



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	Ind.
LAMOUREUX, Cindy	Tyndall Park	Lib.
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
<i>Vacant</i>	The Pas-Kameesak	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, March 25, 2026

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

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

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Premier Printing

MLA Shannon Corbett (Transcona): I rise today to recognize Premier Printing, a remarkable Manitoba business that has been part of the Transcona community for more than 60 years.

Premier Printing got its start in 1962, when it opened as a small print shop on Bond Street in downtown Transcona. Its founder, the late Gerry Kuik, was a proud Transcona resident who lived the values of hard work, service and community.

From that little shop, Gerry built a business that didn't just offer quality printing; it provided meaningful jobs for local families. As the company grew, it moved first to Plessis Road and later to its current home on Beghin Avenue in St. Boniface Industrial Park.

What's never changed is Premier Printing's strong connection to Transcona. More than 60 years later, the company is still owned by Transcona residents and employs people from both the Transcona area and the wider Winnipeg community.

Over its 63 years, Premier Printing has been a welcoming workplace for generations of high school and university students. Many still remember summers producing student and teacher planners from across Canada, a proud Manitoba product that reaches classrooms coast to coast.

Today, Premier Printing has grown into one of Manitoba's leading print and production companies.

From its Transcona facility, the company provides printing, mailing, fulfillment and promotional services. At its other facility it produces custom fabric displays and sports apparel for clients across Canada.

Now led by three brothers, Will, Ted and Dave Gortemaker, Premier Printing remains a true family business grounded in innovation, integrity and community spirit. They continue the legacy started by their grandfather Gerry and show what's possible when strong local roots and family values guide a company's success.

I invite all of my colleagues to join me in recognizing Premier Printing, a true Transcona success story, a proud Manitoba employer—

The Speaker: Is there leave for the member to complete her statement? [*Agreed*]

MLA Corbett: And a shining example of family entrepreneurship and community pride.

Bonnie Lynn Rae

Mr. Derek Johnson (Interlake-Gimli): I rise today to recognize and celebrate an extraordinary milestone in the life of Ms. Bonnie Lynn Rae, as she marks both her 40th anniversary of employment, as well as her well-deserved retirement on the very same day.

This remarkable achievement reflects far more than the passage of time. It speaks to a lifetime defined by dedication, resilience and an unwavering commitment to excellence for the children and families in Lundar.

For four decades, Bonnie has devoted herself not only to her profession, but to the well-being of others,

particularly through her meaningful work with young children at the Lunder Day Care.

Her commitment to early childhood development has helped shape generations of youth, providing them with a strong foundation in their earliest and most formative years. Through patience, compassion and guidance, she has created a nurturing environment where children can learn, grow and thrive. The positive influence she has on these young children's lives will continue to be felt for years to come.

Bonnie has crafted for the children—Bonnie has cared for the children of the children she once cared for. Forty years of service is no small accomplishment. It is a testament to her professionalism, her strong work ethic and the deep care she brings to everything that she does.

As she enters retirement, we recognize not an ending but a beginning of a new chapter, one filled with well-deserved time with family, friends and personal pursuits.

On behalf of the community, I extend heartfelt congratulations and sincere gratitude to Bonnie Lynn Rae. May the years ahead bring continued happiness, good health and fulfillment. And thanks for joining us today.

Bud Ulrich

Hon. Tracy Schmidt (Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning): Honourable Speaker, I rise today to recognize Bud Ulrich, whose lifelong dedication to sport and community continues to make lasting impacts in Rossmere and across our great province.

Bud's legacy in Manitoba began with sport. After a notable athletic career in his youth, including his involvement with the Canadian Ukrainian Athletic Club in the North End of Winnipeg, he went on to become an officiant, refereeing at the highest levels, both for the NHL's Winnipeg Jets, and the CFL's Winnipeg Blue Bombers. Bud has dutifully officiated not one, but three Grey Cup games, as well as the world junior hockey championships.

Known for his integrity and deep knowledge of sport, Bud earned the respect of athletes and fans alike and was inducted into both the Manitoba Hockey Hall of Fame and the Football Manitoba Hall of Fame, where he also later served as chair, helping preserve and celebrate Manitoba's rich sporting legacy.

Bud has also remained active with the Canadian Ukrainian Athletic Club, including with the planning

of their 100th anniversary celebrations last year, where they raised thousands for local charities.

* (13:40)

Now retired from both of his careers, both as an officiant and as a dedicated teacher, Bud now serves our community as a columnist with the Senior Scope, where he shares stories that celebrate the contributions of seniors across Manitoba.

Bud's years of work for the Senior Scope led to his very latest project: a gala fundraising event that he is planning for this fall to honour the many prominent Manitobans that he has interviewed, such as Ed Schreyer, in support of myeloma cancer research, one of the many causes that is close to Bud's heart.

Closer to home in Rossmere, Bud's volunteer leadership with the Ruth Gardens residents' association—some of you join us here in the gallery today—reflects a deep and ongoing commitment to building community. Bud leads with generosity and purpose, with kindness; he is always supporting his neighbours, organizing local initiatives and sharing stories that bring people together.

Bud's life is a powerful example of service and generosity. His dedication reflects the very best of Rossmere and of all Manitoba. I would invite all my colleagues to join me in celebrating the great Bud Ulrich.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Donna Eastoe, Dale Kilfoyle, Jim Landon, Tawny Landon, Cortez Rivera, Ken Schellenberg, Laureen Schellenberg, Braxton Ulrich, Bud Ulrich, Olivia Ulrich.

Keystone Centre

Mr. Wayne Balcaen (Brandon West): I rise today with real pride to recognize the Keystone Centre and the new chapter unfolding within this institution that has long been at the heart of Brandon and Westman.

For many of us, the Keystone is where our communities gather for fairs, for hockey games, concerts and graduations and countless moments that bring us together. It has shaped memories for generations, including my own.

I'm pleased to welcome representatives from the Keystone Centre and the Keystone Centre Foundation, who have joined us in the gallery here today. I would especially like to welcome Bruce Luebke, chair of the Keystone Centre. Your dedication to this facility and to our community is deeply appreciated.

A major part of the Keystone's renewal began in July of 2024 when Connie Lawrence stepped into the role of chief executive officer and general manager. I've had the chance to see her leadership first-hand, and the energy and optimism she brings are already making a difference.

