic expectations and projections for revenue growth in the province despite the current state of global trade and the current state of Canada's economic climate. The Bank of Canada reported declining business confidence. Now the IMF said that Canada will suffer one, and I quote: the largest declines in exports due to the medium- and long-term effects of tariffs.

The NDP's short-term, 90-day tax deferrals simply are not enough of solution for what businesses are facing and desperately need right now. The IMF knows that our economy is under attack. The business—the Bank of Canada knows that our economy is under attack.

When can businesses expect a realistic plan from this minister instead of just a 'defause', a deferral, a delay and temporary—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister of Finance): Honourable Speaker, this team is working to defend jobs and defend our economy here in Manitoba. Our last budget committed to do something enormous, a \$3.7-billion capital investment to build, build, build Manitoba.

For years, the members opposite didn't get the job done. When it came to schools, we know they had imaginary schools that they were going to build. It came to PCHs, they couldn't get the job done. It came to NEWPCC, they couldn't get the job done.

This team is going to get the job done. We're going to build Manitoba; we're going to build Canada; we're going to build our economy, and we're going to continue to create more wealth and prosperity right here in Manitoba.

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

Mrs. Stone: The only thing this minister said that was right was the budget was enormous, with a \$2-billion deficit on the backs of hard-working Manitobans.

The IMF said real exports in Canada could fall anywhere from 1.8 per cent to 6 per cent. These are scenarios that should warrant real action from this NDP and this government. Yet this budget failed to recognize and account for the economic expectations and projections that Canada would be facing.

Honourable Speaker, 40 per cent of businesses have said that they will have no choice but to reduce staffing levels in the face of US and China tariffs.

Will this minister act to safeguard Manitoba businesses and jobs rather just delays, temporary deferrals on the backs of hard-working Manitobans?

MLA Sala: Honourable Speaker, it doesn't appear as though the critic read the budget, because if she'd read the budget, she would know that we, in addition to our core budget, had a tariff-contingency budget that clearly outlined what our government would do if those tariffs were sustained throughout the course of the year.

It reflected and expanded revenue contingency and it reflected expanded appropriations to support businesses, ag and Manitobans. That's because this government—this team—is ready, and we are always ready and going to be ready to make sure we stand up for Manitoban jobs and stand up for our economy, something that Manitobans couldn't count on under the members opposite for seven and a half years when they did absolutely nothing to advance this province. When it comes to advancing our economy or advancing energy, they left us unprepared.

This team is getting the job done. We put forward a budget—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Discarded Needles in Swan Valley Inquiry into Effectiveness of Clean-Up Plan

Mr. Wayne Balcaen (Brandon West): Tomorrow was the date for the minister's Swan Valley community spring cleanup event featuring rubber gloves, prizes and quote, snacks and fun. And I table the minister's invitation. Parents, educators and residents were outraged that this minister was offering children prizes for picking up the most needles.

Now that the cleanup has been cancelled for safety reasons, what is happening to the hundreds of thousands of needles littering our parks, sidewalks and waterways?

Hon. Bernadette Smith (Minister of Housing, Addictions and Homelessness): I'll remind that member, under their previous government, they were giving out needles without any disposal plan—no disposal plan at all.

When the mayor from Swan River contacted us and asked us to work collaboratively with us and wanted to, you know, meet, I went down to Swan River. I met with the municipality. I met with the mayor. We came up with a plan.

Prairie Mountain Health needle disposal group is going out daily, picking up needles. And I want to give—I'm going to table this—Tidy-Up Brandon: sweet treats from Twisters Ice Cream Shoppe, \$40 in gift cards. Clean up your community; post a picture, use tidy-up; win prizes every week.

Will the member from Brandon be going out—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

The honourable member for Brandon West, on a supplementary question.

Mr. Balcaen: Well, let's talk about this clean-up plan. The minister proudly stood in the Chamber and declared that her crack commando committee had personally picked up 17 needles over the course of a week. That's 10 two-hour shifts over a course of a week, and all she was able to secure was 0.000017 of a per cent of the used needles plaguing the Swan Valley region.

I table for the minister—[interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Balcaen: —a picture sent by a concerned local resident. There are literally tens of thousands of used sharps in this one photo.

Can the minister explain to Manitobans how the \$30,000 taxpayer-funded crack commando committee missed these needles?

Ms. Smith: I don't know what plan, you know, members opposite try to dream up, but on this side of the House, we are sending out folks that are trained to go and do needle disposal.

We have folks that are going out daily—twice daily—to make sure that the needles are cleaned up. We are making sure that we are working collaboratively

with the community. We have folks that are going out and meeting with the municipality, as well. I've been on the phone with the mayor last week, and we're continuing to collaborate, something members opposite didn't do and still continue not to do.

They continue to use divisive rhetoric. I invite them to get on board and start working—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

The honourable member for Brandon West, on a final supplementary question.

Mr. Balcaen: In the face of a massive community pushback, this minister did an about-face. She recognized that, quote, prizes, STBBI testing and snacks and fun—and I table again for the minister—was not enough to alleviate local safety concerns.

Now that the community spring clean-up is cancelled, can the minister share with this House her plan to safely and securely dispose of the remaining 499,983 sharps she has distributed in Swan River?

Ms. Smith: Again, I'll remind that member opposite, in 2021, under their government, they gave out 200,000 needles with no disposal plan; in 2022, 300,000, no disposal plan; in 2023, 500,000, no disposal plan.

We're not going to take any lessons from members opposite.

Here's another invitation for the members opposite: Downtown community; community clean-up in Brandon—refreshments, cookies, prizes. Maybe that member can get on board and go and help clean up his community.

On this side of the House, we send out trained members to go and clean up the needles. That member can get on board and work collaboratively instead of using divisive rhetoric—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Vulnerable Populations in Brandon Drop-In Support Services

Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz): Communities like Brandon are facing a growing need for front-line supports. Vulnerable populations live outside Winnipeg, too, but have access to far fewer services than what's available here in Winnipeg.

What is the NDP's plan, if they have one, to restore and expand access to drop-in support services for Manitobans living outside the Perimeter?

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Minister of Families): Actually, I really love talking about Brandon. In my role as Minister of Families, I've had the opportunity, alongside our amazing Families team, to travel out to Brandon many, many times and to meet with all of the folks that are doing extraordinary work on the front lines.

Brandon is quite unique in Manitoba because all of those social service organizations that work with the most vulnerable, they're all connected with one another and they all make sure that they're working with the folks that are the most vulnerable.

I love Brandon. Brandon's doing incredible work. I'm actually on my way there in the next couple of weeks, yet again.

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

* (14:50)

Ms. Byram: The Blue Door in Brandon provided essential services like laundry, showers and a warm place to gather for the city's most vulnerable residents and now it's gone. There is no direct alternative.

A worker from the facility told the Brandon Sun they're deeply concerned about where clients will go to now access necessities like showers. Can the minister explain what immediate steps the NDP government is taking to ensure that these vulnerable individuals aren't left without the supports that they rely on and need?

MLA Fontaine: The Minister for Housing, Addictions and Homelessness and I have both been out to visit Blue Door who, again, do extraordinary work and are connected with all of the resources in the region in Brandon.

I want to share with folks opposite and with Manitobans that under Mino'Ayaawag Ikwewag, which is our strategy for the empowerment and liberation of Indigenous women, girls and two-spirited, we have funded and supported Chelsea's House and, just recently, we were out in Brandon and launching and supporting Franny's Place, and both of those 24-7, drop-in safe spaces for Indigenous women were named after Indigenous women—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

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

Ms. Byram: The Blue Door was facing serious safety challenges for weeks, with Brandon police responding

to dozens of calls this year alone. Despite clear warning signs, no meaningful provincial support was offered from this NDP government before it was forced to shut down. Now, vulnerable individuals in Westman have one less place to turn to when they need a helping hand.

Will the minister acknowledge the urgency of this situation and outline what they are doing to prevent further service gaps in Brandon and other rural communities across Manitoba?

MLA Fontaine: Day after day in this Chamber, members opposite get up and ask questions of the government bench, asking us why we're not fixing up the mess that they made after seven and a half years, why we're not doing it faster.

