



Third Session – Forty-Third Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS

**Official Report
(Hansard)**

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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
ROBBINS, Colleen	Spruce Woods	PC
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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, December 2, 2025

The House met at 10 a.m.

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

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

Please be seated.

ORDERS OF THE DAY**PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Government House Leader): Would you call, please, for second reading debate Bill 218, The Climate Action Month Act.

SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

**Bill 218—The Climate Action Month Act
(Commemoration of Days, Weeks
and Months Act Amended)**

The Speaker: It has been announced that we will now proceed to second reading debate of Bill 218, The Climate Action Month Act (Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Act Amended).

MLA Robert Loiselle (St. Boniface): I move, seconded by the MLA for Radisson, that Bill 218, The Climate Action Month Act (Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Act Amended); Loi sur le Mois de lutte contre les changements climatiques (modification de la Loi sur les journées, les semaines

et les mois commémoratifs), be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

The Speaker: So question period of up to 10 minutes will—the honourable member for St. Boniface.

French spoken

MLA Loiselle: Il est temps d'agir maintenant. Les changements climatiques constituent une menace imminente pour l'avenir de notre planète. Le bilan des Conservateurs en matière d'environnement est clair : ils ont fait peu d'efforts pour prioriser l'avenir de notre province en s'attaquant au changement climatique pendant leurs sept ans et demi d'échec gouvernemental.

En priorisant l'énergie propre et les bons emplois pour notre province, nous tenons notre promesse de protéger l'environnement afin que les Manitobains puissent continuer de vivre la belle vie pendant des générations.

Les changements climatiques constituent une menace déjà à notre porte, l'Honorable Président. Les scientifiques avertissent les dirigeants du monde entier depuis longtemps des ravages imminents qui pourraient causer les changements climatiques si nous n'agissons pas maintenant. L'activité humaine est responsable de l'augmentation de la température au cours des 200 dernières années. Et nous sommes maintenant à 1,2°C plus chaud qu'avant la révolution industrielle.

La dernière décennie, en fait, a été la plus chaude enregistrée en 100 000 ans. Le consensus scientifique est clair : si nous dépassons une augmentation de 1,5°C, les conséquences pour notre planète seront catastrophiques. Si nous maintenons notre trajectoire actuelle, la température de la planète augmentera de 3,5°C d'ici à la fin du siècle.

Les changements climatiques ne concernent pas seulement la température : ils entraîneront davantage d'orages violents, un risque accru de sécheresse, le réchauffement et la montée des océans, un risque accru de pauvreté pour les communautés côtières et les nations; et mettront toutes les espèces en danger sur cette belle planète.

Si nous n'agissons pas maintenant, nous en payerons le prix plus tard, c'est évident. Il faudra des efforts collectifs partout dans le monde pour lutter contre les changements climatiques. Cela est particulièrement vrai pour les sociétés qui contribuent de manière disproportionnée au problème, comme le Canada.

Voilà pourquoi ce projet de loi est si important. Durant le mois d'avril, et comme guide pour le reste de l'année, nous devons tous prêter attention et agir pour freiner les changements climatiques et protéger notre environnement.

Des organisations communautaires aux nouvelles initiatives vertes de notre gouvernement néo-démocrate, nous ferons tous notre part pour préserver notre province. Et nous le faisons en plaçant les Manitobains au premier plan. Nous nous assurons que les Manitobains ont accès à de bons emplois verts et à des sources d'énergie viables, tout en prenant les décisions nécessaires pour sauver notre province et notre planète.

Nous devons continuer d'inspirer une action collective au Manitoba, afin que dans 100 ans, tout le monde puisse encore profiter de la beauté naturelle de notre province.

Le Parti conservateur l'ont démontré : ils n'ont pas priorisé la protection de l'environnement et n'ont pas priorisé les Manitobains et les Manitobaines. D'ailleurs, pendant leur mandat, les Conservateurs ont réduit de 70 pour cent les effectifs du ministère de l'Environnement. C'est effrayant. Il y a 20 ans, il y avait 1 300 employées à temps plein. Sous les Conservateurs, ce nombre est tombé – en fait, a chuté – à 331 employées, dont près de 20 pour cent des postes vacants.

Et ces coupures, ils ont mis notre environnement en péril ici au Manitoba. Le gouvernement précédent a retardé les dépenses pour la conservation des terres, mettant en danger les services 'environnementés' – environnementaux dont les Manitobains dépendent. Ils ont réduit les tests, le suivi et les enquêtes environnementales. Les inspections et les suivis environnementales ont diminué de près de la moitié sous les Conservateurs. Les enquêtes sur les préoccupations du public ont chuté de près de 70 pour cent, démontrant qu'ils ne prenaient pas en compte les préoccupations environnementales des Manitobains.

Lorsqu'on discute de ce projet de loi, il est important de réfléchir aux échecs environnementaux

du gouvernement précédent et de se rappeler à quel point cela a affecté notre environnement de façon néfaste.

* (10:10)

Comme il a dit, un professeur local au sujet des coupes catastrophiques des Conservateurs : les mesures d'austérité ont laissé les employés du ministère au bout du rouleau. Et ceci est de Mark Hudson, professeur de sociologie à l'Université du Manitoba.

Ce sont des services essentiels de protection de l'environnement, et s'ils ne sont pas réalisés, le public n'est pas protégé. Les membres d'en face, les Conservateurs, ont passé sept ans et demi à démanteler le ministère responsable de l'environnement et de la conservation, alors que les scientifiques et les Manitobains tiraient la sonnette de l'alarme face à la menace imminente des changements climatiques.

Comme lorsqu'ils ont tenté de faire passer, en force, le 'prochet' – le projet minier Sio Silica. Deux conseillers municipaux de Springfield ont présenté un sondage indépendant de 5 000 Manitobains révélant que 95 pour cent s'opposaient au projet, mais les Conservateurs ont tout de même essayé d'aller de l'avant. Notre gouvernement, lui, a écouté et protégé l'approvisionnement en eau des résidents de Springfield en rejetant le projet d'extraction de sable de Sio Silica.

Le bilan est clair : les Conservateurs ne priorisent pas l'environnement, peu importe les conséquences négatives que cela cause aux Manitobains. Lorsque les Manitobains nous disent ce qu'ils veulent pour l'avenir de notre province, nous les écoutons, ce qui est besoin – loin de la manière de faire du gouvernement conservateur.

Donc, nous prenons soin de l'environnement. Le moment est venu pour notre province d'être unie et engagée envers la croissance économique et la responsabilité environnementale, et de reconnaître que ces objectifs vont de pair – c'est clair.

Nous faisons progresser notre voie autochtone vers la carboneutralité avec une cible ambitieuse pour vingt mille cinquante. Nous créons un comité du Cabinet sur les changements climatiques et nous renforçons la législation provinciale en matière de climat pour guider le Manitoba vers la carboneutralité. Nous collaborons avec les nations autochtones sur l'initiative en énergie renouvelable et de carboneutralité. Nous créons de bons emplois dans l'économie à faible émission pour la main-d'œuvre actuelle et la prochaine génération.

Nous soutenons une étude de faisabilité fédérale pour une aire marine nationale de conservation dans l'ouest de la Baie d'Hudson, afin d'équilibrer la nature, culture et possibilités économiques. À travers le Budget 2025, notre gouvernement continue de protéger notre environnement commun : nous avons investi 5 virgule – 6,5 millions de dollars pour encourager la gestion environnementale et restaurer des sites partout dans la province.

Nous aidons les agriculteurs et les entreprises agricoles à adopter des pratiques plus durables grâce à une augmentation de 500 000 dollars pour la subvention agriculture durable Manitoba et un protocole 4R renouvelé.

Plus de 5 millions de personnes visitent nos parcs chaque année ici au Manitoba, et nous sommes déterminés à améliorer ces espaces. L'accès aux parcs est gratuit depuis cette année. Cette année, nous investissons les Manitobains à voter pour une nouvelle d'immatriculation sur les thèmes des parcs provinciaux afin de montrer leur fierté.

Nous nous engageons également à des pratiques minières durables et responsables grâce à notre stratégie sur les minéraux critiques. Notre province possède des minéraux critiques nécessaires à la production d'énergie propre pour l'avenir. Nous voulons préserver le paysage naturel du Manitoba tout en créant de bons emplois fiables dans le secteur des ressources naturelles, et nous y parvenons.

L'Honorable Président, nous savons que les Manitobains et les Manitobaines sont fiers de leur province, sont fiers de leur environnement, sont fiers de leurs parcs. Et notre gouvernement veut s'assurer que, pour des années à venir, à travers ce projet de loi, nous préservons l'environnement et nous nous engageons à combattre les changements climatiques.

Merci, miigwech, thank you.

Translation

Now is the time to act. Climate change poses an imminent threat to the future of our planet. The Conservatives' record on the environment is clear: they have made little effort to prioritize our province's future by tackling climate change during their seven and a half years of failed government.

By prioritizing clean energy and good jobs for our province, we are delivering on our promise to protect the environment so that Manitobans can continue to enjoy the good life for generations to come.

Climate change is already a threat at our doorstep. Scientists have long warned world leaders of the imminent devastation that climate change could cause if we don't act now. Human activity is responsible for the rise in temperature over the last 200 years. And we are now 1.2°C warmer than before the industrial revolution.

In fact, the last decade has been the warmest on record in 100,000 years. The scientific consensus is clear: if we exceed a 1.5°C increase, the consequences for our planet will be catastrophic. If we continue on our current trajectory, the planet's temperature will rise by 3.5°C by the end of the century.

Climate change is not just about temperature: it will bring more severe storms, increased risk of drought, warming and rising oceans, increased risk of poverty for coastal communities and nations and will endanger all species on this beautiful planet.

If we do not act now, we will pay the price later, that much is clear. It will take collective efforts around the world to combat climate change. This is especially true for societies that contribute disproportionately to the problem, such as Canada.

That is why this bill is so important. During the month of April, and as a guide for the rest of the year, we must all pay attention and take action to curb climate change and protect our environment.

From community organizations to our New Democratic government's new green initiatives, we will all do our part to preserve our province. And we are doing so by putting Manitobans first. We are ensuring that Manitobans have access to good green jobs and sustainable energy sources, while making the decisions necessary to save our province and our planet.

We must continue to inspire collective action in Manitoba so that 100 years from now, everyone can still enjoy the natural beauty of our province.