This momentum is strengthened by the creation of the Keystone Centre Foundation, led by Executive Director Barry Cooper. Barry's experience and vision will be essential for the foundation's support, the development, stewardship and long-term sustainability.

The Keystone Centre is not only a cultural anchor; it's a major economic driver. It contributes \$78.1 million annually to our local economy and supports more than 2,000 jobs across the region. Those numbers reflect the hard work and pride of the people behind the scenes.

As we prepare for one of Manitoba's most cherished traditions, the Royal Manitoba Winter Fair, running March 30 to April 4, I invite all Manitobans to come to Brandon, enjoy the sights and sounds of the fair and be treated like royalty.

I ask my colleagues to stand and recognize my guests in the gallery, and have their names entered into Hansard.

Steven Gabriel, Connie Lawrence, Bruce Luebke.

The Speaker: The honourable member for Tyndall Park—oh, just—the honourable member—*[interjection]* The honourable minister of sport—no.

The honourable Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning (MLA Schmidt).

MLA Schmidt: I apologize, Honourable Speaker.

I seek leave to have the names of my guests added to Hansard.

The Speaker: Is there leave to have the names added following her statement? *[Agreed]*

Prabjot Maan

MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): I rise today for two reasons.

The first quick reason is because I want to thank my colleagues. Today will be my last day of session before this little one comes, and I just want to thank all of my MLA colleagues and everyone here in the

Legislative Building for all of your support through two pregnancies now, Honourable Speaker.

Now, on a very different note, I rise today to recognize and celebrate Prabjot Maan, who has joined us today in the gallery.

Prab has been with me as a volunteer, a constituency assistant and, most importantly, as a friend for nearly a decade. Over the years, she has demonstrated an incredible work ethic through her dedication, competency, loyalty and eagerness to learn.

I admire her not only because she is someone who jumps at opportunities but also because she is always considerate of others in all of her decisions. Whether it be campaigning, working with me and constituents at our weekly Saturday McDonald's, doing casework, advertisements, claims or just making sure our coffee—or, office always has good quality coffee, she consistently demonstrates such capability.

Honourable Speaker, I share all of this here today because, unfortunately, she is leaving me. But to her credit, it is for good reason. My friend Prab is getting married. And while I really like her fiancé, I was unable to convince him to move to Manitoba, so she is leaving me and going to Calgary.

Honourable Speaker, I believe that people enter our lives for a reason, and her friendship has truly impacted me. She has become like a sister to me.

So, Prab, I will miss you, I know everyone at the constituency office is going to miss you, and I can't wait for your wedding in 121 days.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: Prior to oral questions, there are guests in the gallery that I would like to introduce.

We have seated in the public gallery from École Dugald School 55 grade 4 students under the direction of Holly Byman. And this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Springfield-Ritchot (Mr. Schuler). And we welcome you all here today.

Further, we have seated in the public gallery today from the Keystone Centre, Connie Lawrence, Steven Gabriel, Bruce Lubke, Greg Malderwicz *[phonetic]* who are guests of the honourable member for Brandon West (Mr. Balcaen). And we welcome you all here today.

I would also draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us today Elisa Solomon, Ted Gortemaker, Dave Gortemaker, Pete DeBoer, Alex Vanderhooft who are guests of the honourable member for Transcona (MLA Corbett). And we welcome you all here today.

And I would also like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us today Stephen Yardy who is the guest of the honourable member for Kildonan-River East (Mrs. Schott).

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

ORAL QUESTIONS

Basic Personal Tax Rate—Exemption Increase Request for Government to Support Resolution

Mr. Obby Khan (Leader of the Official Opposition): Honourable Speaker, there wasn't a lot in the budget for Manitoban families yesterday. Actually, the exact opposite, and I'll quote the Premier: a little bit for Manitobans. End quote.

The cornerstone of this NDP disappointing budget is the ability for a family to save a little bit, and when the Premier says a little bit, he means a little bit. This NDP budget will save families between \$5 and \$8 a month, maybe around \$60 to \$100 a year.

Is that really the best the Premier can offer Manitobans in a time of affordability crisis: \$5 a month on saving PST at grocery stores? Honourable Speaker, Manitobans were hoping and expecting more from this NDP government.

But the Premier still has time to do the right thing and put thousands of dollars in your back pocket.

Will the Premier today support our resolution to put up to \$3,000 back in the pockets of Manitobans, or will he keep sprinkling pennies for Manitobans?

Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier): Honourable Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to thank our Minister of Finance (MLA Sala) for bringing in probably the best budget that I've seen since I was elected 10 years ago in Manitoba.

We just came back—we literally just came back from the grocery store, and there were seniors, there were high school students, there were people saying, this is awesome; we're so excited about you taking the

sales tax off of groceries and we're so excited about free transit for young people.

* (13:50)

But they're not the only people who are excited. I want to table the expert opinion of the financial analysts at BMO. In a note that they put out yesterday called surplus is calling, they say: The bottom line, Manitoba looks to be on track to achieve surplus in the next fiscal year despite a backdrop of elevated uncertainty.

So, Honourable Speaker, that's why I am thanking our Finance Minister, because there's more help for you, there's more help for you and we're repairing the mess—

The Speaker: Member's time is expired.

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

Mr. Khan: The Premier embarrassed himself yesterday on national TV, just like he's embarrassing himself here today in the Chamber, standing up and claiming that \$5 of savings a month is going to help you in an affordability crisis.

This Premier said himself he's doing a little bit. He told Canadians that the government, and I quote: not being able to do everything all at once and that the cost of living is such a big issue and the provincial government can't get their hands around everything. End quote.

Premier said himself the provincial government can't; I never thought the Premier would say that. On this side of the House, we believe that the 'provincial' government can and must do everything to make life more affordable for Manitobans.

Why is the Premier happy to have such a total lack of ambition, hope and prosperity for a province that he's leading?

Mr. Kinew: When it comes to saving you money, we're there for you. We're there for you at the grocery store. We're there for you at the gas station. We're there for you if you take the bus. We're there for you if you're paying a mortgage. We're there for you if you pay rent.

In the budget that we brought forward, the good news is that we're helping you with all the different pain points when it comes to the cost of living: energy prices, grocery prices, housing prices.