Really, it begs the question why the member doesn't get up and look across her benches there at her colleagues and ask them: Why did they bury their head in the sand for so many years on the myriad of different issues that occurred under their failed callous and cold government? They did nothing in seven and a half years. They wanted to pretend that these issues didn't exist because, quite honestly, they don't care about those Manitobans. They like to get up—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Cuts to University of Winnipeg Programs Barriers to Student Graduation

MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): Students at the University of Winnipeg are facing barriers to completing their education, not just because of rising cost but despite tireless efforts, essential programs are being cancelled, including athletics and the entire English language program.

Courses needed to graduate are being cut, delaying students' ability to complete their degrees, and while other institutions offer robust practicum and co-op programs, the University of Winnipeg often lacks the resources to do the same.

What is this government doing to ensure students at the University of Winnipeg have access to the programs and practical learning experiences that they need to graduate on time?

Hon. Mike Moroz (Acting Minister of Advanced Education and Training): I want to thank the member opposite for this question.

She'll certainly be aware that we've increased funding to post-secondary institutions in Manitoba, and in the last three years, funding to the U of W has

increased by 24.6 per cent or about \$16 million. Budget 2025 saw an increase of 2 per cent operating.

Members opposite took the wrong approach to post-secondary education. PC cuts were reckless. They cut for seven years, then came in at the eleventh hour, a kind of a deathbed conversion to the value of post-secondary education and brought in an increase they knew they'd never have to deliver.

Our government is proud to have a positive relationship with our post-secondary institutions. On this side of the House—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

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

International Students Systemic Challenges

MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): Again, the University of Winnipeg has the lowest per-student funding here in Manitoba. And international students? They bring significant social and economic value to our province, but they're facing steep systemic challenges: tuition hikes with no cap, limited health-care access, restrictions on online courses and increasing reports of racism and discrimination. These are not the conditions of a welcoming province.

Can the minister explain what specific actions this government is taking to address these challenges being faced by international students here in Manitoba?

Hon. Mike Moroz (Acting Minister of Advanced Education and Training): Again, I want to thank, Honourable Speaker, the member opposite for the question. I would remind the member from Tyndall Park, however, that it was, in fact, her federal political party that cut international student allotment and immigration. This has harmed post-secondary institutions here in the province, as there are less students coming here to study. We'll continue to advocate for the—a solution that benefits all.

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

Request for Public Health Coverage

MLA Lamoureux: Honourable Speaker, post-secondary education is a provincial issue. The government claims to advocate for international students.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order.

MLA Lamoureux: Yet they continue to exclude them from provincial health-care coverage. Many international students and out-of-province students rely on walk-in clinics and urgent care as their primary access points to health services. Yet they—the recent launched Medimap app, meant to help Manitobans find care, is only available to those with Manitoba health-care coverage.

Honourable Speaker, international students pay high private insurance premiums and still often lack sufficient access to care.

Will the minister commit to including them in public health coverage?

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care): Honourable Speaker, I know that member is well aware that it was the previous PC administration that cut international student health care. They cut it callously while they were cutting emergency rooms, cutting nurse jobs, cutting the resources from the front lines of our health-care system that we all depend on.

Our government has been meeting with and working with the post-secondary institutions to find a solution and an approach to this that will ensure that internationally—international students have the care that they need. We're going that work collaboratively, and I recognize that that work isn't moving as quickly as we would all like.

Seven and a half years of cuts and damage to the health-care system takes a lot of time and a lot of sustained effort to fix, but our team is committed to doing that work on behalf of international students and all Manitobans.

School Nutrition Program Funding Investment

Mr. Logan Oxenham (Kirkfield Park): Honourable Speaker, feeding hungry kids just makes sense. I know the members opposite called it a bad idea, but on this side of the House we know the difference a full stomach can make in a child's life, both at school and at home. That's why our government committed to a school nutrition program. This was an important initiative of our dear friend, Nello Altomare, who dedicated his life to ensuring that kids were looked after, protected and had the support they needed when they went to school.

Honourable Speaker, can the minister tell us more about the steps we're taking to make sure kids never go to school hungry again?

Hon. Tracy Schmidt (Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning): I want to thank my colleague and dear friend for that great question. Honourable Speaker, kids cannot learn if they're hungry; it's just that simple. That's why, again, we've invested \$30 million into our historic universal school nutrition program. Our government knows that feeding kids in schools delivers better results for our kids, and that's why we are already seeing better attendance records right across our beautiful province.

But not everyone agrees. The members opposite derided feeding hungry kids as a bad idea; they said that those are not real meals for kids. The members opposite do not believe in this and they called the program dishonest and mocked feeding kids. That's why we've introduced Nello's Law, which makes this program untouchable by any future callous government.

I am so proud to stand here today beside the best team in the country to put forward the—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

MASC Services Funding Concerns

MLA Jeff Bereza (Portage la Prairie): Honourable Speaker, the Manitoba agriculture services corporation—[interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

MLA Bereza: —is critic—is a critical support for producers. They administer business risk management programs for farmers. In reality, this NDP government is cutting \$6 million.

Honourable Speaker, can the minister explain how they justify cutting \$6 million from programming designed to support farmers during this very difficult time?

* (15:00)

Hon. Ron Kostyshyn (Minister of Agriculture): Thank you; finally, an agriculture question has been brought forward to the situation.

So, basically, let me start off by saying a round of applause from all of us elected officials for our agriculture producers for what they are being faced with today and into the future. It is truly ironic that member opposite should be talking about MASC and allegedly, the loss of money.

I wonder how the member from Portage would feel that he was told 21 MASC offices were closed,

right, and he had no objection to that. But he chooses to bring in a situation—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Impact of Tariffs on Food Prices Concern for Small Grocers

Mr. Mark Wasyliw (Fort Garry): This Premier promised Manitobans he'd take on big grocery store chains. He didn't, and as a result, we have the fastest growing prices in Canada.

Last week, Statistics Canada—[interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wasyliw: —released its consumer price index, found that food inflation's gone up 3.2 per cent in the past year. That's the largest jump in 50 years, and I'll table the article.

We're now seeing the effects of tariffs on rising food prices. It's not the big chains who are getting hit; it's the small local grocers. Large chains buy in bulk and have the power to buy at discount. This means it's going to be even harder for little chains to compete with Walmart. Means less competition, means higher prices for Manitobans.

Why is this Premier choosing Walmart over Manitoba families?

Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier): Unlike the member opposite, I actually shop at Walmart. I shop at Food Fare. I support local business. I buy Canadian.

Now here's the thing: we're taking action to make grocery prices more affordable, just like we're taking action to make your hydro bills more affordable and your trips to the pump more affordable.

The members opposite, what are they doing? Me, me, me. It's all about me. They never talk about the people of Manitoba when they get up.

Consider the member for Riding Mountain (Mr. Nesbitt). Twenty minutes, 30 minutes talking about a point of order because he needed time in question period. For what? Their leader didn't even take the first six questions. The backbenchers can't even fill the rest of the 40 minutes. Why do they come here with this charade, trying to pretend like they have a legitimate quibble with us, when, in fact, all they care about is their own pension, their own benefits—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

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

Request to Expand Price Cap

Mr. Wasyliw: Absolutely right, I do not shop at Walmart. I buy Canadian. You know, the only thing that Manitobans does that actually helps grocery store prices is putting a cap on milk.

But we've seen big US— [interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wasyliw: —grocery stores ignore Manitoba law— [interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

The honourable Minister of Families (MLA Fontaine) will come to order.

The honourable Leader of the Opposition will also come to order.

You will find, today, that my sense of humour is pretty limited, so I would ask you all to respect that.

Mr. Wasyliw: So we've seen that this Premier lets big corporations get away with gouging Manitobans. Now the federal NDP has promised that they want to extend price caps on grocery store staples.

Manitoba doesn't need to wait for the federal government. The Province could bring in price caps on other staples other than milk. That's the most effective tool to keeping grocery prices affordable. And with Trump's tariffs, grocery store prices are going up.