The Conservative Party has shown that it has not prioritized protecting the environment or Manitobans. In fact, during their term in office, the Conservatives reduced the Environment Department's workforce by 70 per cent. That's frightening. Twenty years ago, there were 1,300 full-time employees. Under the Conservatives, that number fell—in fact, plummeted—to 331 employees, with nearly 20 per cent of positions vacant.

With these cuts, they have put our environment here in Manitoba at risk. The previous government delayed spending on land conservation, jeopardizing the environmental services that Manitobans depend on. They reduced environmental testing, monitoring and investigations. Environmental inspections and monitoring decreased by nearly half under the Conservatives. Investigations into public concerns dropped by nearly 70 per cent, demonstrating that they did not take Manitobans' environmental concerns into account.

When discussing this bill, it is important to reflect on the previous government's environmental failures and remember how badly this has affected our environment.

** (10:10)*

As one local professor said about the Conservatives' catastrophic cuts: the austerity measures left department employees at their wits' end. And this is from Mark Hudson, professor of sociology at the University of Manitoba.

These are essential environmental protection services, and if they are not carried out, the public is not protected. The members opposite, the Conservatives, spent seven and a half years dismantling the department responsible for the environment and conservation, while scientists and Manitobans were sounding the alarm about the imminent threat of climate change.

Like when they tried to force through the Sio Silica mining project. Two Springfield city councillors presented an independent poll of 5,000 Manitobans showing that 95 per cent opposed the project, but the Conservatives still tried to move forward. Our government listened and protected the water supply of Springfield residents by rejecting the Sio Silica sand mining project.

The record is clear: the Conservatives do not prioritize the environment, regardless of the negative consequences for Manitobans. When Manitobans tell us what they want for the future of our province, we listen to them, which is a far cry from the Conservative government's approach.

So we are taking care of the environment. The time has come for our province to be united and committed to economic growth and environmental responsibility, and to recognize that these goals go hand in hand—that much is clear.

We are advancing our Indigenous path to carbon neutrality with an ambitious target for twenty-thousand-fifty. We are creating a Cabinet committee on climate change and strengthening provincial climate legislation to guide Manitoba toward carbon neutrality. We are collaborating with Indigenous nations on the renewable energy and carbon neutrality initiative. We are creating good jobs in the low-emission economy for the current workforce and the next generation.

We are supporting a federal feasibility study for a national marine conservation area in the western part of the Hudson Bay to balance nature, culture and economic opportunities. Through Budget 2025, our government continues to protect our shared environment: we have invested \$6.5 million to encourage environmental stewardship and restore sites across the province.

We are helping farmers and agribusinesses adopt more sustainable practices with a \$500,000 increase to the Sustainable Agriculture Manitoba grant and a renewed 4R protocol.

More than 5 million people visit our parks each year here in Manitoba, and we are committed to improving these spaces. Access to parks has been free since this year. This year, we are encouraging Manitobans to vote for a new licence plate design featuring provincial parks to show their pride.

We are also committed to sustainable and responsible mining practices through our critical minerals strategy. Our province has the critical minerals needed to produce clean energy for the future. We want to preserve Manitoba's natural landscape while creating good, reliable jobs in the natural resources sector, and we are succeeding in doing so.

Honourable Speaker, we know that Manitobans are proud of their province, proud of their environment and proud of their parks. And our government wants to ensure that, for years to come, through this bill, we preserve the environment and commit to fighting climate change.

Questions

The Speaker: A question period of up to 10 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed to the sponsoring member by any member in the following sequence: first question to be asked by a member from another party; this is to be followed by a rotation between the parties; each independent member may

ask one question. And no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

The floor is now open for questions.

Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain): I'd like to ask my honourable friend from St. Boniface which organizations and environmental authorities he consulted with in the development of this bill?

MLA Robert Loiselle (St. Boniface): Well, thank you for that question.

In fact, we've been consulting with all Manitobans. In fact, I think the last election was a proof of that when they gave us a clear mandate to do better when it comes to the environment and to fight climate change. It's as simple as that. And we will continue to do what's best for Manitobans when it comes to fighting climate change.

Hon. Nellie Kennedy (Minister of Sport, Culture, Heritage and Tourism): Our NDP government has been consistent in its approach to climate change and the environment. We're doing all that we can to save our planet.

My question for my colleague is, can they remind the House about some of the things we're doing to help save our environment?

MLA Loiselle: Thanks for that question.

Our government is dedicated to growing our province while also preserving our environment. Some of the things that we're doing include the critical mineral strategy, which will create good jobs for Manitobans while responsibly harvesting resources.

We're also introducing more climate-friendly energy options through our affordable energy plan. We've also made an investment of \$23.4 million into our NFI build facility here in Winnipeg to create zero-emission buses.

Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River): I'd like to ask the member, what would the benefit be to Manitobans if a climate action month was proclaimed and recognized every April, seeing as how Earth Day already exists during that same month?

MLA Loiselle: Well, that's an excellent question.

In fact, you know, climate change is such a worrisome situation. Being an educator for many years, we know that when we work with students for the month of April, let's say, and talk about climate change, and we're making sure that they know what we're doing as a government to prepare for climate

change, the changes we're making and what they can do as well in their schools and in their communities to fight climate change.

So it's very important that we have a month so that we can focus on it and have a better plan for climate change working with all Manitobans.

MLA Kennedy: We've been working hard to make sure that our government is prioritizing the environment and the future of Manitoba.

With how many different environmental initiatives we are taking, my question for my colleague is, what's their favourite environmental initiative our government is doing?

MLA Loiselle: Well, Honourable Speaker, I actually have a long list: so, EV rebates, a favourite of all Manitobans; the Seal River Watershed, which we're protecting; commitment to protect more Manitoban landscapes; NFI; affordable energy plan; and my personal favourite, geothermal.

In fact, our geothermal plan is very straightforward. You sign up and you pay for—basically, 35 per cent of the costs were paid upfront. I've had geothermal in my house since, you know, 2007. I wonder how many members on the other side have had geothermal in their house, and for how long.

Mrs. Colleen Robbins (Spruce Woods): How would this bill enable the NDP to turn around its woeful record on environmental stewardship?

MLA Loiselle: Well, in fact, that's a comical question. The Conservatives didn't do anything for seven and a half years, so I'm not sure which record, you know, they're really talking about. They should be looking in their own backyard in regards to their record.

Our record is clear. In fact, we're investing in clean energy in Manitoba: 750 megawatts of clean energy is coming—wind power, et cetera. And, you know, we're going to keep on building Manitoba with clean, green energy for years to come.

I wonder how many megawatts the Conservatives built in the last seven and a half years. I'm pretty sure the answer is zero.

MLA Kennedy: Collective action is a vital part to stopping climate change. All of us have to come together to make an impact.

My question for my colleague is, how are they celebrating Earth Day?

* (10:20)

MLA Loiselle: Well, thank you so much for that question.

The way that I celebrate Earth Day, in fact, the day that I celebrate our environment is mostly by spending time on the land. As a Red River Métis, I have a deep connection to the land. I'm a kayaker, a paddler. I am a member of the Canadian Ski Patrol. And I spend a lot of time on the land. I spend time on the land with my family, my wife, my kids. I encourage everyone in my community to spend time on the land.

In St. Boniface, we have the Seine River. We've organized a beautiful activity called Rendez-Vous Rivyayr Seine, where hundreds of paddlers spend time on the Seine River.

So it's all about the environment, protecting the environment long term, because without our green spaces, our blue spaces, we simply do not have a quality of life.

Mr. Nesbitt: Honourable Speaker, speaking of backyards, how would this bill allow the—how would it—how would this bill support the NDP government preventing further catastrophic sewage dumps into the Red River?

MLA Loiselle: Well, that's a good question. That's an excellent question. In fact, I'm happy that he was able to present that question the way that he did.

We know that here in Winnipeg we're investing in the North End water treatment plant. I think the first phase of that program is being implemented as we speak. We've got to continue protecting our environment.

We know that, you know, having strong environmental practices when it comes to water sewage is important. We want to make sure that we keep Lake Winnipeg as clean as it can as well, one of the largest lakes in the world. We know it's got issues so we have to make sure that we keep working with all of our partners at every government level to ensure that our sewage plants are in good working order and that our infrastructure is also in good working order.

MLA Kennedy: The health of our environment is vital to the health of humanity and all living things. If we don't take care of the land, air and water, then all of us will face devastating consequences.

My question for my colleague is, how will climate change impact them and their constituency?

MLA Loiselle: Honourable Speaker, I've always said that the little things in life determine the big things. In St. Boniface, we're trying to build green, we're trying to encourage people to take care of their environment, we're trying to encourage residents to compost, we're trying to encourage residents actually to take care of our, you know, geothermal program, because even in an urban setting, much like my family did back in 2007, you can have ground–earth geothermal systems installed in a city.

So I think it's important that we keep on working with our communities, our families. It's something that we have to teach in our schools. You know, green energy is something that Manitoba is known for. Now I think we have to be known for taking another step, and that's making sure that we heat—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Mr. Wowchuk: This bill appears to be the first actions of an NDP government intention on reinstating their catastrophic hog barn moratorium.

Will the member state unequivocally today that the NDP will not bring back the hog barn ban?

MLA Loiselle: Well, that's an interesting question because it just mixes potatoes and carrots and whatnot and it just sounds like old wine in new bottles and, you know, it's just really interesting how it's like a rehashing of like old themes.

Look, we're interested in developing more green energy in Manitoba. We're interested in make—sure that we protect our climate for generations to come. We're interested in working in the education system to make sure that, you know, young people are engaged in that important work.

And I think it's also very important to state that, once again, the little things in life determine the big things in life. We have to work with all of our partners to make sure that we ensure a green Manitoban that's sustaining life here for generations to come.

Mr. Nesbitt: Honourable Speaker, how can we take the NDP at their word when they have already flip-flopped on wind turbines, instead choosing to double-down on fossil-fuelled energy generation in Brandon?

MLA Loiselle: Well, I'm not wearing flip-flops, first of all, so I'm not sure what he's talking about. We're actually investing in green energy, 600 megawatts of wind power, it's coming. We're going to do it in

partnership with First Nations. And we also have a great geothermal program right now available for upwards of 5,000 Manitobans.