What did the PCs do during two terms of being in government? Did they help you on any of those things

at all? No, not once. And then now, they're on the opposition side, they're like, we got a great plan. We're going to do this and that.

First question they encounter, the whole thing falls apart like a house of cards. Hey guys, how much does it cost? Oh, we don't know, we got to come back later. What did I say on the news yesterday when I was talking to a national audience? I said they need to stop the war in Iran. If the member opposite thinks—

The Speaker: Member's time is expired.

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

Mr. Khan: This Premier wants to save you pennies; on this side of the House, we want to save you thousands of dollars to make your life more affordable in Manitoba. The Premier himself says: a little bit, between \$5 and \$8, he wants to save you a month at grocery stores. We want to save you thousands of dollars.

Maybe the Premier should do his own grocery shopping to understand that the PST is already exempt from main items like apples, oranges—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Khan:—eggs, bread, cheese—essential healthy foods that Manitobans want.

But what does the Premier do? He wants to save you pennies on pop, on chips. Honourable Speaker, Manitobans can see through these empty promises by this NDP government. Families don't need another grocery study that cost millions of dollars; they need money and savings today. They don't need to see \$528,000 go out the door to Richard Madan, the Premier's friend, who brought zero dollars into the province.

Will the Premier stand up today and support our resolution to make life more affordable in Manitoba?

The Speaker: Member's time is expired.

Mr. Kinew: Manitobans, you asked, we delivered. Help at the grocery store, help at the gas station, help with your housing costs, help paying the rent. And as I've tabled, and they have no ability to argue against, we are balancing the budget after they racked up the bills desperately trying to win the last election.

Everybody saw through it and said you're just doing this in an election year, and then it's back to the same old cut, cut, cut. And you see that nothing has changed. He's here talking about a resolution; he doesn't even know how much it costs. It costs

\$960 million. You know what that means? Nine thousand and six hundred nurses.

In order to do what they're talking about, they would have to fire almost every single nurse in the province. It doesn't make sense. They oppose our tax cuts. They oppose us balancing the budget. No wonder—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, on a new question.

Economic Growth for Manitoba Business Support Concerns

Mr. Obby Khan (Leader of the Official Opposition): Goes to show you how out of touch this Premier is. He thinks that 2 cents on milk will help you. He thinks that 1 and a half cents of savings on gas will help Manitobans—1 and a half cents. He thinks that 7 cents on a can of pop will make your life better.

This Premier is completely out of touch with reality. He needs to understand that Manitobans are struggling, and on this side of the House, we put forward a resolution that'll put thousands of dollars into your back pockets to help you in an affordability crisis, Honourable Speaker.

But in order to do that, you have to grow our economy, and under this NDP, Manitoba's economy is dead last at 1.1 per cent. There's nothing in this budget to support small businesses, big businesses or any businesses or any economic growth under this NDP government.

Why is the Premier so set on destroying Manitoba's economy, and what will he do to support the growth of businesses here in Manitoba?

Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier): So, again, I table this analysis from private-sector economists. I'll share also the words from RBC, who says Manitoba has the smallest '26-27 deficit-to-GDP ratio, and it's one of the few provinces charting a path to balance.

We're cutting the deficit so that you can create economic activity and you can create jobs.

What does the PC Party even stand for these days if they oppose us taming their deficit and they oppose the tax credits and tax cuts that we're making to put money in your pocket? No wonder they attack LGBT people. No wonder they attack minorities, because if it comes to the real issues about putting food on your table, they haven't got a single leg to stand on.

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

Mr. Khan: Premier wants to throw around minorities like it's some sort of slogan for him. Last time I checked, I am a visible minority myself, Honourable Speaker. Maybe the Premier should check who he's attacking first.

There is no plan for economic growth under this NDP government. But the Premier's happy to take up to 40 per cent of a handout from the federal government in Manitoba's budget. Manitoba is second, behind Quebec, when it comes to handouts from the federal government. Premier talks about turning a have province—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Khan: —into a have-not province, but under this leadership we will always remain a have-not province.

Last week, they were happy to quote Tom Brodbeck, so I'll quote him here today, and it says: If huge progress looks like Manitobans should brace themselves for what failure might bring. Finance Minister claim is that one will collapse under the most basic scrutiny of Province's own financial statements. No government can credibly claim major progress on deficit when the deficit is essentially unchanged from the day it took office. End quote.

The Speaker: Member's time is expired.

Mr. Kinew: So, again, the BMO economists say that there is a track to achieve surplus in '27-28 despite a backdrop of elevated uncertainty. RBC says it's the smallest deficit in the entire country. So I think we'll probably listen to the bankers than the person whose lemonade stand went out of business.

In this budget, we also eliminated something called the bare trust loophole. This is what big businesses use to skirt taxes when it comes to real estate transactions. I'll note that this is also the way that the PCs just sold their party headquarters. They are closing a real estate transaction on a tax loophole that we are in the midst of closing in this budget.

Will every single member of the PC Party ask the Ethics Commissioner of Manitoba if they have to recuse themselves from debating this budget because they are clearly in a conflict of interest?

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

Mr. Khan: Maybe the Premier should spend less time focused on what the PC Party of Manitoba's doing,

what's happening international conflict. Even though we know the Premier has his eyes set on a federal MP position, maybe he should actually focus on Manitobans—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Khan: —and how to turn Manitoba into a have province.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

* (14:00)

The Speaker: Order, please. Stop the clock.

I would ask the NDP bench to please calm down so I can hear the question.

Mr. Khan: Economic growth is the only way this province will become a have province.

Economic growth means more jobs for Manitoba families. It means higher wages for Manitoba families. It means a balanced budget, not a \$5-billion deficit, a debt like these NDP government is proposing. Economic growth means having money to help with social services.

Will the Premier today stand up and tell Manitobans how he's actually going to turn Manitoba from a have-not province to a have province under his failed leadership?

Mr. Kinew: We're going to take money from rich people who use tax loopholes, and take that money and give it to the middle class. People like you. That's why we're closing this bare trust loophole.

But here's the thing: They are selling their PC Party headquarters right now. They had to take a 25 per cent haircut on it in order to sell it to the person who got more votes than the member for Fort Whyte in the recent PC leadership contest.

If you're listening and saying that doesn't make any sense, you're absolutely right; it doesn't. The point is they are taking advantage of a tax loophole right now to make money for their next election campaign. This budget is closing that loophole. When they stand up to debate this budget, each and every one of them will be in a conflict of interest.