Will the Premier commit today to expanding price caps on groceries or will he keep shopping at Walmart and supporting US grocers?

Mr. Kinew: I see what's going on here. Thinking about that federal NDP run in the future. Well, go ahead, to the member opposite; try and see if you can get elected under your own name. You got elected under our banner a few times. We'll see how the future goes.

But when it comes to the future that Manitobans are concerned about, here's the thing: Manitobans shop at Walmart. Manitobans shop at Costco. They shop at Superstore; they shop at Food Fare and any number of other places.

And we're making your life more affordable, saving money on the gas tax, saving money on hydro, saving money with that tax credit on property taxes.

But what are the members opposite doing? Give us more time in question period. For what? Every single Wednesday they sit down before their time— [interjection]

The Speaker: Order. The honourable member has—time has expired.

And the time for question period has expired.

Order.

PETITIONS

Removal of Federal Carbon Tax

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Leader of the Official Opposition): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly, and this is the background to this petition:

(1) The federal government has mandated a consumption-based carbon tax, with the stated goal of financially pressuring Canadians to make decisions to reduce their carbon emissions.

(2) Manitoba Hydro estimates that, even with a high-efficiency furnace, the carbon tax is costing the average family over \$200 annually, even more for those with older furnaces.

(3) Home heating in Manitoba is not a choice or a decision for Manitobans to make; it is a necessity of life, with an average of almost 200 days below 0°C annually.

(4) The federal government has selectively removed the carbon tax off of home heating oil in the Atlantic provinces of Canada, but has indicated they have no intention to provide the same relief to Manitobans heating their homes.

(5) Manitoba Hydro indicates that natural gas heating is one of the most affordable options available to Manitobans, and it can be cost prohibitive for households to replace their heating source.

(6) Premiers across Canada, including in the Atlantic provinces that benefit from this decision, have collectively sent a letter to the federal government, calling on it to extend the carbon tax exemption to all forms of home heating, with the exception of Manitoba.

(7) Manitoba is one of the only provincial jurisdictions to have not agreed with the stance that all Canadians' home heating bills should be exempt from the carbon tax.

(8) Provincial leadership in other jurisdictions have already committed to removing the federal carbon tax from home heating bills.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to remove the federal carbon tax on home heating bills for all Manitobans to provide them much-needed relief.

This petition is signed by Eve Rattai, Troy Bishop and Eileen Wazny and many more fine Manitobans.

Provincial Trunk Highway 34

Mr. Derek Johnson (Interlake-Gimli): I wish to present the following petition.

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

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

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

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

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

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

* (15:10)

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition has been signed by Gerald Sawatsky, Rick Rivers and R.P. Omeruk [*phonetic*].

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Little Mountain Park

MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): I wish to present the following petition.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The Manitoba Highways department has expressed a desire to have the CentrePort Canada Way to Chief Peguis Trail extension developed to follow Klimpke Road with a termination point on the CentrePort Canada highway–Canada Way.

(2) The proposed path would eliminate a portion of Little Mountain Park, which abuts Klimpke Road, private residences and the neighbouring Little Mountain Sportsplex.

(3) Although located in the RM of Rosser, Little Mountain Park is one of Winnipeg's valuable green spaces, located within the Perimeter Highway boundary, and is the only significant green space in the northwestern sector of the city.

(4) Little Mountain Park has been providing recreational opportunities and natural habitat for local wildlife since it was established in 1965. It contains a tall grass prairie ecosystem on ecologically sensitive land, complete with flora and fauna, and is a destination for tourists from all over.

(5) The impact of the growing industrial port and the resultant redirected traffic through this area would not only disrupt access to the nearby Sportsplex and golf course with the additional heavy traffic, but would also pose environmental threats, and disrupt local wildlife in nearby Little Mountain Park.

(6) The Province of Manitoba has a stated responsibility to protect the environment and green spaces for the benefit of all Manitobans with policies and legislation that support economic development, investment, trade and natural resources and the conservation of species and ecosystems to conserve those precious resources for future generations.

(7) The encroachment of the proposed highway must be considered a threat to the Little Mountain Park designated ecosystem.

(8) An earlier proposal utilized a different route that followed the existing old Sturgeon Road footprint, circumventing Little Mountain Park and the Sportsplex, while still providing suitable access to the industrial area with a termination point between Mollard Road and Jefferson Avenue.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to recognize Little Mountain Park as an at-risk ecosystem and as a potential ecosystem preservation zone.

(2) To urge the provincial government to recognize the impact of the proposed route on Little Mountain Park, The Players Course, the neighbouring Little Mountain Sportsplex and the citizens and tourists who use and visit them.

(3) To urge the provincial government to seek an alternate route that would avoid the area while still providing adequate ingress and egress to the CentrePort Canada Way, such as old Sturgeon Road route, and avoid expropriating land unnecessarily.

This petition has been signed by many Manitobans.

Carbon Tax and Rising Food Prices

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) In 2022, according to Statistics Canada, there was an 11.4 per cent increase in food prices.

(2) Staple food products such as baked goods, margarine and other oils, dairy products and eggs have seen some of the largest price increases.

(3) Agriculture and the agri-food sectors contribute close to 10 per cent of Manitoba's GDP.

(4) There are increased costs added at every step of the process Manitoba's agricultural producers. In order to make 18 cents from one bread loaf worth of wheat, farmers are paying carbon tax at every stage of production to grow the crop and get it to market.

(5) Grain drying, fertilizer and chemical production, mushroom farming, hog operations, the cost of heating a livestock barn, machine shops and utility buildings are all examples of how the carbon tax on natural gas and other fuels cost farmers and consumers more each year.

(6) In food production there are currently no viable alternatives to natural gas and propane. The carbon tax takes money away from farmers, making them less profitable and hindering rural agricultural producers' ability to invest in upgrades and improve efficiency while reducing emissions.

(7) The provincial government neglected farmers in the six-month fuel tax holiday until the opposition critic and the local stakeholder groups called for their inclusion.

(8) Other provincial jurisdictions and leaders have taken action on calling on the federal government to remove the punishing carbon tax and/or stop collecting the carbon tax altogether.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to call on the federal government to remove the punishing carbon tax on natural gas and other fuels and farm inputs for Manitoba agriculture producers and the agri-food sector to decrease the costs of putting food on the table for Manitoba consumers.

This petition was signed by Shar Balcaen, Angela Malo, Shelayne Bloomer and many, many other fine Manitobans.

MRI Machine for Portage Regional Health Facility

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

Mr. Tyler Blashko, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

(1) Thanks to the investment made under the previous PC provincial government as part of the clinical and preventative services plan, construction for the new Portage regional health facility is well under way. The facility and surrounding community would greatly benefit from added diagnostic machinery and equipment, but specifically the addition of an MRI machine.

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

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

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

* (15:20)

(5) Located around Portage la Prairie are Dakota Tipi, Dakota Plains, Sandy Bay and Long Plain First

Nations reserves. Indigenous peoples in Canada disproportionately face barriers in access to services and medical care. An MRI machine located in the Portage regional health facility will bring care closer to their home communities and provide greater access to diagnostic testing.

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This is signed by Roy Kroll, Tricia Bolt, Susan Siddorn and many, many more Manitobans.

New Neepawa Health Centre

Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition has been signed by Rhonda Neufeld, Marylene Kaye and Sarah Upgo [*phonetic*], and many, many more Manitobans.

Thank you.

Phoenix School

Mrs. Kathleen Cook (Roblin): I wish to present the following petition, and the background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

And this petition is signed by Rich Juchnowski, Diana Juchnowski, Kristi Braun and many, many other Manitobans.

Funding Crime Cost Mitigation for Small Business

Mr. Josh Guenter (Borderland): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

(3) More than half—54 per cent—of small businesses in Manitoba are impacted by crime. Property damage, theft, littering and public intoxication are some of the crimes that affect most businesses, according to the Canadian Federation of Independent

Business. There has been a 44 per cent increase in shoplifting incidents over the last year.