I encourage all of my NDP colleagues and Conservative colleagues to take advantage of that program. If you've got room in your background for an earth geothermal loop, get it installed, save the planet, work with us and let's work towards a green planet.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

The Speaker: The time for questions has expired.

Debate

The Speaker: The floor is open for debate.

Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain): I rise today to address Bill 218, The Climate Action Month Act, which proposes to designate the month of April each year as climate action month in Manitoba.

At first glance, this seems like a noble gesture, something meant to signal our shared commitment to confronting the global climate crisis, but, upon closer inspection, Honourable Speaker, one cannot help but question its necessity, its purpose and, certainly, its sincerity.

We already mark an internationally recognized day each April, Earth Day. For decades, Manitobans have enjoyed the rest of the world—have joined the rest of the world in commemorating this important occasion, celebrating our planet and renewing our commitment to environmental stewardship. Earth Day is embedded in public consciousness, in our schools, our communities and our workplaces.

So one must ask: What does climate action month actually add? Why do we need to legislate something that already exists in widely embraced form? And why now?

It is especially curious, Honourable Speaker, that this bill originates from the NDP, because when it comes to actual environmental action, their record is far from something to celebrate. In fact, it is the opposite.

This is the same NDP that was in government during two of the most severe raw sewage spills in Manitoba's history. In September 2002, under an NDP administration, a malfunction at the North End Water Pollution Control Centre sent 427 million litres of untreated waste water into the Red River.

And again, under this current NDP government, we witnessed another disastrous release: 230 million litres of untreated waste water, enough to fill more than 90 Olympic-sized swimming pools, pouring into the Red River at the Fort Garry Bridge.

These events weren't unavoidable accidents, they were predictable failures rooted in long-standing neglect of critical infrastructure. So, Honourable Speaker, pardon me if I have difficulty taking the NDP's so-called climate action month seriously.

When a party has repeatedly failed the most basic test of environmental leadership—protecting our waterways from catastrophic pollution—its sudden enthusiasm for symbolic climate gestures rings hollow. And the sewage spill is only one example of this troubling trend.

Let us recall another environmental failing under the NDP, the invasion of zebra mussels into Manitoba's waters. Years ago, when biologists and environmental experts raised the alarm, the NDP, under then-premier Greg Selinger and his Environment minister, chose not to take meaningful action. They allowed this invasive species, now entrenched and enormously costly, to spread into Manitoba waterways unchallenged. Today, the environmental and economic costs of that inaction continue to compound.

So yes, Honourable Speaker, when the NDP introduces a bill under the banner of climate action, we must scrutinize it carefully. The public deserves honesty, and the truth is that the NDP's record is littered with failures and irresponsibility.

But while I'm in—deeply skeptical of the NDP's motivations, let me be equally clear: climate action itself matters immensely. The principle behind this bill, the recognition that climate action is an urgent reality requiring sustained action, is something I support wholeheartedly.

Climate change is not abstract. It is not distant. It is affecting our communities now: more frequent extreme weather, more intense drought cycles, increased wildfire risks and threats to our agricultural stability. These issues affect every Manitoban.

Earth Day, which you have celebrated for decades, serves as an important annual reminder of these realities. Earth Day 2026 will be Wednesday, April 22. The 2026 theme is Planet vs. Plastics, focusing on the global plastic pollution crisis.

We, in Manitoba, have every reason to take environmental stewardship seriously. Our province is one of the most ecologically diverse regions in the world, blessed with an abundance of lakes, forests, prairie ecosystems and wildlife. Many jurisdictions talk about natural beauty, Manitoba lives it. And because of that, we shoulder a greater responsibility to protect it, not through symbolic declarations or rhetorical posturing, but through genuine policy, robust investment and transparent accountability.

*(10:30)

We are committed to protecting Manitoba's natural environment with continued investments in clean energy and strategic conservation initiatives. We believe in leaving future generations with the same breathtaking landscapes and vibrant ecosystems that we cherish today. That work is not optional, it is essential.

But that brings me back to the central issue, Honourable Speaker. If this province already recognizes Earth Day every April, what tangible additional value does a government-declared climate action month bring? The NDP has failed to explain this. They have offered no clear rationale, no complementary action plan, no measurable outcomes and no accountability mechanisms. Without those, climate action month is little more than a label: a month-long slogan rather than meaningful policy. And slogans have never reduced emissions or restored an ecosystem.

What Manitobans need is not a commemorative month: they need a government willing to show leadership—not after the fact, not when the political winds shift, but in moments of crisis. Yet when Winnipeggers witnessed a massive sewage spill, what did we see? We saw a premier who utterly failed to address the situation with the urgency it warranted. We saw a government that neglected its responsibility to notify affected municipalities and Indigenous communities promptly and transparently.

Communities downstream were left uninformed during a potential environmental emergency. That is not climate leadership; that is environmental negligence. Yes, the NDP introduced a bill meant to address notification protocols, but one must ask: Why did it take a catastrophic spill for the government to recognize the importance of basic transparency?

Why were these frameworks not in place already? The answer, unfortunately, is because this government consistently responds to 'crises' with

half measures after damage has already been done. This pattern is unmistakable.

The NDP talks about the environment loudly and often. But it—when comes time to act, to prevent harm or to uphold accountability, they fall silent. Or worse, they move slowly and inadequately. Honourable Speaker, climate action is too important to be reduced to symbolism. It requires planning, investment and responsibility.

It requires competent management of infrastructure, robust environmental monitoring and rapid responses to environmental threats. It requires long-term thinking, not short-term political theatre. Symbolic gestures are not inherently harmful, but when symbolism replaces real action, as we have seen repeatedly with this government in many departments, it becomes a distraction from the work that actually needs to be done.

That is why our side of the House finds it difficult to take this NDP climate action bill seriously: not because we oppose climate action but because we support it fully, 'sincerely' and substantively. And sincerity requires more than naming a month; it requires governing responsibility.

If the NDP wishes to demonstrate their commitment to climate action, they should prioritize reducing sewage spills, modernizing vital infrastructure, restoring public confidence in environmental oversight, protecting our waterways and investing in real emissions reduction strategies.

They should engage with Indigenous communities proactively, not reactively. They should ensure invasive species are not allowed to quietly devastate our lakes and rivers. They should provide measurable goals, transparent reporting and clear timelines, things entirely absent from Bill 218.

Honourable Speaker, Manitobans expect and deserve more. Climate change is one of the defining challenges of our time. We owe future generations decisive, thoughtful, tangible action. That means protecting our waters. That means safeguarding our ecosystems. That means investing in renewable and clean energy. And above all, it means treating environmental protection not as an annual commemoration, but as a daily responsibility.

So while I support the principle behind climate action, I will not support performative legislation designed to mask a government's ongoing failures. Earth Day already exists. Manitobans already understand its importance. And if the NDP truly wished

to strengthen environmental stewardship, they would begin not with a declaration, but with meaningful action.

Manitoba is worth protecting, not for a month, but always. And this House must never mistake symbolism for leadership.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Hon. Mike Moyes (Minister of Environment and Climate Change): What we just heard from the critic of the Department of Environment and Climate Change is the most that he's spoken on the environment and climate change, I think, in two years, so appreciate that, appreciate putting some words on the record.

I think this is really important. I disagree fundamentally with the member opposite that this is only about symbolism. It's not. In fact, this, if—just to bring, you know, peel back the curtain and bring the members opposite in, this isn't actually our idea at all. This idea actually came from the Educators for Climate Action Manitoba, and I would welcome the member to speak with them and why this is important.

This was one of three actions that they said we should take. They said the first thing is we should have a climate month. Yes, we have Earth Day, but we should actually try to build out Earth Day so that it spans a longer period of time so that more kids could learn about the actions they can take and the actions that a wider society can take in order to effect change.

And one of the things that the Educators for Climate Action really emphasized is that it has to be about action; it's not about telling them what climate change is. Most kids, I would imagine—most adults, I would imagine—have heard of climate change, they could describe it in some fashion. But it's not about just learning about what it is, it's about what can be done about it.

Because there's a lot of climate anxiety that is taking place, especially with our young folk. And what we were hearing from the Educators for Climate Action is that by having a month centred on action, centred on what could be done about it and putting in tangible, concrete steps with our children in our education system, that that would have a meaningful—that would be a meaningful approach to move forward.

So there was the climate action month. And so we said, absolutely. We agree with you. We should move this forward.

The other piece that they said is that we should update our curriculum. And so I am happy to let folks know and—that we have a framework in place that is updating the curriculum. We actually hired on an educator-for-climate-action-in-residence, and that is an incredibly important position because what it's going to do is it's going to update our curriculum across the board, putting in climate action pieces so that students are appropriately learning about the actions that they can take, from very young students all the way up to our grade 12s. And so we think that that is an important step. And so that was the second thing that our Educators for Climate Action spoke to.

The third piece was working with our school divisions and working with the broader sector of education. And so our educator-in-residence has been tasked with doing that work and is—we're building those relationships. And they were doing good work already. They were doing work within the Seven Oaks School Division where they were an employee, and now we're looking to broaden it out to the entire province.

And so I'm happy that this is the first step. I recognize that—is this going to solve all of our problems on climate change? Absolutely not, and that's not the point of it. But the point is, this is an actual, tangible piece. And one thing that I learned is that actual—the education piece, the education component that this plays into is as effective a mechanism to address climate change as anything else. That's remarkable because it's almost like a little, you know, a little ripple in a body of water: it spreads and it continues to spread.

And so by starting off with our climate action month and then building on that into the curriculum and having it a—be a comprehensive piece in curriculum, and then building on that into a strategy that works in partnership with teachers with educators, with the school divisions, with folks in the sector, that is going to be a very effective method to addressing climate.

And so this is an important bill. This doesn't have to be partisan. This does not, you know, I'm not interested in making this partisan. Of course we can, in terms of, like, this hasn't been done, this—other things haven't been done, but this is an actual non-partisan piece. We think that taking climate action is important.

* (10:40)

Now, the member opposite mentioned a few different things. He said, like, oh well, this is just symbolism, this isn't going to do anything. But one of things that I would really speak to is that, for the first time ever, we have a strategy. We have a path to net zero, which is an enabling strategy, and I know that that is only the first step, because what it does is it, at a high level, it outlines how we're going to get to net zero.

And then the next step on that—

An Honourable Member: A study.