They need to speak to the Ethics Commissioner before they say a word about this budget and try to critique our measures to save you money and fix our health care.

Cost of Living—Budget 2026 Request for Affordability Measures

Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland): Yesterday was a massive disappointment for Manitoba families who are struggling during an affordability crisis.

Honourable Speaker, 50 per cent of Manitobans are reporting that they are within \$200 of insolvency, and the Premier's responding to this crisis with pennies.

Healthy fresh food costs are up: beef, chicken, vegetables. Home heating costs are up. Fuel prices are the highest we've seen in recent memory, and property taxes continue to skyrocket, thanks to this NDP government.

Why did this NDP table a budget that completely ignores the affordability crisis amongst skyrocketing property taxes that Manitobans can't even afford today?

Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister of Finance): Honourable Speaker, I want to thank the member opposite for teeing up the ball. Very excited to share more of the measures we brought forward yesterday, including no PST on food—on all food in grocery stores.

Our education property tax credit now up to \$1,700. Increasing the renter's tax credit up to \$675. Free child care for the lowest income Manitobans who need the support. Free transit for kids and youth, saving families money all school-year round. Targeted supports for families.

We're getting the work done. We're so proud of this—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

The honourable member for Midland, on a supplementary question.

Mrs. Stone: This NDP government has again increased taxes on hard-working Manitobans. Last year, they deliberately cancelled indexation of income taxes, thus pushing more Manitobans into a higher tax bracket. Any increase in wages that Manitobans would see would not truly be felt as a result of this policy.

Yet, again, in yesterday's budget, they did not bring back indexation and they did not increase the basic personal amount.

So why did this NDP Finance Minister fail to index income taxes that would truly help Manitobans who are struggling today?

MLA Sala: Honourable Speaker, the members opposite raised taxes on Manitobans, and they raised taxes on renters, for example, by \$175. That's shameful.

We know renters are some of those Manitobans that need the most help.

This team, this government, is lowering taxes for Manitobans. Whether it's your education property tax bill, whether it's your fuel bill, whether it's your costs as a renter, we're reducing your costs. We're proud to be doing this work.

We're incredibly proud of this budget because not only are we bringing forward affordability measures that are targeted and helping Manitobans where it matters, we're doing it in a way that's fiscally sustainable. Nothing like what the members opposite are bringing forward, which is a ludicrous proposal they haven't even costed, written on the back of a napkin.

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

Mrs. Stone: This former PC government nearly doubled the basic personal amount, and we're going to do it again for Manitobans. That is true tax relief that Manitobans need today during an affordability crisis, yet this Premier is handing out pennies when Manitobans need thousands of dollars. That's what our team is proposing.

Why won't they support that real tax relief for Manitoba families?

Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier): When you sell your house, you have to pay the land transfer tax. When someone in her constituency sells their house, they have to pay a land transfer tax. But when the PCs sell their house across the street, they want to avoid paying a land transfer tax by using the bare trust loophole. This budget is going to close that loophole.

They stand right now to make money off of a tax measure that will be under debate in this very budget. Each and every single one of them are going to benefit from the pecuniary interest that they have into the PC Party of Manitoba.

Will she stand up and say that she's spoken to the Ethics Commissioner and that she will be allowed to debate before she puts a single word on the record about the greatest budget in Manitoba history?

The Speaker: The honourable member for Midland— or, honourable member for Morden-Winkler, sorry.

Autism Support Services Availability Across Manitoba

Mrs. Carrie Hiebert (Morden-Winkler): Families in Manitoba are disappointed and frustrated. They're doing their best to support their children with autism,

but services aren't available close to home. Many cannot afford to travel to Winnipeg for programs through St. Amant.

Every child in Manitoba deserves equal support no matter where they live.

Why is this government leaving children behind? And when will families get a fair access to autism supports in their own communities and across Manitoba?

Hon. Nellie Kennedy (Acting Minister of Families): I'd like to thank the member opposite for that question. Autism is something that our government is incredibly supportive of supports for children and family within this province.

We recognize how challenging it is—we recognize how challenging it is for families who have children who live with autism and we are committed to providing supports and ensuring that families have the support they need in order to have their children live the very best life that they can.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

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

Mrs. Hiebert: Honourable Speaker, families don't need promises or words. They need action.

Right now, rural and urban parents are being told to wait, travel or go without essential autism services, and they can't afford to pay for private supports themselves. This is unacceptable.

Will the minister commit today to a funded plan with clear timelines and to bring autism services to all Manitobans in both rural and urban settings?

MLA Kennedy: As I said previously, autism and supports for autism within our government is very important and it really is something that is a priority for us. *[interjection]*

I know the member opposite is enjoying his sound of his own voice, but on this side of the House, I have the floor, and I would like to speak to the families who have children with autism.

We know that there has been wait-lists for people to receive diagnoses. That's why our Minister of Families (MLA Fontaine) has made it so that pediatricians are now able to provide that service and aren't—families won't be having to wait to receive those diagnoses.

St. Amant is an incredible agency and provide incredible support, and we're so thrilled to be providing \$30 million—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

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

Mrs. Hiebert: Honourable Speaker, the minister points to a non-existent plan or services, and our families know words are simply not the same as real help.

Children are still waiting, parents are still traveling, and many are still going without supports right now. This government's approach is not working.

* (14:10)

Why are so many Manitoban families still being left without the services they need today? When will families see real, measurable access to care in rural and urban Manitoba?

MLA Kennedy: I have a question for members opposite. I was a person who worked within the disability services program for many years during my time with the Department of Families. Seven and a half years of that was under the PC government, and let me tell you, they cared not for people who lived with disabilities. They cut services, they froze services, they froze civil service wages. They didn't care about people who lived with disabilities.

So it is very rich coming from that side of the House that they have any leg to stand on when it comes to disability services. Our government is committed to providing those services to Manitobans. *[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Economic Growth for Manitoba Business Support Concerns—Budget 2026

Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye): Honourable Speaker, with the slowest growing economy in the entire country at only 1.1 per cent growth, Manitobans were looking at this budget for real support.