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

* (15:30)

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

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

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

We urge the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition has been signed by Lisa Penner, Ann Wolfe, Alicia Guenter and many, many, many Manitobans.

Construct New Personal-Care Home—Stonewall

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The Government of Manitoba funded the design for a new personal-care home in Stonewall to address the critical need for additional care-home spaces in the community and surrounding areas.

(2) The community has committed to raise \$10 million in funding for this project, demonstrating strong local support and readiness to proceed with construction.

(3) Interlake-Eastern region health—regional health authority is experiencing a critical shortage of personal-care-home beds.

(4) Interlake-Eastern Regional Health Authority has the lowest number of personal-care-home beds per capita, with a shortfall of approximately 400 beds.

(5) Despite these approvals, the government has made no mention of the construction of the Stonewall personal-care home, leaving many seniors and their families without access to adequate personal-care services in the region.

(6) The delay in commencing construction exacerbates existing challenges in providing timely and appropriate care for aging residents, forcing some to seek services far from their families and their communities.

(7) Investing in the timely construction of this personal-care home will provide essential services to the growing senior population, support the local economy and demonstrate the government's commitment to the well-being of Manitobans.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to immediately restore funding and commence construction on the personal-care home in Stonewall, ensuring that this essential project proceeds without further delay.

This petition has been signed by Colleen LaPage, Karen McEchan [*phonetic*] and Kathy Cockerill and many, many, many Manitobans.

Thank you.

Morden Waste Water Project

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

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

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

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

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

(4) As 2024—as of 2024, after exploring all options, the City announced in July that the estimated cost for critical infrastructure upgrades has risen from 70 million to 88 to 108 million.

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

(2) We urge the provincial government to ensure all levels of government and regulatory bodies will expedite necessary funding and approvals necessary to advance the Morden waste water project with no further delays and ensure no hindrance to growth and economic development for Morden and southern Manitoba.

This petition has been signed by Peggy Krause, Howard Sager, Dorothy Wiebe and many, many other Manitobans.

Thank you.

Green Valley School Expansion

Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye): I wish to present the following petition.

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

(1) The residents of La Vérendrye and other areas around Manitoba are extremely frustrated and concerned by the provincial government's decision to cancel the

school expansion project for Green Valley School in Grunthal.

(2) In 2021, the PC provincial government committed funding to expand Green Valley School for a new gymnasium and classrooms.

(3) The school is so crowded that three mobile classrooms were added to alleviate overcrowding in classrooms.

(4) In order for construction to begin, the school removed all three portable classrooms, leaving Green Valley in a further critical state of overcrowding.

* (15:40)

(5) As a result of overcrowding, parents are choosing to home-school their children due to safety concerns and the challenges associated with overcrowding.

(6) The current Premier of Manitoba and the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning have said they are committed to investing in education.

(7) The concerns of residents of La Vérendrye and the surrounding area are being ignored by the provincial government.

(8) The lack of space in the school is affecting the quality of education and extracurricular activities for students.

(9) The minister and Premier have a duty to respond to the educational needs of children and youth identified by rural communities.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning to immediately bring back the three portable classrooms to help alleviate the stress and overcrowding classrooms.

(2) To urge the provincial government to reinstate the expansion project for Green Valley School.

This petition has been signed by Leroy Driedger, Harold Warkentin, Jeff Guenther and many, many other Manitobans.

Support for Border Communities

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

This petition has been signed by many, many, many Manitobans.

Thank you.

Teaching Certification

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

(2) To urge the provincial government to address teacher shortages through alternative measures that uphold rigorous subject-area standards, which are

critical for providing quality education to all Manitoba students.

This petition has been signed by R.D. Omeniuk, Rick Rivers, Bill Rivers and many other Manitobans.

Provincial Trunk Highway 34

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

* (15:50)

The background of this petition is as follows:

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

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

(3) A new bridge is currently being constructed over the Assiniboine River at PTH 34—and I believe it's actually completed now—north of Holland and in RM of Victoria. The bridge serves as the important north-south link over the Assiniboine River between the Trans-Canada Highway and PTH 2.

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

(5) Construction of a new bridge is in accordance with current design codes with the RTAC standard, located at PTH 34 crossing at the Assiniboine River—I believe, again, it's been done, and we put it through—forward—will support trade and commerce and the improve public safety in the area, and also could accommodate flood events on the Assiniboine River.

We petition the Assembly of Manitoba—the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This has been signed by Glenn Vercaigne, Darryll Breemisch [*phonetic*] and Garry Serruys, and many, many other Manitobans.

The Deputy Speaker: Before moving on to the next member, I'll just remind all members reading out petitions that they should read the text exactly as written and not provide further commentary.

MRI Machine for Portage Regional Health Authority

Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background in this petition is as follows:

(1) Thanks to the investment made under the previous PC provincial government as part of the clinical and preventative service plan, construction for the new Portage regional health facility is well under way. The facility and surrounding community would greatly benefit from added diagnostic machinery and equipment, but specifically the addition of an MRI machine.

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Thanks to the investment made under the previous PC provincial government as part of the clinical and preventative services plan, construction for the new Portage regional health facility is well under way. The facility and surrounding community would greatly benefit from added diagnostic machinery and equipment, but specifically the addition of an MRI machine.

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

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

* (16:00)

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This is signed by Warren Neufeld, Phil Beam, Orvil Cairns and many, many, many more Manitobans.

The Deputy Speaker: Seeing no further petitions, grievances?

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Government House Leader): Would you please call bill—no. Can you please call third reading of Bill 42, The Buy Canadian Act, government purchases act amendment; followed by Bill 31, The Property Controls for Grocery Stores and Supermarkets Act (Various Acts Amended).

The Deputy Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable—it has been announced by the Government House Leader we'll move on to third reading—we'll move on to debate on the concurrence and third readings of Bill 42, The Buy Canadian Act (Government Purchases Act Amended); and concurrence and third reading of Bill 31, The Property Controls for Grocery Stores and Supermarkets Act (Various Acts Amended).

**DEBATE ON CONCURRENCE
AND THIRD READINGS****Bill 42—The Buy Canadian Act
(Government Purchases Act Amended)**

The Deputy Speaker: Therefore, moving to Bill 42, standing in the name of the honourable member for Borderland, who has 28 minutes remaining.

Mr. Josh Guenter (Borderland): I guess I'll pick up where we left off yesterday, which was the previous PC government—this team, this PC team signing on to the New West Partnership.

That's right; that's where we were. And we were talking about how the NDP, in their 17 years, voted against it and refused to sign on to the New West trade partnership for purely ideological reasons—perhaps because they didn't like the governments in Saskatchewan and Alberta—but for whatever reason, they refused to sign on for 17 years and—17 years. For 17 years—17 long, dark years—that the NDP were in charge, that the socialists across the way were in charge, and left us behind, left Manitobans—neglected Manitobans, neglected Manitoba businesses and neglected Manitoba's economy.

And those were supposed to be the good years, too, by the way, and they were running massive deficits and left Manitobans in a bad spot. And that's why, when the previous PC government was elected in 2016, we signed on to the new west trade partnership with our partners to the west, our partners in Confederation, Alberta, Saskatchewan and British Columbia. And that was really fulfilling the original purpose of Confederation, which was to create east-west ties, east-west trade and east-west economy and an east-to-west, coast-to-coast-to-coast cultural identity and economy.

So, yes, so it's unfortunate yesterday, as I was saying, that with just a few minutes left on the clock that I was cut off and I'm now picking up today. But I think it's a good place to pick up: the new west trade partnership.

And today, we're seeing that conversation once again across this country about knocking down trade barriers. And you have premiers in Nova—a premier in Nova Scotia, another PC premier, is taking the initiative this time. Sadly, not the Manitoba Premier (Mr. Kinew); it's the PC Premier of Nova Scotia, it's the PC premier in Ontario that are picking up—

An Honourable Member: Good on them.

Mr. Guenter: Absolutely. They're leading the way. They're leading the way to try to finally, 'trily' fulfill the dream, the original intent, of Confederation to create a unified country and economy and trading block north of the 49th parallel.