MLA Moyes: —is going to be the action plans—it's not a study. I know the member for La Vérendrye (Mr. Narth) doesn't believe in climate action, doesn't believe in climate change, but it's not a study. It's an actual document that is out there that he can feel free to peruse at his leisure. And the next step is going to be those action plans, which are the tangible steps that we need to take in each sector, in each department in government so that we're pulling in the same direction.

It is so important that we do this because this—we need to be pulling in the same direction. And a part of that direction is ensuring that our kids are coming alongside, that our climate action month is a piece of that, ensuring that kids can learn more about the climate action that they can take and that the climate action that their government can take and that the climate action that the whole of society and the different sectors can take. That's critical.

And so I would argue that Bill 218 is actually incredibly important, and it's not the first step that we've taken. In fact, it's not even close.

And just to quickly run down the list for the member, who seems to have forgotten: first wind project since 2007; first geothermal program stood up that makes it more affordable for Manitobans to install geothermal clean heat and cooling; first EV rebate to help Manitobans, where thousands and thousands of folks were able to take part in that and continue to take part in that; protecting more nature, including saving the Lemay Forest; as well as working on coming to a full agreement with the Seal River Watershed—which I'll just remind the member opposite from La Vérendrye that that started off as a study, but those studies actually then have action afterwards—and so happy to say that we're working with the Seal River alliance, those four First Nation communities, on building out protection for pristine nature, so important

and something that we're very proud of and we'll continue to work with the alliance in developing.

And so there's lots of steps that have been taken already. On water—the member for Riding Mountain (Mr. Nesbitt) discussed water—absolutely. Bill 22 was an important step in transparency. It was an important step in ensuring that we could go after polluters. And one of the things that he said was, why weren't they in place already.

And the question that I have is, you had two terms in office, why wasn't it in place already? Why is climate action month not already in place? Why is the path to net zero not already in place? Why is the legislation not clear and definitive? Instead, it's convoluted and confusing and most Manitobans that would read it would say, I don't even know what the goal is.

We're trying to be very clear. It's very clear that climate action month is a fantastic way to engage young people. It's a fantastic way to engage the broader community of Manitobans. And so, hopefully, when all members of this Chamber and all members of this House support this bill, that Manitobans can be proud that they're taking action. And it's not just a symbolic piece but instead it is going to be a—one part of the entire puzzle that needs to be taken for climate action.

We just came through some of the smokiest, you know, season ever in terms of the wildfires that were—that transpired over this past summer, and I think people are starting to connect the dots. People are starting to recognize that we need to take action, and if we don't take action, those young people are going to be scared. They're having their soccer practice cancelled, they're having to not go outside, parents are not being able to take their young folks on walks.

And instead, let's actually do something about this. Let's show Manitobans, let's show those young people that we can take action, starting with a month and then we'll build out the actions during that month. We'll build out those actions throughout the year and actually get some stuff done.

And so I hope that all members of this Chamber would be proud and state for the record that this is where we need to go and this is more than just symbolism.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: Prior to recognizing any other members to speak, there are some guests in the gallery.

We have seated in the public gallery, from École Sun Valley School, 30 grade 9 students under the direction of Rachelle Dunlop. And this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Rossmere (MLA Schmidt).

We welcome you here this morning.

* * *

Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River): It's great to see—a lot of times when we see the students in the gallery, we know on Earth Day that they do a lot of activities and various types of things to recognize the things that we have in the environment. And myself, as an educator for 35 years and 25 in the environmental management area, it's a real important step.

However, we know that it's got to mean action, taking action and making sure that we take the steps and recognize. We see a lot of things, even the minister—the honourable Minister of Environment—was talking about a lot of things. A lot of it is just smoke and mirrors from the NDP and that kind of coincides with the, you know, terrible climatic conditions that we had this past year.

But I rise today to speak on Bill 218, The Climate Action Month Act. At its core, this bill proposes to designate April as climate action month. When we look closely it becomes clearer that the legislation is redundant, unnecessary and does little to advance any tangible goal.

Honourable Speaker, Manitoba already has a long-established, widely recognized observance for environmental awareness: Earth Day, celebrated annually on April 22. Schools, municipalities, community groups already use this time to educate, organize and engage Manitobans. Entire networks are in place to raise awareness and foster participation in environmental and climate-related activities.

So the question arises: What does Bill 218 add that is not already done? The answer, frankly, is very little. By creating a climate action month, this bill duplicates efforts that are already occurring throughout the province. At best, it's repetitive. At worst, it risks giving the impression that government is taking action, when in reality, it's merely remaining what already exists.

Honourable Speaker, legislation should be about substance. It should address real needs, establish direction and create measurable benefits for Manitobans. The bill, however, accomplishes none of these—or none of those objectives. It doesn't fund programs,

doesn't create new initiatives, doesn't provide tools for schools, municipalities or community organizations.

It does not improve outcomes for Manitoba in any measurable way. All it does is add a new title to the calendar, a symbolic gesture that achieves nothing beyond what Manitobans already do to recognize Earth Day.

If the Legislature spends time debating and passing symbolic bills, it's time taken away from issues that require real attention. Our constituents expect us to prioritize action, efficiency and results. This bill offers none of that.

Honourable Speaker, redundancy in legislation is more than inefficiency. It can be confusing, and when we create a climate action month that mirrors Earth Day, we're duplicating efforts for no clear reason.

Teachers, administrators and community organizers already know when environmental initiatives take place. Adding a new observance doesn't enhance this work, it merely layers additional terminology onto something that already functions effectively.

We should ask ourselves if we already have mechanisms in place to achieve the intended goal, is legislation necessary? In this case, the answer is no. Bill 218 does not create new outcomes, it merely names what is already happening. That is not the role of this Assembly. Our job is to create meaningful change, not duplicate it.

Honourable Speaker, Manitobans don't need another month on the calendar. They don't need symbolic designations to tell them what they already know. What they need is action.

* (10:50)

When a bill like this comes before us, it asks the Legislature to devote time, energy and debate to a proposal that adds no real new value. In doing so, it distracts from more pressing priorities that affect families, schools, municipalities and communities right across our entire province.

This is not about the merits of raising awareness. Manitobans already care about environmental issues. They're engaged, they're involved, but they also expect their government to focus on measures that create impact, not ceremonial titles.

Honourable Speaker, one of our responsibilities as legislatures is to ensure that our time and efforts are spent wisely. Every minute that we devote to a bill is

time not spent addressing urgent issues, issues that can improve services, support families and protect communities.

Bill 218 asks us to spend legislative time on a symbolic designation. It doesn't deliver programs or resources or measurable outcomes. It duplicates what is already happening through Earth Day, and in doing so, it diverts attention away from legislation that could make a real difference in people's lives. Redundant legislation consumes resources, both in terms of debate and administrative implementation.

It also risks sending the wrong message, that symbolic gestures are equivalent to action when they are not. Honourable Speaker, this bill is redundant. Manitobans already have Earth Day, a long-standing and effective observant that encourages citizens and our students and organizations in meaningful environmental and climate activities.

Bill 218 duplicates what already exists, adds no new programs or resources and offers no measurable benefit to Manitobans. At a time when Legislature has pressing issues to address, our focus should remain on legislation that delivers tangible results, like programs that help the families, as I mentioned, strengthen the municipalities and improve their province's well-being.

Symbolic gestures have their place, but they should not replace or consume time that should be devoted to real priorities. Manitobans expect their elected representatives to act with purpose and efficiency. Creating a climate action month accomplishes neither. Our time, our attention and our efforts are far better directed toward practical, meaningful solutions and make a real difference in the lives of people that we represent.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

MLA Jelynn Dela Cruz (Radisson): So Bill 218, Honourable Speaker, was brought to this Legislature by Educators for Climate Action, and it's actually no surprise that members opposite oppose this bill, because they didn't spend a single day under their Stefanson government acting for the climate. So why would they want to spend a month?

Honourable Speaker, they are here on the record saying that climate action is confusing. There are students that I know across Manitoba, maybe even here in the gallery with us today, that don't find it confusing whatsoever. They talk about generations in the future and whether or not they can enjoy the things

that so many of us take for granted. The future is already here.

There are children today in Manitoba, there are generations here in Manitoba: an entire generation that will never know a smoke-free summer, that will never be able to take a plunge in Lake Winnipeg safely, that will never be able to hit the ODR in November because of them, because of their inaction for seven and a half years and years prior.

There's this famous idea in science—and, yes, we believe in science on this side of the House—called the butterfly effect: that a small flap of a butterfly's wings can set off a chain reaction felt halfway across the world.

It's a reminder that our world is deeply connected and that every action, big or small, matters, Honourable Speaker. We've seen that truth unfold this year. When a butterfly flaps its wings, it starts a flood in countries like the one that I come from in the Philippines. It starts a typhoon after another typhoon.

Honourable Speaker, communities across the world have been devastated by a series of extreme climate events. Farmers across this world are seeing the predictable seasons that they used to rely on dissipating. You know, they're getting environmental whiplash, frankly, swinging from too little water to far too much. These events aren't isolated and they ripple across economies, food systems and communities everywhere.

And right here at home in Manitoba, we are feeling those ripples, too. We've seen drought threaten our lakes or wetlands and farms. Wildfire smoke has turned our skies orange, Honourable Speaker. Our winters swing from extreme cold to sudden melts. Families in rural and northern Manitoba are seeing the impacts on their livelihoods, their land and their traditions while their MLAs do nothing on the other side of the House.

Climate action isn't something that happens somewhere else; it's reshaping the place that each and every single one of us love, whether the members opposite heckle me or not. But if a butterfly flaps its wings and sets things in motion, Honourable Speaker, so can we.

Every single step that we take investing in clean energy, protecting wetlands, supporting climate-resilient agriculture, creating good green jobs adds up, Honourable Speaker. It sends a signal that Manitobans are choosing a future where our communities are safer,

our air is cleaner and our kids can grow up in a province that thrives.

Honourable Speaker, we are not racing against the clock. We are racing to reverse the clock. The most important truth behind this butterfly effect is this: small actions become powerful when they move together. If each of us does our part and if governments and communities and nations that we inspire choose courage over delay, we can shift the path that we're on.

The world is connected, our futures are connected and the actions we take here in Manitoba can be the wings that help change the world for the better, Honourable Speaker. And so, while the opposition says that every single minute in here matters, I challenge them because they waste every single minute that they put on the record this morning not passing this bill.

And so I encourage members opposite—this entire House—to call the question and pass this bill today.