But here's what the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce had to say about yesterday's budget, and I quote: Manitoba businesses continue to navigate a period of economic uncertainty, and we would have welcomed a stronger focus on the challenges facing employers. And I'll table that. That means no payroll tax relief, no reduction in red tape, no incentives to invest, expand or even hire.

With no real plan to support job creators, how does this government expect to grow Manitoba's economy?

Hon. Jamie Moses (Minister of Business, Mining, Trade and Job Creation): Honourable Speaker, this is a fantastic budget, and I want to thank the minister of financing for speaking to it and providing an optimism to Manitobans for affordability, for better health care, for lower costs and good jobs.

And how do we deliver on that good jobs piece? Well, we're already doing it with nearly 30,000 new jobs created in our province over the last two years, in additional economic development support for—\$10 million for a catalyst fund for Churchill, an 'economic' driver for the future of our province.

On top of that, we're training more people in the skilled trades to work highly in this—high-skilled trade jobs, right here in Manitoba. And additional \$7 million to train apprentices in our province.

That's how we move our economy forward: with more skilled workers, more investment to support industries—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

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

Mr. Narth: Honourable Speaker, after yesterday's budget, we aren't hearing a whole lot of optimism.

But here's something else that the chambers had to say, and I quote: Three quarters of businesses report that economic uncertainty is affecting their hiring, financial planning and investment decisions. At the same time, the increasing cost of doing business remains the greatest barrier to growth.

This government clearly does not understand the economy. Why do they continue to ignore the experience and expertise of those in the business community?

Mr. Moses: Honourable Speaker, we know Manitoba businesses are facing a lot of uncertainty right now—a lot of uncertainty caused by Donald Trump and the folks in The White House. And that's why it's so confusing to hear members opposite thank him for the tariffs. The quote is, I would say thank you to Trump, referring to his tariffs.

Now, what sort of sense does that make when you're talking about Manitoba businesses who are trying to struggle under this uncertainty? Well, here in Manitoba, our government wants to provide certainty and clarity.

What do we do to deliver that? We improve our SBVCTC tax credit; we take the PST off of manufacturing equipment; we create a \$50-million trade

investment growth fund; and we double our Export Support Program to help more businesses diversify to global markets. That's exactly how we move our economy forward for all businesses.

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

Mr. Narth: Honourable Speaker, yesterday, before the budget was delivered, I asked the government where the plan was to make life more affordable and to grow our economy. Well, yesterday, a small-business owner from my constituency reached out, frustrated. After a long day's work, he stopped to buy groceries. His \$109 bill, with this government's so-called tax relief, would have saved him two cents. And I have his crumpled up receipt here to table.

Honourable Speaker, we have proposed tax savings with a plan to increase the personal tax exemption to three—\$30,000, saving Manitobans thousands.

How does this government feel that a 2-cent saving is going to help small businesses—

The Speaker: Member's time is expired.

Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister of Finance): Honourable Speaker, we know that members opposite don't take the affordability challenges Manitobans are facing seriously, especially when it comes to grocery affordability challenges. We are very proud to be doing the work of pulling every single lever we have available to us as government to lower your grocery costs, including starting with the freezing of a one-litre jug of milk.

We're banning predatory pricing in Manitoba so companies can't use your personal information to charge you more for groceries, and now we're taking the PST off all groceries in grocery stores in Manitoba.

They're—did nothing to reduce your costs. They're not concerned about grocery costs. We're going to keep doing the work each and every day.

Community Groups and Municipalities Funding for Programs and Services

Mr. Trevor King (Lakeside): Honourable Speaker, when the municipal funding is adjusted in this budget for inflation, it's actually down by 1 and a half per cent. Now, surely, the minister understands that if funding increases do not keep pace with inflation, the purchasing power of that funding declines, meaning municipalities can buy less with the same dollars.

Will the minister agree that an increase below inflation is, in real terms, a cut?

Hon. Glen Simard (Minister of Municipal and Northern Relations): Well, here we go. Another day, another question. We're on a roll here.

So what I would say is that two is better than zero. Two every year for multiple years is better than zero for six years. So I don't think you need to be an economist to understand that that's a problem.

And, you know, it's funny: when I travel across this great province, every time I walk into a municipal office, they think I'm the golden goose because I'm always coming with my chequebook, building infrastructure in their communities. Whether it be—
[interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Simard: —Deloraine, whether it be Minnedosa, building a vet clinic in the member from Riding Mountain's constituency. We show up; we build.

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

The honourable member for Lakeside, on a supplementary question.

Mr. King: Honourable Speaker, the minister tries to wow us with his humour just like the Premier (Mr. Kinew) does, but I suggest they work on that wow factor.

Honourable Speaker, the government has cut the so-called One Manitoba Growth Revenue Fund and the Water Services Board.

Can the minister explain how cutting a growth fund and core infrastructure supports is supposed to help municipalities grow, or is this simply another example of how this government's saying one thing and doing another?

Mr. Simard: I encourage the MLA for Lakeside to take a walk on that beautiful trail of building in Stonewall and Rockwood. I'd like to table for the House an article entitled, Premier takes his chequebook to Brandon. Because that's what we do: we invest in communities. [interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Simard: And when we are lowering property taxes by 2 per cent by announcing improvements to Andrews Field, the Eastview Landfill Site or paving the parking lot at the Sportsplex, that's real action in communities that make a difference.

Not only does it make a difference for the people who are going to use those facilities, it makes a difference for those seniors who are paying those property taxes. Because that's what we do: we show up.

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

Mr. King: Honourable Speaker, programs like From the Ground Up and Green Team have been cut by approximately 2.7 per cent. And, earlier today, the Premier stood up and claimed that this budget includes billions for the North End Water Pollution Control Centre, yet neither the City of Winnipeg nor the media nor anyone who has actually read this budget can find that funding anywhere.

Now, can the minister confirm that community groups and municipalities will receive less support this year—[interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. King: —and will the Premier table this circled copy of—

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. King: —the budget showing exactly where those billions are, or admit that those claims simply do not exist in this document?

* (14:20)

Mr. Simard: I think it comes down to the fundamental question of who Manitobans trust, and I think we know who they trust by the election result in general election. They put us in the seat, and the thing is is that we know our record; we can campaign on our record.

Can they campaign on theirs? Can they go to communities and say, we stood up against the landfill search; let's do it again. We're not standing up for the poor. We're not standing up for the working class. If you put that offer in front of Manitobans, I think you'll get the same answer every time.