It's no secret 80 per cent of our exports go to the United States. And, of course, we will always do business with Americans. They are our neighbours. We will never be able to divorce ourselves from them because we're married, as John F. Kennedy said when he came to the House of Commons and gave an address.

And, you know, he was a Democrat, and members across the way might be shocked but I really admire John F. Kennedy. I think he was a great American president. He cut taxes, believe it or not. Revenues went up. And he stood for religious freedom; he was a Catholic in a country that—in which Catholics were minority at that time, and he was the first Catholic president, so he understood the importance of religious freedom and minority rights. But also, he was a true democrat, a classic liberal, something that I think has been lost somewhere along the way in the last couple of decades.

And I respect him for his leadership. He was a visionary. But he came to Ottawa. He came to Canada when John Diefenbaker was prime minister, and the two didn't necessarily have the greatest of relationships.

But he said: What geography has brought together—and I'm paraphrasing him. It was a beautiful quote, and he went on and on—and what the economy is for us, and so on and so forth—and what culture has—what history has tied—brought together, let no man put asunder. And I think that that quote today is very fitting. The relationship between Canada and the United States will—it's certainly hit a rough patch and it's pretty—it's at a pretty low point today, I think we could all agree, but that will go on.

But we must—as Canadians we must focus on strengthening our ties within our country and strengthening our country. This is a moment—you know, you can turn every crisis into an opportunity, and I think there's an opportunity, there's a silver lining in every dark cloud and I think you just have to spot it.

And it takes leadership to spot it. And I think it's disappointing that that leadership doesn't come from 450 Broadway, although, I don't—you know, as a Conservative, I don't think many good things necessarily

come from government inherently; they tend to come from the people.

* (16:10)

It's the people, the grassroots, the people on the ground, the moms and dads, business owners and farmers and many others out there who are living life and responding to reality and carrying out their dreams, and they've got big aspirations, and it's their work and their sacrifice and their efforts towards those dreams and aspirations that propels our economy and propels our society forward.

But there are times when government must lead as well, and this is one of those times, and there is an opportunity for us here at 450 Broadway; there is an opportunity for the gentleman who takes—who's currently—works out of room 204 in this esteemed Legislature to take up leadership. There's an opportunity here for the Premier (Mr. Kinew) to be a leader.

He has gone—the NDP Premier has gone to Washington twice, two trips to Washington—two trips to Washington—and each trip he comes back, zero deals, zero jobs. Two trips to Washington: Manitobans fund two trips to Washington, all—two all-expense-paid trips to Washington for this Premier who has federal aspirations, and that's exactly why he's doing it, by the way. That's exactly why he's doing it.

I think he's a little bummed out at Mark Carney's prospects because I think he was angling for that seat. I don't know what kind of—how many seats the NDP will be left with on the 28th, but I'm thinking he's probably a little bummed out that his—he'll have a tiny caucus to preside over there in Ottawa when he finally gets there. So that's a bit of a bummer on the part of the Premier. But two trips to Washington, all-expense, all-inclusive trips to Washington, zero deals, zero jobs; zero deals for Manitobans, zero jobs.

Who is leading? Who is leading? Who's leading the objective of Confederation forward, that grand deal, that grand bargain of 1867? Who's leading? It's premiers in Nova Scotia, the Premier of Ontario, the Premier of Alberta—they're all—Saskatchewan, the Premier of Saskatchewan, almost everyone, even the—you know, the Premier of Quebec. Virtually every premier, except this Premier. Virtually every premier except this Premier and—

An Honourable Member: Where is Wab?

Mr. Guenter: It's a valid question: where is the Premier on these issues? Two trips to Washington, zero deals, zero jobs.

And as I said, no surprise though; I don't think we should be shocked because in their 17 years in power previously, they balked at the opportunity, repeatedly, to sign on to the new west trade partnership and bring Manitoba into the economic bloc that is western Canada and all the potential, all the natural resources, all the industry that is—that—within this economic bloc of western Manitoba. And so they left Manitoba as an outlier, which is why, when our PC government took office, we signed on, and we're reaping the benefits of that.

But today here we are, and it's important that we carry this conversation forward, and it's good that it's happening across the country, but, of course, the Premier is nowhere on that file. He talks a good game. This government certainly talks a good game; I'll give them credit for that. They talk a very good game.

But the devil is in the details, and when you look at the results, the results are very dismal. In fact, if we're going to talk about results I think we can't miss—I would be very remiss; it would be wrong—it would be, I would even say, morally wrong. I know we're not allowed—I'll be careful, okay, for parliamentary reasons.

But I will say I do think it would be very wrong for me not to mention that this NDP government, that these socialists across the way, were left with a \$270-million surplus by the previous Conservative government; a \$270-million surplus. And what did they do that? What did they do with that surplus? They blew it all and they turned it into a \$2-billion deficit. Shame on that government.

And, unfortunately, that puts Manitobans and our economy in a very bad spot right now with this trade war going on with the United States and with China, and all the global uncertainty that's been brought about as a result of it.

So we are in the red—deep into the red—and those are supposed to be the good times. That \$2-billion deficit was generated arbitrarily. It was just, they—generated in the good times. And now we're in these bad times and we may have to—the government may have to provide relief of some sort, whether it's tax relief or whatnot. Of course, I don't anticipate they're going to do that.

They raised taxes in their last budget just several weeks ago: \$150 million in property taxes and it'll keep going up. And by the way, that's the issue that's going to send them out of office, that Manitobans are noticing their school property taxes are—

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

I'd ask the member to bring his comments back to the content of the bill, which has to do with creating regulation that require the Manitoba government to give preference to Canadian suppliers when making government purchases.

Mr. Guenter: So that's the other issue with this bill: there is no regulation. All this bill does, it gives the government the ability to develop the regulation later on. It's already been—we're weeks, we're months into this trade war with America and the United States and this government is still talking about developing—and as I said, that's what this government does. It's all show and no substance.

And they're all talk. I mean, that's why, as I mentioned, two trips—this Premier (Mr. Kinew) took two trips—he's very image conscious which is why he took two trips to Washington D.C., because those kind of headlines will generate attention, except that when he came back, there was zero deals, zero jobs.

And so, again, this government, very good at showmanship, very good at TikTok, but not very good at following through. And maybe that's why all we have here is really a title. It's The Buy Canadian Act. It's a buy Canadian—there's no regulation. There's no opportunity later on. We have no idea when the government is going to come forward with this regulation and what's going to be in the regulation.

And they'll—and by the way, there's going to be no opportunity for members of this House to speak, or to move amendments, or to improve that regulation. It'll just be whatever arbitrary regulations someone within that government writes. And that is a huge concern. I don't think that that serves democracy very well.

We're here for a reason and it's a huge concern when we pass laws in this Chamber that are one page or two pages long and then they go off to those who write the regulations, the bureaucrats and so on, so forth, who, many of them are well-intentioned and you know, are trying to do a good job, but unfortunately, then after the regulations are written, there's no potential, once this bill is—once any piece of legislation is passed and moves on to those who write the regulations. There's no opportunity then for legislators in this place to have any say on that or provide any oversight or any suggested improvements and so forth.

And so I do think that that does a disservice to Manitobans, who are living through these very serious times and so—and how having to deal with the economic fallout of the trade war with China and with United States. So that's a huge concern.

But this government, for weeks, has been dragging its feet on this bill. This government is—has not made clear what's going to be in the regulation and when it's going to be implemented. This government has not provided any inclination of what it will mean for government procurement, and there's no details. And so that's a concern.

You know, Manitobans are listening, as I said, these days to what their government is doing, to what direction the government is pointing us in. And what actions the government is—governments of all stripes are undertaking. And so it's important that, you know, if they're telling Manitobans to buy Canadian and buy Manitoban, what does that mean for government procurement? You know, what is the—what does this NDP government think that that means?

In fact, we've seen—and the member for Midland (Mrs. Stone), the Finance critic has just in recent days tabled multi-million dollar contracts that this NDP government has signed in the middle of a trade war with United States and China, contracts that this NDP government has signed with other international countries, including businesses in the United States and China.