Mr. Jeff Wharton (Red River North): It gives me great pleasure to get up today, speak to Bill 218 and engage the members opposite in some good, healthy discussion.

Bill 218, The Climate Action Month Act, Honourable Speaker, I just wanted to touch on a comment the member from Radisson had made. And I just wanted to bring to that member's attention that 20, almost 23 years ago, which, almost a generation ago, in 2002, Winnipeg experienced one of the largest sewer spills in the history of Manitoba—almost a generation ago.

So a little bit of education there for the member opposite, that under the NDP watch, that was the largest spill ever. So for 23 years, we've now experienced Lake Winnipeg continuing to blossom into this green algae bloom due to the fact that during the NDP's watch, our beautiful, pristine Lake Winnipeg, which I have the privilege of living on and living beside for the last three decades, is just something that is just horrendous.

So I know under the NDP, when they were in power, they also had in 2024—so this will bring up the member from Radisson, up to current year, another sewage spill into the river, which actually could have filled 90 Olympic-sized swimming pools. That's right, Honourable Speaker: 90 swimming pools.

You know, I am going to move on to something here, too, that the member from Riel had said about

Seal River. I don't know if the member is aware, but I had the absolute privilege of meeting with Seal River and their team, as a minister as well, back in 2022-23. And that meeting was to commence discussions about saving the pristine—areas of the pristine northwest part of our province that we recognize here on this side of the Chamber as an area that needs to be protected and balanced—in a balanced approach, Honourable Speaker.

And I know that in speaking with the folks from Seal River on a number of occasions, one of the challenges we had was getting the federal government on board. Well I can tell you, and I'll even tell the members opposite, because they're probably not aware of it, that we actually convinced the federal government to sign a memorandum of understanding to ensure that we can ensure that we can look up that northwest—[interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wharton: —corner. We can look up that northwest corner and protect the area—

* (11:00)

The Speaker: Order, please.

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

RESOLUTIONS

Res. 2—Advancing Manitoba's Economic Future through Provincial-Federal Collaboration in Churchill

The Speaker: The hour is now 11 a.m. and the time for private members' resolutions. The resolution before us this morning is the resolution brought forward by the honourable member for Thompson, and the title of the resolution is Advancing Manitoba's Economic Future through Provincial-Federal Collaboration in Churchill.

MLA Eric Redhead (Thompson): I move, seconded by the member for The Pas-Kameesak (Ms. Lathlin),

WHEREAS the Town of Churchill and the Port of Churchill are critical assets for Manitoba's economic development, Arctic sovereignty, and international trade, being the only deepwater port in North America with Arctic Ocean access and rail connectivity; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Government launched Manitoba's new Economic Development Strategy, which includes a long-term vision to make Manitoba a "have" province through productivity growth, trade expansion, and strategic infrastructure investments; and

WHEREAS the Port of Churchill is identified as a potential future federal infrastructure priority, with plans to upgrade the rail line, develop an all-weather road, establish a new energy corridor, and do a feasibility study on marine ice-breaking capacity to enable year-round shipping; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Government has emphasized the importance of a true nation to nation partnership with individual nations to advance economic reconciliation, create good jobs in the nations and ensure a healthy future for Indigenous communities and all Manitobans; and

WHEREAS the Federal Government has acknowledged Churchill's strategic role in diversifying trade routes and supporting Canada's critical minerals strategy, with potential for growing exports to Europe; and

WHEREAS Prime Minister Mark Carney and the Premier issued a joint statement committing to work together to deliver the Port of Churchill Plus project, in partnership with Arctic Gateway Group, the Major Projects Office, and the Manitoba Crown Indigenous Corporation; and

WHEREAS the Arctic Gateway Group, composed of First Nations and northern communities, is actively preparing for expanded operations and has expressed readiness to collaborate with governments and stakeholders.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba affirm its support for the inclusive and sustainable redevelopment of Churchill as a strategic infrastructure project of national importance, and urge the Provincial Government to continue working collaboratively with all partners to ensure Churchill becomes a cornerstone of Manitoba's economic transformation and global trade strategy.

Motion presented.

MLA Redhead: Honourable Speaker, Manitoba is a province of possibility, a place where prairie fields meet northern tundra and where communities from Winnipeg to Churchill share a common hope that every family can build a good home and life here.

Yet we know the challenges Manitobans have faced these past two years. Costs have climbed because of global inflation and tariffs that have driven up prices across this great country while the previous government failed to invest in infrastructure that could have cushioned the blow.

Under their watch, Manitoba's endured some of the steepest increases in decades. Food prices surged by 8.3 per cent in 2022 and another 7.2 per cent in 2023, squeezing household budgets and forcing families to make hard choices.

Since forming government, we have worked tirelessly to bring this inflation under control. After years of steep increases, Manitoba is now in a stronger position. Overall inflation sits at 2.9 per cent as of September 2025, and food price growth has slowed to 3 per cent, less than half the pace of those record highs.

While global pressures remain, our policies are helping to stabilize costs and protect household budgets. But we must also be clear about the reality. In northern communities, families still pay several times what southern households do for basic necessities like milk and bread. And when rail service flooders or storms hit, shelves go bare and costs spike even higher.

These differences are felt in the checkout line and in the choices northern Manitoba families make every single day; moreover, seeing too many young people leave for better prospects elsewhere, and northern communities struggle with limited career paths.

Honourable Speaker, previous infrastructure gaps by the previous PC government have only added to these challenges. And the Hudson Bay Railway is known—is a known lifeline for 33,000 northern Manitobans, yet the previous government failed to maintain the rail line. And when floods severed the lines in 2017, communities were stranded for months, exposing just how fragile and costly our northern supply chain can be when a single corridor fails.

Our NDP government has been paying attention to these issues. We know these challenges are real and we're taking action to fix them. That is why the Churchill project is central to our plan.

Who could have imagined, just two years ago, that Manitoba would stand at the heart of a multibillion-dollar opportunity. Now, Prime Minister Mark Carney and our Premier (Mr. Kinew) have made it clear that they are committed to working together

to make sure the multibillion-dollar opportunity comes to life.

More than a simple port, the Port of Churchill Plus project is a chance to rewrite Manitoba's story. Honourable Speaker, Churchill is North America's only deepwater Arctic port with direct rail line access and is owned by Indigenous and northern communities. This is a bold step forward for Manitoba and the North.

The project will be built in partnership with the Arctic Gateway Group and the Major Projects Office and the Manitoba Crown-Indigenous corporation. Together, we are creating a future where northern communities lead, where reconciliation is more than words and where Manitoba becomes a gateway to global opportunity.

Crucially, our plan will contribute to lower costs for families, a modern Arctic trade route, shortened shipping times and reduces reliance on southern choke points—in turn, stabilizing prices for food and the essentials, especially in our northern communities. When the rail line is strong and the port is modern, shelves stay stocked and costs come down.

And the benefits go beyond groceries. Rail upgrades, port modernization and of-the logistic operations will create thousands of careers in construction, trade and technology, keeping our young people in Manitoba and attracting new talent.

The economic growth Churchill will drive, through new trade, investment and jobs, will strengthen Manitoba's economy and keep costs lower for families across the greatest province in Canada—Manitoba.

Honourable Speaker, this is about building a stronger, fairer Manitoba, where every family from the prairies to the tundra can thrive, and that is the future we are working towards and that is the promise we intend to keep.

Due to the advocacy of our NDP government and the pressure we put on the federal government, Prime Minister Mark Carney and the Premier (Mr. Kinew) have now issued a joint statement, committing to work together to deliver the Port of Churchill Plus project, in partnership with the Arctic Gateway Group and the Major Projects Office, also the Manitoba Crown-Indigenous corporation.

The federal government has confirmed new long-term funding to strengthen Churchill's transportation corridor, ensuring Manitoba's northern gateway

remains open and thriving. Starting in 2025-2026, the federal government will invest \$175 million to sustain and expand northern infrastructure, shared between Transport Canada and Prairies Economic Development Canada.

Through Transport Canada's Remote Passenger Rail Program, \$125 million over five years will support the continued operation and maintenance of the Hudson Bay Railway, ensuring this lifeline keeps connecting northern and Indigenous communities from The Pas to the Port of Churchill.

Prairies Economic Development Canada will further invest \$50 million for predevelopment activities at the Port of Churchill, maintaining safety, improving efficiency and attracting new private sector investments.

* (11:10)

Our government is proud to match this ambition with action. We are investing \$36.4 million over two years to rebuild and expand the Port of Churchill and the Hudson Bay rail line, unlocking new opportunities for trade, job growth and—in northern Manitoba.

And today, I am pleased to announce a \$51-million commitment by our NDP government to the Arctic Gateway Group for capital investment to the rail line and a critical mineral storage facility at the port.

Together with the federal government's \$175-million commitment, these joint investments total \$262.5 million. That's almost a quarter of a billion dollars invested by both levels of government to make sure that the Port of Churchill remains open, vital and continues to thrive and build Manitoba's economy, creating jobs, attracting private capital and unlocking billions in future economic activity.

Honourable Speaker, this is just one of many steps our NDP government is taking to make sure Manitoba is a have province, not a have-not province. I look forward to this PMR passing with everyone's support.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Questions

The Speaker: A question period of up to 10 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed in the following sequence: the first question may be asked from a member from another party; any subsequent questions must follow a rotation between the parties;

each independent member may ask one question. And no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye): I'd like to thank the member for Thompson for bringing this resolution forward, as he represents the North. I know that this is something that he sees the potential in.

Since the resolution is called the federal and provincial collaboration in the Port of Churchill and since we've seen the Prime Minister of Canada here in the Premier's (Mr. Kinew) office without a commitment for any dollar values and without us seeing any private investment partnership, I'd like to ask the member: How much federal investment would we need for this NDP government to see the Port of Churchill a viable shipping port?

MLA Eric Redhead (Thompson): Well, as I said in my speech, we already have commitment from both our government and the federal government to rebuild that port and the rail line.

You know, unfortunately for seven and a half years, members opposite neglected that rail line. They left infrastructure crumbling. You know, if they had invested in that rail line, we would have seen the port be vital and thriving. But that's what we're doing; we're committing to making sure that that happens under the leadership of our Premier.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Mrs. Rachelle Schott (Kildonan-River East): Can the honourable member for Thompson please tell us why Churchill and the Port of Churchill are so important to Manitoba's future?