So I'm looking forward to 50 years of NDP government. How about you?

North End Sewage Treatment Plant Funding Inquiry in Budget 2026

MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): Honourable Speaker, despite Winnipeg's North End Sewage Treatment Plant being one of the most critical infrastructure projects in our province, the 2026 budget contributes zero dollars towards the plant.

The North End Sewage Treatment Plant directly impacts not only the cleanliness of water here in Winnipeg, but is essential to reducing environmental impacts and revitalizing freshwater ecosystems, notably Lake Winnipeg and Netley-Libau Marsh, by managing waste water treatment.

Can the government explain why their 2026 budget excludes any commitment to this essential project?

Hon. Glen Simard (Minister of Municipal and Northern Relations): I want to thank the member for that question on NEWPCC. I think that the record is clear: we've stood with the City in building phases one and two and financing them, and we'll continue to do it.

But let's look at the PCs' record. When they wanted to meet to talk about NEWPCC, Mayor Bowman said he wanted to meet with Pallister in person, resolve the dispute, but has been denied a meeting. He said the Province has offered no make-up date even after became clear the premier was vacationing in Costa Rica.

That's their record on NEWPCC. Our record on NEWPCC is continuing the conversations, not only with the municipal government, with the federal government. I don't think we need to go on the record to say how they feel about the federal government and how they love to fight with other levels of government.

We're a collaborative government. We'll work with the mayor to make sure that—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

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

MLA Lamoureux: Honourable Speaker, as the mayor of Winnipeg, Scott Gillingham, shared in this morning's Winnipeg Free Press: The North End Sewage Treatment Plant is critical for the province's economic future. We know that treated and untreated waste water from Winnipeg enters the Red River alongside other sources like agriculture runoff.

This raises serious environmental and public health concerns, because without responsible waste water management, Manitobans risk illness, limited economic growth, growing environmental impacts and challenges to local and provincial industries such as First Nations fishers.

How does this government plan to contribute to this needed infrastructure if not through the budget?

Mr. Simard: Obviously, I'm very encouraged by Mayor Gillingham's talk about growth because it contradicts what the opposition is saying about people's

willingness to come to Manitoba. We're growing. We're growing in the right way.

I'll go over our approach. So far, we've committed \$294 million to NEWPCC. Our government invested \$30 million to the City of Winnipeg through the strategic infrastructure basket to stop cost overruns. And the thing is is that we are an honest broker. We're sitting with the City to make sure that things progress in a way that is suitable for them but also for the Province, because we are managing our books like the Premier (Mr. Kinew) said and demonstrated through great reviews from—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

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

MLA Lamoureux: Honourable Speaker, the North End Sewage Treatment Plant is a piece of infrastructure that is critical to the immediate needs of Manitobans, and essential for economic growth as well as our ecological and environmental stewardship responsibilities. Last year, in Budget 2025, the government committed to contribute \$30 million annually for four years; however, there was no line item for this in yesterday's 2026 budget.

Can the government provide a clear indication if there are any dedicated provincial funds in the budget going towards the North End Sewage Treatment Plant?

Mr. Simard: Listen, this is the largest construction project in Manitoba's history, right? So we have a dedicated strategic infrastructure basket to the City of Winnipeg to the tune of a hundred million a year. And so we continue to invest with our partners to make sure that infrastructure needs are met, not just in Winnipeg but also across the province.

I would also like to thank the member for that question on her last day in this session. I wish you an excellent time away from this House so that you can, hopefully, follow very closely the progress that we are making to make it one Manitoba.

Grocery Food Items Removal of PST

Mrs. Rachelle Schott (Kildonan-River East): Honourable Speaker, Manitobans are telling us loud and clear that groceries cost too much right now. *[interjection]* Oh, are you trying this again? Okay.

Families are working hard doing everything they can—stretch their budgets, and they want to see real action that lowers costs where it matters most.

Can the Minister of Finance (MLA Sala) please tell the House what the Budget 2026 is doing to help families—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Schott:—at the grocery store and put more money in the pockets of yours?

Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier): What a well-positioned question, Honourable Speaker. I was so happy to join the member for Kildonan-River East and all of our colleagues, as well as seniors and Grant Park High School students and everyday Manitobans at the Grant Park Co-op this lunch hour to share the good news that we're taking the tax off of all food and drinks at the grocery store.

We started by freezing the price of milk. We brought more competition to the grocery sector. We are banning predatory pricing—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew:—and starting July 1, there'll be no more tax at the grocery store when you get that rotisserie chicken, when you get that Greek salad and when you get that case of drinks. That means real savings every single time you check out at Co-op. Honourable Speaker, this is good news. It's mom and apple pie, and you know what? You won't have to pay tax on the apple pie, either.

The Speaker: Order.

Agriculture Industry Budget 2026

MLA Jeff Bereza (Portage la Prairie): Agriculture is a key driver of Manitoba's economy, particularly in regions like Portage la Prairie. Yet, this budget provides no clear plan to support growth in our region. Instead, it includes a \$4-million reduction to AgriInsurance.

Global markets remain unstable and producers are facing real pressure.

Manitoba producers play a critical role in feeding this world, so why does this minister choose to leave Manitoba farmers out of this budget?

Hon. Ron Kostyshyn (Minister of Agriculture): Well, I want to thank the member opposite, finally, for an agriculture question somewhat directly or indirectly. But, you know, it's a situation where members opposite really forgot what they had done to the agriculture society for seven and a half years.

And you know what? The fact is—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kostyshyn:—not only many things I'd like to share with members opposite, but the fact, whether it's Crown lands, 20 agriculture offices closed, you ask the people that were affected by that decision, I would gladly entertain the conversation again with members opposite.

But let's look back on history to make it what it is and accept the fact that you guys made life challenging for agriculture—

The Speaker: The member's time has expired.

The time for question period has expired. And I would ask all members to remain in their seats because I have a ruling for the House.

* (14:30)

Speaker's Ruling

The Speaker: Prior to routine proceedings on March 12, 2026, the honourable member for Fort Garry (Mr. Wasyliv) raised a matter of privilege alleging that comments made by the honourable First Minister during oral questions on March 11, 2026, called into question his integrity and were therefore unparliamentary. The member concluded his remarks by moving: "that the matter be referred to a standing committee of this House."