So that's interesting. So, you know, it's—they say one thing and then do another. And—but I think it's important that they be forthcoming about what would a bill like this mean for government procurement.

* (16:20)

And so, but I was talking about results, and I was talking about—and if we go back a couple minutes, before your wise interjection there, Speaker, I was talking about results. Because that matters. When someone is telling you something, I think most Manitobans want to know, you know, what gives you the ability to talk about a subject like this. Why is what you're telling me right, or why is it the thing to do? What experience or what record of results do you have? Show me the proof, and so show me the results.

And during a trade war with China and with America, you know, we're talking about buy Canadian and buy Manitoban, but we look at the results of this NDP government and what they've managed to mess up in our economy, and we see how that in 2023, the end of 2023, the beginning of 2024, the unemployment rate was at 4 per cent. Today the unemployment rate is above 6 per cent in Manitoba.

I talked about how this government was left with a \$270-million budgetary surplus, and they turned it into a \$2-billion deficit. We see how business bankruptcies spiked by 23 per cent under this government;

consumer insolvencies by 4.4 per cent in 2024. We see how Manitoba now has the highest inflation and food inflation in Manitoba. And in the middle of a trade war, the breadbasket—and I know the Agriculture Minister has talked about Manitoba being the fruit basket. Is that right? And Manitoba's the breadbasket.

They say fruit basket, we say breadbasket. But I think we can all agree, Manitoba is the breadbasket. We grow some great crops, and we have got some high quality agricultural land—

An Honourable Member: Take out the combine, harvest some fruit.

Mr. Guenter: —and I always like to see, and my colleague here is talking about seeing combines. And I like to see the agricultural equipment travelling along our highways. I know it can be perhaps frustrating sometimes for travellers, for commuters. But it's always good to see farmers out in the fields working hard, and when farmers do well, everyone does well.

Because we know that in rural Manitoba, if the farmers are taking off a great crop, you know, those—everyone else, everyone in our local community is going to be doing well. We—that wealth gets spread around pretty well.

And so in this wonderful breadbasket, can you believe it: under the NDP, we have 50,000 Manitobans—out of a population of 1.3 million people—50,000 reliant, on a monthly basis, on food banks. Is that—does that not just defy common sense? It defies logic. To me, it's crazy. And I—that's a shameful record on the part of the NDP.

And so—they've gone further. They—one of their first actions was to repeal the red tape accountability act. As a result, we're now last place in the Canadian Federation of Independent Business red tape business rankings. We're last place in natural resource investments over the next 10 years. Vale, the huge mining giant up north—

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

I would invite the member to bring his comments back to the bill, which is a procurement bill related to Canadian suppliers.

Mr. Guenter: So, talking about that great Canadian mining operation up in Thompson there, which is so vital to the Northern economy, and so vital to our Manitoba economy. And the member across the way mentions Alamos Gold, except that it was the previous PC government that got that mine off the ground. And

it was the previous PC government that got the first potash mine built in Manitoba in 66 years. The first potash mine.

Think about what Manitoba could be. We've got oil, we've got a chunk—a little piece of the Bakken oil sands. And the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Piwniuk) often gets up and talks about the oil revenues that can come—and the potential. Can you imagine what lies undiscovered under these grounds, what potential Manitoba has and the potential within Manitobans themselves, if only they weren't so saddled by NDP tax hikes and NDP overreach and NDP regulation.

If you unshackle Manitobans and unleash the potential of Manitoba's economy—and you've got explorers and entrepreneurs and dreamers, Manitoba moms and dads, farmers, business people going out there and propelling this economy forward—I think we may not need necessarily to be so reliant on America. I think we would be a lot stronger; we'd be a lot wealthier, and that wealth would have so many manifests, so many benefits.

And so—and the members opposite, too, talk about how poverty is one of the root causes of crime, but I don't know why they wage economic war on Manitobans. You know, it's this vicious cycle—it's this vicious cycle that they put—any time you get the socialists take charge, what happens? Crime goes up; unemployment goes up; the economy goes into the tank, and it's just a vicious cycle and we're seeing that all over again. And those results, you can see them in black and white. They are there.

And so I think it's time, though; it's time. And this side of the House certainly will continue to champion Manitoba entrepreneurs, Manitoba business people. And we will champion Manitobans. This side believes in Manitoba's potential. We believe in the Manitoba advantage on this side of the House, and we will continue to stand up for Manitobans.

And so I think it's unfortunate we have a government that is so divorced from reality that they're raising taxes on Manitobans at a time when we're in the middle—when we are in the middle—of a trade war. Look at how the bottom has fallen out. The member for Portage la Prairie (MLA Bereza) has stood up repeatedly in this Chamber and asked the member—the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Kostyshyn) for something, for an answer—we cannot even get an answer—anything.

The member for Portage la Prairie (MLA Bereza) and members on this side of the House stand up for farmers, and we ask this NDP government: What is their plan? What is their plan? Because the bottom has fallen out. The bottom has—we've seen canola prices absolutely crater with the—with China now embarking on a trade war with Canada. And that's a huge concern, and there's just a complete lack of leadership on the other side.

So they put—they bring forward bills like this, the buy Canadian bill, and it sounds great, but at the end of the day, it is just a title—it's just a title. There's no details in it; there's nothing in this buy Canadian bill. They introduced it, when? A long, long time ago. They introduced this bill a long time ago, and they have no idea—and I think the reason they may be dragging their feet on this is because they have no idea, when this bill passes, what they're going to put in it; what's the regulation going to be like?

They have no idea. Even if you just—just conceptually, just—if the minister was king for a day and this bill was passed at 8 a.m. in the morning, what would the minister like to do, just hypothetically? What would this mean? What would passing this bill mean for procurement in Manitoba?

You know, we can tell Manitobans to shop local and buy local, and the Premier (Mr. Kinew) confessed today—admitted—that he shops at Walmart; he buys American products at Walmart. And his government—the member—the Finance critic on our side, the member for Midland (Mrs. Stone), has pointed out in recent days several multi-million-dollar contracts that this NDP government has handed out not to Manitoba businesses, not even to Canadian businesses, but to international American businesses.

Now, as I said, I'm the member for Borderland, and the communities that I have the distinct honour of representing have close ties with our American neighbours, and that will continue. As strained as relations are today and as low as the relationship is today—and I think, too, that the federal government certainly didn't do any favours, but it appears to have paid off on their part, but we'll see. But anyway, those ties will endure.

But isn't it something, the hypocrisy of this NDP government to suggest that Manitobans should buy local and they're signing contracts with companies outside of Manitoba and outside of Canada—multi-million-dollar contracts. They're sending taxpayer dollars outside of this province and outside of Canada.

* (16:30)

And this is the same Premier that goes down to Washington not once, but twice, and comes back with zero jobs, zero deals. So this is the Premier who talks about getting rid of trade; this is a Premier who talks about getting rid of trade barriers, interprovincial trade barriers, and yet it's other premiers across this Confederation who are leading the charge on that front.

But I would also like to ask members opposite: Do they support nation-building pipelines? Do members support taking this opportunity to make Canada more self-reliant to use our own oil and our own gas resources, to lower the cost of fuel for Manitobans and for Canadians? Would this NDP Premier—do members of the—this NDP government support a revived Energy East Pipeline, which would be—which would do wonders to build our country and knit our ties of Confederation together, to draw us closer together as a country, to make us more self-reliant and stronger economically and to lower—

An Honourable Member: God bless Canada.

Mr. Guenter: God bless Canada, absolutely. There's an opportunity—there's an opportunity to bind us together as Canadians and to strengthen our economy and also to lower prices at the pump and to lower inflation.

Would this—that's a question this NDP government needs to answer. Do they support pipelines? Now is the opportunity to build those pipelines, put them in the ground. We see the trains. I'm a rural member; I come into Winnipeg. I travel all the way up Pembina Highway, and I'll tell you what: I see those trains, dozens and dozens of oil cars travelling through almost 900,000 people and all the traffic, all these oil cars.

An Honourable Member: Build the pipeline.

Mr. Guenter: Absolutely. Build the pipelines, I say. Build the pipelines; it's a better, safer way to do it—

The Deputy Speaker: And the member's time has expired.