MLA Redhead: Churchill is Manitoba's northern gateway to the world: the only deepwater port in North America with direct rail line access to the Arctic Ocean. It's not just a port; it's a vital trade corridor that connects our province to global markets, supports Arctic sovereignty and provides a lifeline for northern communities.

Mr. Doyle Piwniuk (Turtle Mountain): I just wanted to ask the member for Thompson, when it comes to the—it's important topic that we have here, you know, trade corridors. I signed an MOU with Saskatchewan and Alberta. But I just wanted to know—I have a question here—how many years is it going to be: a two year, five year, 20 years? When is this actually—we're going to see significant activity actually happening and actually import—exporting products or importing products here in—for Manitoba at Churchill?

MLA Redhead: You know, as the member opposite should know that the port is actually already in operation, but what we need to do is invest heavily in maintaining that rail line, upgrading it to a certain standard so we can start exporting other minerals, other commodities through the port to European markets.

So yes, you know what: that's where I'm at with that.

Thanks.

Mrs. Schott: Honourable Speaker, the PCs often neglected Churchill during their time in office.

Can the honourable member for Thompson please tell us what our government's approach will be and how it is different?

MLA Redhead: The difference is simple: we're taking action, not just making announcements.

For years, the PCs treated Churchill as Ottawa's problem. Our NDP government is at the table from day one, working collaboratively with the federal government, Indigenous partners, northern communities. We're investing in infrastructure, jobs and partnerships that will last for generations.

We're rebuilding trust and ensuring the North has a real voice in Manitoba's economic future.

Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz): As we know, this port will offer valuable economic growth for our province.

And I want to ask the member: Did his government consult with shipping, trucking and rail industry about growing exports through the Port of Churchill and the viability of Hudson Bay rail line for heavier shipments and grain and other commodities?

MLA Redhead: If you build it, they will come. It's that simple. And that's what we're doing on this side of the House. We're investing to make sure that that rail line and the port can sustain those shipments and other commodities to global markets.

Seven and a half years—[interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

MLA Redhead: —the previous PC government neglected the North. You know what: in this government, the North has strong voices from every single member on this side of the House representing all of Manitoba, not just within the Perimeter.

Mrs. Schott: Honourable Speaker, how does this resolution show that our government is listening and taking action on the challenges Manitobans face?

MLA Redhead: For years, the PCs ignored Churchill, left northern communities vulnerable. Manitobans paid the price with soaring costs and limited opportunity. Our government has been paying attention.

We're—already delivered the lowest inflation rate in Canada, invested \$36.4 million to rebuild the port and Hudson Bay rail line and partnered with Indigenous communities to ensure growth is inclusive.

This resolution is the next step, affirming Churchill as a strategic project of national importance.

Mr. Jeff Wharton (Red River North): I'd like to thank the member from Thompson for bringing this resolution forward today.

I did have a question for him, though: When did the Arctic Gateway Group start, and can the member share with Manitobans today who makes up the Arctic gateway ownership group?

MLA Redhead: Honourable Speaker, that is actually a great question.

It started, actually, in the flood of 2017, when their previous government neglected to fix the rail line. What happened was the Pallister government left the rail line, left the Port of Churchill, so Indigenous communities gathered together because they—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

MLA Redhead: —recognized the importance of that rail line, the importance of northern Manitoba.

Their previous PC government left that rail line in shambles. Shame on them.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Mrs. Schott: Honourable Speaker, my question for the amazing member for Thompson (MLA Redhead) is: Why is it important that we are taking a collaborative approach with the federal government?

MLA Redhead: Thank you for that question. Because collaboration is key to long-term success. The PCs often treated Churchill as someone else's problem.

Our government is different. We're at the table from the very beginning, working hand in hand with the federal government, Indigenous leaders and northern communities. That partnership is what will

make Churchill sustainable: a thriving hub for generations to come.

Mr. Narth: Well, I think every economist and business professional in our country can agree that, build it and they will come, isn't a viable business plan.

* (11:20)

So I'd like to ask the member for Thompson that, since we know that we can't just build it and they will come, who are the suppliers for products to the port and who will be the customers and what will those resources and products be?

MLA Redhead: You know, I think the member's feelings are a bit hurt because we're investing in the North and they did absolutely nothing with the port.

You know, we have a gold mine that's opening up in my backyard, Honourable Speaker. The potential of that gold mine shipped to other markets around the world through the Port of Churchill is so, so crucial, and that's why we're making sure that that rail line is sustainable, that the port can handle other minerals and commodities shipped through that port. So yes, and there's also that, as well.

Thank you.

Mr. Piwniuk: Honourable Speaker, I just wanted to—have a question for the member for Thompson. When it comes to the importance of—

The Speaker: Order, please.

My mistake. Should be the honourable member for Kildonan-River East (Mrs. Schott).

Mrs. Schott: Honourable Speaker, I ask that some time be added to questions for the misidentification of the order of sequence, there, so we can hear more from the amazing member for Thompson.

My question for him, Honourable Speaker, is, how does investing in Churchill support northern communities and families?

MLA Redhead: What a wonderful question, thank you.

Investing in Churchill isn't just about trade, it's about people. Reopening and strengthening the port means stable jobs for northern families, new opportunities for Indigenous and local businesses and reliable transportation links for communities that depend on Churchill.

It's about building a northern economy that will unlock economic opportunities for all of Manitobans,

and that is what is so great about, you know, building up Churchill and building up the North, is that it's going to feed all of Manitoba's economy, create jobs from the North all the way down south and everywhere in between.

Thank you for that question.

The Speaker: The time for questions has expired.

Debate

The Speaker: The floor is open for debate.

Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye): I'm pleased to rise today and speak to the government's resolution called Advancing Manitoba's Economic Future through Provincial-Federal Collaboration in Churchill.

As I reflect on today's resolution, all I can think is, no wonder this government isn't getting anything done on this file, because their approach to economic development in Churchill is completely backwards.

Over the past two years, under this NDP government, we've seen jobs and investment dollars migrating west. I've risen before in this Chamber and talked about the plight of NPI, an ag processor, and Law-Marot, a grain-drying company, and many others—great Canadian companies who want to set up shop here or expand their businesses here but they can't because NDP taxes, red tape and incompetence kill their profit margin.

They can't make money in Manitoba, and if industry can't make money in Manitoba, they're going to invest that money in other provinces. They're not going to create steady, good-paying jobs here, not going to add to our GDP, which is, by the way, under this failed government, down to a meagre 1.1 per cent growth.

To quote one executive that I spoke to: Why would we do business with a government that doesn't want to do business with us? And that's just in the ag sector. That's the key word here, business, because that's what we need. That's what Churchill needs.

It may come as a shock to the NDP, but government doesn't create private—

An Honourable Member: Point of order.

Point of Order

The Speaker: The honourable Minister of Justice, on a point of order.

Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): On a point of order, Honourable Speaker.

I noted that the member opposite was quoting from—or provided a quote for the House. I just was wondering if that was from a public document or if it's from private correspondence and if—whether he could table that for the House, please.

The Speaker: Could the honourable member clarify, was that a public document or was it something else, and if so, would he table it, please?

Mr. Narth: It was from a phone conversation with a businessman in my constituency.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

The Speaker: The honourable Opposition House Leader, on the same point of order.

Mr. Derek Johnson (Official Opposition House Leader): Yes, Honourable Speaker, obviously you can't table a phone conversation, so it's not a point of order.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Just on the point of order, I would point out that it's not a point of order and obviously you can't table a phone conversation, but one should be careful when quoting things like that.

* * *

Mr. Narth: Just to expand on that, that was a conversation that I had with Chris from Law-Marot, which is a Quebec-based grain dryer company, that's the western Canadian territory rep. The interesting part about that phone conversation is that emails, phone voicemails are all sitting on the Minister of Agriculture's (Mr. Kostyshyn) desk somewhere to be unresponded to.

Mr. Tyler Blashko, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

That same company—and I thank the Minister of Justice for bringing this conversation up, because Law-Marot, a Canadian-based grain dryer manufacturing—manufacturer that specifically—specifically specializes in value-added grain processing was interested in setting—[interjection]

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Narth: —up manufacturing in southern Manitoba. So I encourage the Minister of Justice, I encourage the minister responsible for economic development and I definitely encourage—[interjection]

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Narth: —the Minister of Agriculture to pick up the phone and talk to Chris, because he'd be more than

happy to talk about the millions of dollars that that company was willing to invest in a manufacturing facility in southern Manitoba that was going to immediately going to employ more than 100 people.

But guess what? Because they can't get a response from the failed Ag Minister or the failed minister responsible for job creation and the economy, they're moving on. You know who else they took with them or who they are taking with them? NPI.

NPI is a value-added agriculture processor that takes soybean meal and adds value to it and ships it across the entire world. That company—the owner of that company—has now moved to British Colombia since our conversation. That's where his personal residence is and he has no issue with me talking about that on the floor of this—[*interjection*]

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Narth: —House, because of the frustration of the lack of business acumen of this government.

So he's now moved his residence and his family to British Colombia. Guess what's coming next? The millions of dollars that he was going to invest in that Law-Marot big fancy new grain dryer and processing piece of equipment in Blumenort, Manitoba. He's going to take that because he's got over \$1 million invested in Blumenort, Manitoba that now is collecting dust and it's going to need to be scrapped or sold to another province.

So instead of selling it to another province, guess what he's going to do, honourable Speaker? He's moving his production to southern Saskatchewan. So we've lost them—[*interjection*]

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Narth: —as a—[*interjection*]

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

I'm trying not to take this personally where it seems—the volume seemed to get a lot louder once I took the Chair. But maybe we can reset and give the member for La Vérendrye (Mr. Narth) a chance to share his thoughts on the resolution.

Mr. Narth: I'm glad that the Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe) allowed me to steer in a direction to showcase the importance of the Port of Churchill, but the importance of having business acumen when you build a pie-in-the-sky port in Churchill.

* (11:30)

The Port of Churchill has great value, not only to the people of the North, not only to the people of Churchill, not only to the province of Manitoba but it has great value to our entire country. Everyone can agree on that, but what we can't agree on is that when you have businesses that are in our province—multi-generational businesses in our province—willing to further invest here, being chased away; that there is no product to ship through the Port of Churchill. If you chase away all the businesses that potentially could add value to our commodities in Manitoba, what are you going to need the Port of Churchill for?