The honourable Government House Leader (MLA Fontaine) spoke to the matter before I took it under advisement.

In order for a matter of privilege to be ruled as *prima facie*, a member must demonstrate that the issue has been raised at the earliest opportunity, while also providing sufficient evidence to support the claim that the—that a *prima facie* case of privilege has been established.

On the condition of timeliness, the member stated that he raised the matter at the earliest opportunity after consulting Hansard and reviewing the authorities. Given that he raised the matter a few hours after Hansard was published that day, I would agree that the member raised the matter at his earliest opportunity.

Regarding the second condition of whether a *prima facie* case was demonstrated, in his submission, the honourable member for Fort Garry asserted that, in oral questions on March 11, 2026, the Premier "made a personal attack on me." The member contended that the Premier's remarks were unparliamentary and should have been ruled out of order. The member also alleged that the comments of the Premier amounted to an obstruction, interference or intimidation of a sitting MLA.

It is important to note here that the basis of the member's allegation—language used in debate—is governed by a practice of this House. Joseph Maingot, in the second edition of *Parliamentary Privilege in Canada*, states on page 14 that allegations of a breach of privilege by a member which amount to complaints about procedures and practices in the House are by their very nature matters of order. He also states on page 254 of the same edition that "language that impugns the integrity of Members would be unparliamentary and a breach of order contrary to the Standing Orders, but not a breach of privilege."

Accordingly, I am ruling that, on this matter, the member did not establish a prima facie case of privilege.

Having said that, the member did touch on a point that I and others have made in the past, which is that some of the behaviour we see from members in this Chamber is not consistent with the standards of a respectful workplace. On this point, I agree with the member. I think Manitobans would like to see more respectful behaviour from the people they have elected to serve them in this place. I would ask all honourable members to reflect on that advice before speaking in this House.

And I thank all members for their attention to this ruling.

PETITIONS

Mr. Obby Khan (Leader of the Official Opposition): Thank you, Honourable—

The Speaker: Oh. Order, please.

The honourable member for Tyndall Park.

Water Rescue Response Services

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Manitoba has one of the highest drowning rates in Canada. Each year, hundreds of lives are lost in lakes, rivers and dams.

(2) At 7:52 p.m. on the night of May 4, 2025, a young man named Devkarn Singh drowned by the Pinawa Dam in Manitoba. The 911 emergency line was called just before 8 p.m.

(3) The RCMP Underwater Recovery Team, the only team authorized and equipped to act, was advised that they would have to wait until sunrise before they could respond.

(4) The RCMP Underwater Recovery Team did not arrive until 10 a.m. the following day, which was devastating news to all involved. Devkarn's body was eventually recovered near 4 p.m.

(5) Devkarn's family has been left to endure a night of unthinkable helplessness, grief and unanswered questions.

(6) This is not just a tragedy, it is a failure of the system.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to conduct an independent investigation into the RCMP's actions in Devkarn Singh's case, examining not just the delay, but also the decision making, communications and systemic failures that contributed to this tragedy.

(2) To urge the provincial government to create a provincial water rescue policy with enforceable standards for water rescue responses, including response time targets, mandatory co-ordination protocols between agencies and consequences for non-compliance; and

(3) To urge the provincial government to establish a dedicated oversight body to audit water rescue operations across the province, which would release annual reports regarding audit findings and enforce the reforms based on data, community needs and lessons from tragedies such as what happened to Devkarn Singh.

This petition has been signed by many Manitobans.

An Honourable Member: Honourable Speaker—or.

The Speaker: The honourable member for Tyndall Park.

MLA Lamoureux: Honourable Speaker, I'd like to ask for leave for a moment of silence in respect to the petition that I just read, as the family members of Devkarn Singh, who drowned on May 4, has joined us today in the gallery.

The Speaker: Is there leave for a moment of silence as requested by the honourable member for Tyndall Park?
[Agreed]

Leave has been granted.

A moment of silence was observed.

The Speaker: Thank you.

MRI Machine for Portage Regional Health Facility

Mr. Khan: I wish to present the following petition.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

* (14:40)

(7) No-wait times for Manitobans to receive an MRI scan is currently six to eight months. Having the MRI machine in the Portage regional health facility will help reduce these wait times for patients and provide better care sooner.

We petition—[interjection]

The Speaker: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition has the floor.

Mr. Khan: Just couldn't hear on top of the Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe) heckling.

(6) Located in close—[interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Khan: Minister wants to heckle and he's continued. Minister of Education wants to heckle now, okay.

The Speaker: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition should stick to reading his petition.

Mr. Khan: All right, well, I don't know where I am.

An Honourable Member: Just start anywhere.

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Khan: I don't know where I am.

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

The Speaker: Order, please.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition does not need to start his petition from the beginning. He can pick up where he left off.

Just for your information, you left off at we petition the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Khan: Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

Honourable Speaker, this petition was signed by Ken Werbashi [phonetic]—

An Honourable Member: Werbiski.

Mr. Khan: —Werbiski, Jerry Jose and Mary Jane Abis [phonetic]—Albis—Mary Jane Albis and many, many other Manitobans.

Mr. Derek Johnson (Official Opposition House Leader): On House business.

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

Mr. Johnson: Honourable Speaker, could you please canvass the House for leave: (1) do not see the clock today until all stages is—of interim supply are completed; and (2) to allow only one interruption of the budget debate this session under rule 35(6).

The Speaker: Is there leave for the two provisions described by the Official Opposition House Leader?

Is there leave? [*Agreed*]

Leave has been granted.

The—back to petitions.

Opposition to Releasing Repeat Offenders

Mr. Jeff Wharton (Red River North): I wish to read the petition to legislation Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

(2) Despite repeated violations of his bail conditions, the offender was free—

The Speaker: Order, please.

I would ask members on both sides of the aisle to please remain quiet while someone is trying to read a petition so that I can hear it and make sure they're reading it properly. If you wish to have a conversation, take it to the loge or somewhere else.

Mr. Wharton: The Red River North member would like to continue. Thank you.

—the streets and ultimately claim Kellie's life. This tragedy was entirely preventable.

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

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

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

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

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

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

(2) To urge the provincial government to lobby the federal government to immediately repeal provisions of the Criminal Code that allow for the continued victimization of law-abiding Manitobans while granting repeat offenders additional rights.