Mrs. Carrie Hiebert (Morden-Winkler): Oh, I didn't hear you, sorry.

Canada is the greatest country in the world, and we should never forget that. We will never be the 51st state. We are the land of the true north, strong and free. We are rich in natural resources, powered by clean energy, driven by innovation and united by diversity. From our farmers and manufacturers to our

engineers and entrepreneurs, Canadians are builders, problem solvers and leaders on the world stage.

And I'm proud to stand for my country today and talk about Canada. What makes Canada great isn't just what we have; it is who we are. We value fairness, hard work, taking care of one another and we have—the talent, the tools and the will to shape our future.

But for too long, we've learned—we've leaned heavily on the United States for trade and economic stability. That's a risk we can no longer afford. Protectionist policies, tariffs and political instability remind us that we need to chart our own path. We need to build sturdy, stable economy here at home. And by doing that, we need to support and purchase and do what we can to support our community and our country and the retailers and people who purchase and—supplies that we need for our province.

We must diversify our trade, strengthen ties with the Commonwealth, expand to Asia and Europe and reduce our reliance on one country. We must eliminate interprovincial trade barriers, supporting each other in our provinces across the country. We must improve transportation infrastructure so that we can continue to purchase and supply those things we need for our country throughout our provinces that we already have.

We need to invest in the tools that let our goods reach global markets. This is so important that we do this. This isn't about turning our back on anyone. It's about standing on our own two feet. I'm going to say that line again: This isn't about turning our back on anyone; it's about standing on our own two feet. Canada doesn't need to be the 51st state. We are a proud sovereign nation, and when we work together from coast to coast to coast, there is nothing we can't achieve.

I want to speak to you about something that's been very much on my heart, something that affects every family, every worker, every business in Manitoba, and that's the importance of buying Canadian, buying local whenever we can. This should be a priority for everyone to help build our economy and support our families.

In Manitoba, we believe in supporting each other. When we choose to buy Canadian we're not just making a purchase. We're making an investment. We're making an investment in a small business; we're making an investment in our roads; we're making an investment in big, large companies because those people are all needing to—jobs from those big manu-

facturers. An investment in our communities in good-paying jobs in strong, local businesses and in the future of our province: that is what we need to do, and that was what will happen if we continue to purchase and try to focus and get the things that we need.

We support Manitobans buying Canadian and buying local in every way we can because we know it makes us stronger. It keeps dollars circulating in our communities. It helps our farmers, our manufacturers, our small shop owners, which I have a history of—I was once a small shop owner—and the tradespeople, our tradespeople, everybody; it's a chain effect. Everybody is—it just flows down, and it's amazing how, when we support local, how it continues to trickle down to everyone.

And right now, more than ever, that support is critical. Why is it critical? Because the world is changing. It's always changing. The US, our largest trading partner—become more and more protectionist, which is okay for them, but for us, that's not a great situation if that's all we rely on. Tariffs, trade restrictions and political uncertainty south of the border have shown us that we can't rely on one market to carry our economy; we must look other places; we must look within ourselves.

We need to make sure we have—we diversify. Looking across to all the provinces of our country is part of that. We need to open up more trade with the Commonwealth, with Asia and the European Union and with countries around the world. This is about protecting our economy and our future, alongside working with the rest of our provinces of our country.

But to get there, we need to fix what's broken at home. Canada still has interprovincial trade barriers that make it harder to do business across our own provinces than it is to trade with foreign countries. That makes no sense. We should be able to get something from Nova Scotia or Alberta or wherever we need to, much easier than if we were to try to get it from a country across the pond. That needs to change. We need to break down those walls, unleash the full potential of a united Canadian market.

United: united means that we are all together on one page. So I would encourage all of us in this room today to be united in what we stand for, that we all support Canada, we all support every province across the country to break down those trade barriers. It's so important. We need to break down those walls and unleash that full potential so that we can get all of the

things that we're doing—from each province—to market across the country.

* (16:40)

This will make our economy more resilient and more prosperous. It will benefit everyone. That means lowering taxes on productivity so our businesses can grow, innovate and compete. It means investing in transportation, better highways, ports, railways so we can connect Manitoba to the rest of Canada and to the world.

I'll repeat it again: It's so important for us to be able to get what we need from our own country of Canada, and in order to do that, we need to make sure we continually work on our transportation options across the country. For example, truck drivers: we need to make sure that we can—they can get through and back and forth easily, rather than having all these regulations and rules. Trucks take so much goods back and forth across our country. We need to make sure we work hard to provide what they need.

And when it comes to unfair Chinese and US tariffs, we must stand up and fight back with everything we have but still protect those businesses in Canada, but still need to have supplies and things coming from the United States.

We can't afford to be passive. We need a team Canada approach, and here at home, we need a team Manitoba mindset. Because there's—here's the truth: Canada will never be the 51st state, but we are—and we are not just sidekicks to our southern neighbours. We are an independent, proud nation with world-class resources, skills and values. And it's time that we act like that by standing together, supporting each other and choosing Canadian whenever and whenever—wherever we can.

So next time you're at the grocery store, at the hardware shop or online shopping, make a choice to choose local; choose Canada. Choose Canadian and choose Manitoba because when we do that, we're not just buying a product; we're building a stronger, more resilient future for all of us.

Manitoba may be in the heart of the country, but we are the centre of Canadian industry. Our province is powered by strong sectors: agriculture, transportation, aerospace and advanced manufacturing. From the golden fields of grain to the cutting edge aircraft parts made right here in Winnipeg, Manitoba produces goods that feed the world, move the world and connect the world.

Right now, Manitoba farmers are facing serious challenges, not just from weather and rising costs but from growing tariff threats from both the United States and China. We need to make sure that we support our farmers as much as we can, and that's why I'm bill-bringing in Bill 228.

The farmers feed our province; they fuel our economy and support thousands of jobs. Now it's our turn to support them back. We need to buy local, buy Canadian and push for policies that protect our producers. We need a team Manitoba approach: strong, united and loud, like when we go to a Jets game, because our farmers deserve more than words; they deserve action.

Let's listen to our farmers and ask them what they need from us and how we can support them as legislators. Let's stand with them today and every day.

We're the leader in food processing, building on our farming roots. We're home to one of the largest bus and vehicle manufacturing hubs in North America, and our aerospace sector supplies top-tier components to the global market. This is Manitoba: skilled, innovative and built to compete. We are strong and resilient, and this challenge that we're in right now, both in Manitoba and across our country, will only build us stronger and make us more united.

But to keep growing, we must support our local industries. That means choosing Manitoba- and Canadian-made whenever we can. Because when we buy local, we build local, and when we build local, we build a stronger Manitoba. When we build local, we provide jobs. We help families to supply the things that they need. It's a beautiful thing.

The Speaker in the Chair

Canada is a manufacturing powerhouse, and yes, we don't get the spotlight, but we should. Manitoba should get the spotlight. Farmers in our area and in the prairies should get our spotlight. Across this country, our manufacturers are creating world-class products, innovating and competing on the global stage, and it's time we recognize, support and protect the industries that keep our economy strong.

Let's talk about my community of Morden-Winkler for a minute. It has such a prosperous industrial area. There's so many people there that are world-class. They engineer and they come up with things that are just amazing. And they need the spotlight because our community of Morden-Winkler is just so innovative and so community-oriented, it's amazing to see.

Southern Manitoba is definitely the economic hub of the province, and I'm proud to say that. And I'm proud to represent them.

Let's talk about the auto industry right here in Canada, in Ontario and Quebec especially. We produce some of the most advanced, reliable and environmentally conscious vehicles in the world. With the shift to electric vehicles, Canada is at the forefront, powered by our clean energy and our critical—critic—sorry, critical miss—I can't speak—critical minerals. This is a sector we must stand behind.

Then there's aerospace: the places like Winnipeg in—and Montreal. Canadian aerospace companies design and build aircraft parts all over the world. Canada is ranked among the top five aerospace countries globally—top five. That's something that we need to be proud of and something that we need to protect. Again, we need to continually shine those spotlights on our province.