When you have NPI and Law-Marot that aren't able to add value to the soybeans that we grow in Manitoba, what are we shipping to the world through Churchill? If they only need to cater to the local market in Blumenort or in Portage la Prairie or in Brandon, you don't need a port. We need a port to show the value that we can provide to the rest of the world through our agriculture products, just as one; through our energy as another. And that energy can also be shared across our entire country.

But when you have a government like this, that calls me out in representing my constituents and valuable agriculture producers throughout our province, it—you know, I think we can all see that this plan has failed before it started.

But I'll try to get back on track for my comments on the Port of Churchill. And a federal-provincial collaboration, we know, is important. But we didn't see any deal. We haven't seen a deal. What we've seen is we've seen the Prime Minister sitting in the Premier's (Mr. Kinew) office, and guess what? The only thing that happened was a little bit of back and forth banter and a joke. The Premier took a toy ball and he tossed it across to the Prime Minister and said the ball is now in your court.

Well, you know, to no surprise, the ball is again left in the Prime Minister's court and he's come back with absolutely nothing. So right now, the people of the North, the people of Churchill and the people of Manitoba, all that they can see is that the Prime Minister hasn't shown a whole lot of interest and their Premier is spending our tax dollars on that.

And you know why people like Chris from Law-Marot and the owners of NPI are really concerned? Because they can't get a call back, but yet the Premier is saying we're going to build a port with your tax dollars; your tax dollars that you're struggling to generate for this province, for this failed NDP government and their lack of commitment to any

business future in our province. It's people like that. It's everyday Manitobans that are really concerned with the promises by this government.

The Prime Minister has committed absolutely nothing to this project. The minister responsible for economic development in this province has not made a single deal with a supplier to provide any products to that port. We also seen that that same minister hasn't made any deals to sell those products to the rest of the world.

So essentially, we are telling Manitobans that we are going to take their tax dollars, build a huge warehouse—it's like building a Costco in the middle of nowhere. It has no road to get in there, it's got no suppliers to supply it and it has no customers. So we're building a Costco without suppliers and without customers. That's the Port of Churchill under this government and I think everyday Manitobans are seeing it clear as day.

Thank you, honourable Speaker.

Hon. Glen Simard (Minister of Municipal and Northern Relations): Honourable Deputy Speaker, today I rise to speak out about the tremendous opportunity before us; the opportunity to build a stronger, safer, more prosperous province for every Manitoba, whether they live in Winnipeg, Beausejour, Swan River or in the northern gateway community of Churchill.

For far too long, Manitobans were told to expect less: less investment, less support and less vision from their government. Under the Pallister and Stefanson PCs, austerity was elevated to ideology. Cuts became routine and communities were left to fend for themselves.

But Manitobans elected a new government with a different purpose, to rebuild what was broken, to restore what was lost and to create real opportunity, not just in the south but across the North, where Churchill and the Port of Churchill represented one of the most consequential economic projects of our time.

Our government knows that public safety, strong health care and a thriving northern economy are not optional luxuries; they are essential pillars of a fair and prosperous Manitoba.

French spoken

Honorable l'assistant Président, les Manitobains veulent un gouvernement qui leur écoute et qui investit dans leurs communautés. Ils veulent savoir que leurs familles sont en sécurité, que leur—les services de santé sont accessibles et que les possibilités d'emploi existent non seulement dans

la capitale, mais aussi dans les régions rurales et nordiques. Ils veulent un gouvernement qui comprend leurs besoins, pas un gouvernement qui les ignore.

Translation

Manitobans want a government that listens to them and invests in their communities. They want to know that their families are safe, that health care is accessible and that job opportunities exist not only in the capital, but also in rural and northern areas. They want a government that understands their needs, not one that ignores them.

English

Under former PC governments, the opposite was true. Communities were ignored, services were cut and the North was treated as an afterthought.

It was Brian Pallister who closed emergency rooms at Seven Oaks, Concordia and Misericordia. It was the PCs who shut offices, hollowed out staffing and left nurses and paramedics stretched to their limits. And when the northern communities were stranded after floods destroyed the Hudson Bay rail line in 2017, the PCs quite literally left them isolated and alone.

Honourable Deputy Speaker, when shelves in Churchill went bare, when families faced the highest food prices in Canada, when the cost of fuel soared and essential goods couldn't get through, what did the PCs do? They pointed fingers. They shrugged. They said it wasn't Manitoba's problem. When the rail line was finally restored by Indigenous and northern partners, the PCs were nowhere to be found.

That is what seven years of PC mismanagement looked like: abandonment masquerading as leadership.

French spoken

Les familles du Nord s'en souviennent : elles se souviennent du silence du gouvernement, elles se souviennent du manque de soutien, elles se souviennent d'avoir été laissées à elles-mêmes pendant que leur gouvernement coupait les services essentiels. Ce n'était pas du leadership : c'était un échec moral et politique.

Translation

Families in the North remember: they remember the government's silence, they remember the lack of support, they remember being left to fend for themselves while their government cut essential services. That was not leadership: it was a moral and political failure.

English

Our government is taking Manitoba in a new direction, one based on partnership, reconciliation and long-term vision. And nowhere is that clearer than in Churchill. Churchill is not simply a northern town; it is North America's only deepwater Arctic port with direct rail access. It is the key to unlocking a northern trade corridor, a driver of Arctic sovereignty, a catalyst for critical mineral exports and the foundation of a modern northern economy.

This is why, honourable Deputy Speaker, we have committed to \$36.4 million over two years to rebuild and expand the Port of Churchill and strengthen the Hudson Bay rail line. Churchill is owned by northern and Indigenous communities through the Artway [phonetic] Gateway Group: 41 partners leading the way. Every investment here is an investment in economic reconciliation, in northern opportunity and in a future where no community is left behind.

French spoken

Le port de Churchill n'est pas seulement une infrastructure régionale : c'est un projet national stratégique. Avec une ligne ferroviaire modernisée, les mises à niveau portuaires et un corridor énergétique potentiel, Churchill deviendra un centre commercial majeur pour les minéraux critiques, l'énergie propre, l'agriculture et le tourisme nordique. C'est un moteur économique pour tout le Manitoba.

Translation

The Port of Churchill is not just a regional infrastructure project: it is a strategic national project. With a modernized railway line, port upgrades and a potential energy corridor, Churchill will become a major trading hub for critical minerals, clean energy, agriculture and northern tourism. It is an economic driver for all of Manitoba.

English

And, honourable Deputy Speaker, for the first time in decades, Manitoba has a true federal partner. Thanks to strong provincial leadership, the Prime Minister and the Premier (Mr. Kinew) released a joint statement confirming the Port of Churchill Plus project, a landmark collaboration between our government, the federal government, the Arctic Gateway Group and the Manitoba Crown-Indigenous corporation.

* (11:40)

Beginning in '25-26, the federal government will invest \$175 million into northern Manitoba: \$125 million for continued maintenance and operation of the Hudson Bay Railway, \$50 million for long-term predevelopment work at the Port of Churchill.

This is the largest federal commitment to Churchill in a generation, secured because Manitoba's finally showed leadership, not excuses.

French spoken

Ces investissements changeront la vie des familles du Nord. Ils stabiliseront les prix des aliments, amélioreront de l'accès aux biens essentiels, créeront des emplois et renforceront la souveraineté arctique du Canada. Grâce à ces investissements, le Nord pourrait enfin prospérer.

Translation

These investments will change the lives of families in the North. They will stabilize food prices, improve access to essential goods, create jobs and strengthen Canada's Arctic sovereignty. Thanks to these investments, the North could finally prosper.

English

Honourable Deputy Speaker, affordability remains a defining issue for families. Food price inflation reached 8.3 per cent under the PCs. Their cuts only made things worse.

Our government has turned the corner. Manitoba now has the lowest inflation in Canada at 2.9 per cent, but for northern families who still pay more for everything, from milk to fuel, the Port of Churchill is part of the solution.

Lowering costs, reducing supply chain risk and ensuring communities never face the isolation they endured under the PCs: this is the essence of our new economic development strategy, a vision for Manitoba as a have province, a province powered by trade, clean energy, critical minerals and northern infrastructure.

Churchill is at the heart of this vision, and as we grow the economy we will do what the PCs refused to do: protect the environment, tackle climate change, invest in Indigenous partnerships and strengthen the services families rely on.

French spoken

C'est cela, bâtir un Manitoba. Cela signifie investir dans les soins de santé, dans la sécurité publique, dans les infrastructures nordiques et dans

les personnes qui font fonctionner notre province. Cela signifie reconnaître que chaque région compte et que Churchill est une des portes d'entrée vers l'avenir économique du Manitoba.

Translation

That's what building one Manitoba is all about. It means investing in health care, public safety, northern infrastructure and the people who make our province work. It means recognizing that every region matters and that Churchill is one of the gateways to Manitoba's economic future.

English

The PCs left Manitoba unsafe, unstabled and unprepared. They closed ERs, dismantled services, ignored the North and abandoned Churchill. That era is over. Our government is rebuilding health-care, restoring public safety and unlocking the North's enormous economic potential.

French spoken

Ensemble, nous bâtissons un Manitoba plus fort, plus équitable et plus prospère. Nous investissons dans les services essentiels, dans la croissance économique et dans les communautés nordiques longtemps négligées. Le port de Churchill est une pièce maîtresse de cette vision, un symbole de ce que nous pouvons accomplir lorsque nous choisissons la collaboration plutôt que l'austérité.

Et l'avenir du Manitoba n'a jamais été aussi prometteur.

Translation

Together, we are building a stronger, fairer and more prosperous Manitoba. We are investing in essential services, economic growth and long-neglected northern communities. The Port of Churchill is a centrepiece of this vision, a symbol of what we can achieve when we choose collaboration over austerity.

And Manitoba's future has never looked brighter.

English

Honourable Deputy Speaker, we are not just reopening a port. We are reopening a future, a future where northern families are partners in prosperity, a future where Manitoba leads nationally in clean energy, Arctic trade and critical mineral development; a future where every community, from Winnipeg to Brandon to Thompson to Churchill, can say with confidence, my government is building a better

Manitoba for me, my government is working for us not against us.

Thank you, honourable Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Doyle Piwniuk (Turtle Mountain): I know when I'm in this Chamber a long time when—over 12 years—when I have to talk right now when it comes to the NDP government.

We—the minister of municipal relations talked about our seven and a half years. Well, let's—I'll give you a history lesson. History doesn't repeat itself but it does rhyme, I always say in this Chamber.

But the fact is, when I first came here, the NDP were actually—had all seats in the North. They were representing the North. They did a dismal record of the North. The thing is, when it came to—even when deferred maintenance, when it comes to our roads, highways, schools, hospitals, they left us with a mess, honourable Deputy Speaker, a big, bloody mess that we had to clean up that we had to reinvest in our infrastructure.

And the thing was, this NDP government and the 2016 Selinger government, which I see the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Kostyshyn) being part of that, did not do anything for the North. They actually left it—they didn't put any money into the railway, honourable Deputy Speaker. And the fact was, when it came to the election of 2016, two ministers, major ministers from the North were defeated, one in Thompson: Steve Ashton and Eric Robinson were defeated because they didn't do anything for the North.

People in the North knew that and they defeated them, honourable Speaker. So the fact is, you know what? This is when—I'm not quite sure if the member from Kildonan River East—she'll have her time to come up to speak on this. And so—she asks questions but she didn't have a chance to speak; they always put a minister up.

And so, the fact is, I just want to say, honourable Speaker, that when I was minister, I signed an MOU with Saskatchewan, Alberta—and the fact was the importance of a port—if you're going to have sustainability of a port, you've got to have a whole region that's going to bring goods and services and manufacturing goods to that one port.

Honourable Deputy Speaker, Vancouver—basically everything from the western region goes to Vancouver. Everything from here to the St. Lawrence Seaway,

it goes to the St. Lawrence Seaway port. The fact is, you've got to start working with the other provinces.

Why was an MOU signed by Alberta, Saskatchewan and Ontario, but this Premier (Mr. Kinew) failed to actually sign and go on board with it? Because the fact is, you had to have a whole bunch of buy-in to make sure that this port is going to be feasible.

When the federal government wants to put money into it, they want to know that there's actually going to be natural resources. So let's also look at the history of the Selinger government. They took—when Filmon government was in, we were number two—number one when it came to mining. When this—by the time the Selinger government ended, they went down to almost 62 of the 62 of second when it came to the amount of mining.

They had a poor record in mining. And when the Premier came in as an MLA, he had to say, keep the minerals in the ground. That was his philosophy. And the fact was, you know what, honourable Deputy Speaker? We won't take any lessons from this NDP government. They're all talk, they're no action. And the fact is right now, there's no commitment from the federal government: only maybe a feasibility study.

We tried to do a feasibility study for looking at a second port and we had Alberta and Saskatchewan lined up, but this government actually decide not to pursue that. And the fact is now they're just going solo and all—I believe that the Premier's getting his—trying to get some recognition. He's always on campaign mode but he's never been actually running this province, honourable Deputy Speaker.

So I would say, when it comes to the trade corridors, it's very important that you work with the other provinces. Because the fact is, there's going to be goods and services coming from Alberta, manufacturing, when it comes to natural resources in Saskatchewan and Alberta, there's an abundance of them.

We need to make sure that they're partner on this project. Ontario, they have the ring of fire, when it's in northern Ontario. That's looking—I was actually at a conference last year with the member from Elmwood and I actually met with—actually had lunch with the legislative assistant for Doug Ford. And I told him about the opportunity of Churchill and Hudson Bay and the opportunity that we were doing.

And the fact is, they got interest. And Doug Ford put him on the actual—that project. And so, this fact is, honourable Deputy Speaker, the fact is this government,

I would say that it's going to be the same NDP government from the 16 and a half years that they could have actually fixed the North up. The fact is they just let it go—let it go.

They were so concerned about their unionized friends that they never really invested in northern Manitoba. This is where the jobs are. The mining companies were starting to shut down. The fact is they left us with the—a situation with a huge debt, huge deferred maintenance issues that we have all across the province. And the fact is, they're going the same direction, honourable Deputy Speaker.

They're spending money big time putting us into more and more deficits and more and more debt. They doubled the hydro debt—the Selinger government did in that 16 years. And they doubled our provincial debt. And this is a legacy that we still have to wait. And the member for—the Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe), he was there to have it all happen.

And the fact is, he's doing the same thing. He's going to create the same situation when it comes to this, you know, when it comes to this trade corridor that they feel that this is going to be the saving grace for them.

* (11:50)

But if they're not going to collaborate with other provinces, honourable Deputy Speaker, and if they're not getting a commitment from this prime minister, basically they're in the Premier's office stroking each other's ego.

And the fact is that they—not do anything. They can't get anything done, honourable Deputy Speaker. And the fact is, you know, I just want to say that when it comes to these trade corridors it's very important for our mining sector, it's important for our farmers, our manufacturers.

When I was in Saskatoon, I actually was on the trade corridor panel, and talking about the opportunity of Hudson Bay. And like I said, not one MLA—there was about 10 or 11 of them from—went to Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, for the conference, for the midwest legislative conference and not one of them actually came into that trade corridor one. We had people from all the provinces and the states.

The Americans were really excited because of—they felt that there was an opportunity to ship stuff northern, because they know that everything is tied up in the ports in Vancouver and Chicago and the Great Lakes and eastern United States seaboard.

The fact is they know that this is an opportunity for the states, for northern, midwest states. They know the opportunity.

And the fact is, this government has even reached out to them to have this conversation because there is excitement, but this government has not even been there. Not one person represented the NDP government at that trade corridor presentation. Not one person was there.

And the fact is, if they feel that this is important to them, they'd be working with their—with all their states and with other provinces that really need the tidewater when it comes to northern Manitoba, to connect to Europe, to connect to the rest of the world. And this is our opportunity.

And for me, it was a passion of mine that this had to be done. And the fact is, I will be promoting this as I go forward, to make sure that this actually happens. And the fact is, right now there's really no action right now with this NDP government. It's all talk but no action.

Thank you, honourable Speaker.

Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz): I want to thank the members on this side of the House; the member from La Vérendrye, for sharing a story regarding a business that is, you know, due to the lack of involvement here from the NDP government, we've now lost business here in Manitoba in economic growth; and from the member of Turtle Mountain for describing the mess that our government was left with after the NDP vacated, years ago, or lost government years ago.

But also the member from La Vérendrye and Turtle Mountain also describing what some of—has transpired from these meetings between the Premier (Mr. Kinew) and the minister. We've got a game of ball toss and stroking egos. I think that tells you what happens in these meetings: virtually nothing. Nothing gets accomplished from this.

But this also gives me an opportunity here to highlight and talk about when our Progressive Conservative government was in power and the investments that were made, and substantial investments, specifically in the Arctic Gateway Group, focusing on the rail and port transportation.

The investments were not just promises. They were a commitment to a vision, a vision of thriving northern economy. It created jobs as well as opportunities for First Nation communities, the North and Indigenous communities. We understood that by

working together we could develop Manitoba's North into a region that supported local communities and significantly contributing to the growth here in the province of Manitoba.

But seriously, what has transpired since the NDP has brought forward anything in terms of the Port of Churchill? They've had a game of ball toss, I guess and stroking egos, and the unfortunate reality is nothing has been accomplished. Another study, I guess.

In their first two years in office, the NDP have failed to get our economy moving. And like I mentioned earlier, the member from La Vérendrye clearly describing business that has literally moved their family once they learned that nothing was going to happen here with this NDP government in the province of Manitoba; took their business and moved it to the other side of Canada, to BC. Manitoba's lost out on economic growth and opportunity here.

They've not succeeded in securing federal government commitment to make the Port of Churchill fully viable, honourable Deputy Speaker. But instead of real investment, what have we received here? Study. Another study that's added no financial backing and has failed to turn anything into action.

An Honourable Member: Study after study.

Ms. Byram: Study after study.

The NDP's inability to secure necessary federal funding for the Port of Churchill means we're missing out on these opportunities that could significantly boost the economy in the northern—in northern Manitoba. Their failure to attract new mining operations has led to a decline in our status in mining jurisdiction.

And again, this is a vital industry that could create jobs and drive economic growth here in the province of Manitoba, and the NDP's inaction on this has left us failing, behind our neighbouring provinces. Our communities are all suffering as a result, honourable Deputy Speaker.

And not just mining, but we are seeing this in all different ways from small business to manufacturing, that again of which my colleague here, member of La Vérendrye, shared with us how businesses in manufacturing are leaving the province.

We've also seen a significant and very noticeable lack of investment in the critical North infrastructure, and I know the member from Turtle Mountain hit on this as well. Infrastructure is the backbone of economic development and community growth here across

our province, specifically in the northern communities, and without adequate roadways, railways and facilities, these northern communities cannot thrive and—leaving us with diminishing opportunities for jobs and, again, that economic growth that is very vital to our province here.

And residents of the North should be concerned with the NDP's failure to effectively advocate for the needs of these northern communities. They've not been a strong voice for those living in the North, and it's resulted in many lost opportunities for northern development, honourable Deputy Speaker.

Manitoba—northern Manitoba deserves a government that's going to champion their needs, champion their voice, and this NDP government has failed to do so. They rely on vague announcements and empty promises, which have only fueled skepticism about their intentions and effectiveness.

We need concrete plans with concrete timelines and, of course, funding commitments to ensure that our communities see real progress. Unfortunately, the NDP have not delivered on any of these fronts, just proving another failure of this NDP government.

As we face rising unemployment and increasingly challenging economic landscape across our province here, it's clear the NDP's policies and inaction have contributed to the struggles that we're witnessing right across Manitoba and into the North. Families are feeling the impacts of these decisions, and the

northern communities are left searching for solutions, honourable Deputy Speaker.

We all know what families are feeling right now. We're all—we see many struggling going to the grocery store, having to make some really tough decisions and prioritizing different things right now, especially with the holidays coming up. These are challenging times for many families.

And we see those struggles with families here in southern Manitoba, but those struggles are even bigger with those families in northern communities where the cost of living is much higher and the needs are much higher than families down here in southern parts of the province.

Our PC team did bring forward a resolution calling on the government to sign a MOU regarding an energy corridor with Saskatchewan, Ontario and Alberta, yet the NDP voted that down. And this, again, raises an important question: Are they genuinely committed to the concept of energy corridors, or are they merely—

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

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

The hour being 12 p.m., this House is recessed and stands recessed until 1:30 p.m. today.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, December 2, 2025

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