Let's not forget agriculture and food processing. Our farmers feed the world, and our food manufacturers produce safe, high-quality products that we can trust. We need to keep that at home and just keep continually to—continue to expand that. When you buy Canadian food, you're supporting not just our economy, but food security of our own people.

We also have world-class manufacturers in advanced technology, clean energy, pharmaceuticals, defence equipment, forestry and mining. Each one of these industries creates good jobs and strengthens our communities, from the biggest cities to the smallest towns in rural Manitoba.

But here's the truth: all of this only works if we Canadians show up for each other. We need to show up for each other. That means reducing our reliance on cheap imports when we can buy something made here, locally, at home, down the street, at the market or done at the—from the manufacturer in our community. This means—it means pushing governments to invest in Canadian industries and on—ensure fair trade. It means tearing down interprovincial trade barriers so that Manitoba goods can get to BC, to Nova Scotia; goods that can reach Alberta faster and easier than they can get shipped across the ocean.

We can't just sit back and hope these industries survive. We need to fight for them. We need to fight for the small business. We need to fight for the Canadian family to make sure that they can food—feed their children and grow the food that—for the world that they are doing—the farmers are doing.

* (16:50)

We need to buy Canadian, proudly and deliberately. Because when we do, we create jobs, we build our economy and we keep ownership and control of the future in Canadian—and keep it into Canadian hands.

It's about pride. We need to be proud. We need to continue to work and be proud. It's about independence, the future of Canada, being dependent on ourselves and being able to be successful on our own. And it's about knowing that, when we support Canadian manufacturing, we're not just buying a product. We're investing in our communities, our country and in the next generation.

So next time you're at the store, online or making a business decision, stop and ask yourself: Can I choose Canadian first? I want to challenge everybody to make sure that we do that. Is there something that we can do to support those businesses, to buy locally and to support and choose Canadian first? Because the answer is, more often than not, is yes, and when we all make that choice together, we build a stronger Canada.

And I want to talk about a few of the amazing companies and businesses in Morden-Winkler, but there's so many: Farm King, Decor Cabinets; we've got Gardenland Co-op, Prairie Barnwood. We've got Hiecon Technologies; we've got so many different places. Elias Woodwork—we've got so many manufacturers and steel workers in our community of Morden-Winkler. And I'm so proud to be part of that community and to represent them today.

Thank you.

Mr. Doyle Piwniuk (Turtle Mountain): I just want to thank my colleague for giving us a great, proud presentation of, you know, buying Canadian and some of the issues that we're dealing with, and I'd just like to put a few words on the record here when it comes to this bill and—it's more complicated than I think we all—when we're all talking here, yes. It's pro-buy Canadian.

But some of the challenges here now is that our manufacture is so integrated across the world right now. Like, parts are made in different parts of different countries, and that's why I think even with the US tariffs they're putting onto Canadian goods, it's very complicated, because even our auto industry, many parts are manufactured here in Canada. We have—I believe that we have one of the biggest production of auto parts, is in Canada. And, meanwhile, a lot of assemblies are done in the US and in Mexico.

But it's very tough to identify what is actually a Canadian product, what is an American product and

what is actually an international product out there. And it's nice that, you know, we're not having a battle with other countries—well, except maybe China, besides the US. But the fact is, you know, you go to a supermarket, and it's amazing how much—I thought—lot of—and I've actually identified, looked at closely what—especially produce, where they actually are coming from. And I see now at one time we used to get a lot of produce from the United States. Now I'm seeing it's coming from Morocco, like oranges from Morocco to oranges from Spain, avocados from Mexico.

So this—it's amazing that how, you know, where everything is actually produced or manufactured, and I think that's what we have to be very careful about, too, is making sure that—how much of that item or that product that, you know, if it's actually—when it comes to buy Canadian only, a lot of it could be manufactured in the United States, but only a small portion is—could be manufactured here. Vice versa, whereas something that's manufactured a little bit in the US, maybe the finished product, but a lot of products are actually—for that component, is actually manufactured in Canada.

This is why this whole tariff thing I'm totally against because I feel that, right now, that we are so integrated. We have such a globalization of a—of the world right now, and that's why we have to be careful of identifying Canadian products to American products, because it's—I'm sure every product that you have, any car manufacturing, I bet 20 countries have actually put a part into that car.

And that is why I think it's—but again, it's great that we actually are supporting our Canadian manufactures, our companies. I believe one of my colleagues from Borderland talked about the pipeline. I'm a very big proponent of pipelines; it's a lot safer to transport oil. I don't know what happened with the Keystone pipeline when Warren Buffet wants to—not to have that keystone but—pipeline. Meanwhile, his train company is the one that benefits from all the transferring of oil unsafely.

Look what happened to Quebec: Lac-Méginty [*phonetic*], Quebec. It blew up half the town, the oil. I would sooner see oil go through my community in pipelines than instead of through railway, right through our town. And many towns, we don't—we can't—we don't—there's not the resources out there to actually bypass a lot of these communities with railway. It's very expensive, very costly.

But pipeline is the answer. And if we would've had Energy East Pipeline—and I know Moosomin

would've been a benefactor and not my region. Then there was the jobs there, where a pumping station, much like we have in Cromer which a lot of my constituents and lots of Riding Mountain constituents work there and have good jobs.

And so that's why it's so important that—I said, when I was a transportation minister, we had the opportunity to—I signed an MOU with Alberta, Saskatchewan. And that pipeline that went to the east, if it would've—could've went to Quebec and Maritimes, we could've shipped a lot of oil and natural resources to Europe when Russia invaded Ukraine. We missed that opportunity. And you can thank the Trudeau government for doing that.

That thing was on the—slated during the Harper days, and we could've had it got done. We could've been beneficial—that would've saved us a—actually, opportunities when it came health care. That was where we could've gotten a lot of revenue from.

And right now, by signing the MOU, there's opportunities of getting natural resources for—all the way from the Rocky Mountains to the Hudson Bay. And now, hopefully, this NDP government continues looking at an option of a possible—another port in the Hudson Bay. That gives opportunities to ship potash, to ship LNG—natural gas reserves to Europe. We have such big opportunities. Germany is looking at the Hudson Bay area for opportunities.

We got to become more self-sufficient and be able to partner up with these other countries, because we have the abilities; we have the natural resources. We could be north—Norway, Honourable Speaker, who have a very higher stand of living, one of the wealthiest countries in the world right now, and we could be part of that. But this Trudeau government did not do that. It fell way behind.

And I'm hoping this NDP government, like, again, when it comes to their philosophy, you know, when it came to Winnipeg, let's say the north treatment plant. Instead of focusing on that during the Selinger days, that they could've put some money in, we did that when—in our days.

But the fact is, they blame the pork industry. The Agriculture Minister was there when he actually put a moratorium on the hog industry. That held back production in western Manitoba. Lot of my growth in my hog industry is from the hog industry. The population of Killarney has grown. [*interjection*]

And I don't know why the minister—the member for Point Douglas (Ms. Smith) is chirping there because

the fact is, she doesn't—there's opportunities to help with First Nations groups that want to do a corridor, a port into the Hudson Bay. This gives an opportunity for First Nations—the NeeStaNaN project to be part of this opportunity for First Nations self-reliance in the North, Honourable Speaker.

So on that note, Honourable Speaker, I'm going to wrap it up. And I think I got a rise out of the member for Point Douglas (Ms. Smith) when it comes to working with First Nations communities. I think we have a big opportunity, and I wish I would've been able to continue that because I think there was a big opportunity for a trade corridor to the North, working with Saskatchewan and Alberta. This minister has not even tried to communicate with the other ministers in the other provinces.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River): I thank my—

An Honourable Member: Sit down. Just sit down.

Mr. Wowchuk: —colleagues.

The Speaker: The honourable member for Swan River (Mr. Wowchuk)?

Mr. Wowchuk: No.

The Speaker: No further speakers?

Then is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

The Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 42, The Buy Canadian Act (Government Purchases Act Amended).

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

The motion is accordingly carried.

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, April 23, 2025

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