This is signed by Brenda McConnell, Charlie [*phonetic*] Soucy, Peggy Mitchell and many more Manitobans.

Thank you.

Phoenix School

Mrs. Kathleen Cook (Roblin): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

* (14:50)

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

And this petition is signed by Colleen Turney, Emma Filion, Joe Filion and many, many other Manitobans.

Education Property Taxes

Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Provincial government's decision to cancel the Education Property Tax Credit and the property tax offset grant has enabled and encouraged school divisions to introduce massive tax increases.

(2) These massive increases have been felt by all Manitobans and compounded by arbitrary and punitive changes to the education property tax rebate, and those changes have made many Manitobans ineligible to receive the \$1,500 rebate.

(3) Secondary property owners are subject to taxation without representation as they're ineligible to vote for trustees who set the rates; yet, second property owners are still required to pay full education taxes in their division.

(4) Additionally, families can only claim the reduced Education Property Tax Credit on their primary residence.

(5) These increases and the revocation of rebates were done with no consultation, punishing Manitobans who maintain family cabins by tying education taxation to assessed property values.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to remove education funding and taxation from property taxes and find a fair and equitable way to fund education in Manitoba.

This is signed by Andrea Behl, Alan Marks, Harpreet Kulblaski [*phonetic*] and many, many more Manitobans.

MRI Machine for Portage Regional Health Facility

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

And the background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

Mr. Tyler Blashko, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition has been signed by Lorraine Gross, Amanda Hofer, Lorraine Hofer and many, many other fine Manitobans.

Opposition to Releasing Repeat Offenders

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

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

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

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

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

* (15:00)

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

(2) To urge the provincial government to lobby the federal government to immediately repeal provisions of the Criminal Code that allow for the continued victimization of law-abiding Manitobans while granting repeat offenders additional rights.

This is signed by Colleen Pallister, Jim Pallister and many, many more Manitobans.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Programs for Adolescents with Disabilities

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Children with disabilities often require child care beyond the age of 12. Children with disabilities aged 12 to 17 face a gap in publicly available care programs.

(2) The current adolescent-care service model creates undue hardship on caregivers.

(3) While developing children may be entering into extracurricular activities, school clubs or spending time with friends independently, children with disabilities have reduced opportunities for such social and recreational opportunities due to the lack of spaces.

(4) The current self-managed adolescent-care models place additional workloads onto already stressed families, requiring parents to seek all alternative options and prove their need for care.

(5) The current adolescent-care system, as part of overall respite and support available to families, is failing families of children with disabilities, as identified in the Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth's Bridging the Gaps report.

(6) To date, none of the nine recommendations it contains have been completed beyond 50 per cent.

(7) The recommendations in this report touch on many of the issues facing families, with adolescent care being but a small component of their overall needs.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to fully implement recommendations in the Bridging the Gaps report.

(2) To urge the provincial government to immediately implement official policies and procedures that are most respectful and collaborative, which also minimize harm faced by families seeking help from Children's disABILITY Services.

(3) To urge the Minister of Families to arrange for a full review of employment supports provided by Children's disABILITY Services for children with disabilities aged 12 to 17, including direct consultation with impacted families and to explore a full spectrum of options to support families, empowering them to choose solutions that best fit their needs.

This petition has been signed by Brittany Berard, Myra Woodhouse and Loretta Johnston and many, many more Manitobans.

Medical Assistance in Dying

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

These are the reasons for this petition:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

This petition has been signed by Margaret Wiebe, Mary Reimer, Judy Peters and many, many Manitobans.

Funding Crime Cost Mitigation for Small Business

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

* (15:10)

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

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

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

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

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

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

We urge the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition was signed by Tammy Axelsson, Julianna Roberts, Melanie Specula and many, many other fine Manitobans.

Medical Assistance in Dying

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

To the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, these are the reasons for this petition:

(1) Beginning March 17, 2024, a person struggling with mental health as their sole condition may access medical assistance in dying unless Parliament intervenes.

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

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

(4) Legal and medical experts are deeply concerned that permitting Canadians suffering from depression and other mental illnesses to access euthanasia would undermine suicidal prevention efforts and risk

normalizing suicide as a solution for those suffering from mental illness.

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

This petition was signed by René Bogerin [*phonetic*], Lina Parent and Marie Durand and many, many other Manitobans.

Thank you.

Opposition to Releasing Repeat Offenders

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

And the background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

* (15:20)

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

(2) To urge the provincial government to lobby the federal government to immediately repeal provisions of the Criminal Code that allow for the continued victimization of law-abiding Manitobans while granting repeat offenders additional rights.

This petition has been signed by Alex Halabiski, Jordan Grasby, Drew Cassidy and many, many Manitobans.

Thank you, honourable Deputy Speaker.

Provincial Road 210

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

And this petition has been signed by Ken Lachnit, Joel Bourrier, Travis Bourrier and many, many other Manitobans.

The Speaker in the Chair

Opposition to Releasing Repeat Offenders

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

(2) To urge the provincial government to lobby the federal government to immediately repeal provisions of the Criminal Code that allow for the continued victimization of law-abiding Manitobans while granting repeat offenders additional rights.

Honourable Speaker, this petition has been signed by Cindy Martin, Nicole Twist, Elaine Eros and many, many, many other fine Manitobans.

Thank you.

Removal of Federal Carbon Tax

Mrs. Colleen Robbins (Spruce Woods): Honourable Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

* (15:30)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition has been signed by Larry Maguire, Nic Chudley, Sandy Roy and many, many other Manitobans.

MRI Machine for Portage Regional Health Facility

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield-Ritchot): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

* (15:40)

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

Now, this is signed by Daniel Gagnon, Theresa Williams [*phonetic*], Dennis Walker and many other Manitobans.

Provincial Trunk Highway 45

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

These are the reasons for this petition:

(1) Upgrading Provincial Trunk Highway 45 will accelerate economic development as it will enhance connectivity, facilitate efficient transportation and promote economic growth in the region.

(2) Economic development will be further enhanced as improved road infrastructure attracts businesses, encourages investment and creates job opportunities.

(3) Roads meeting the Roads and Transportation Association of Canada, RTAC, standards improve both safety and efficiency, as they can handle heavier loads, reducing the number of trips required for goods transportation.

(4) Safer roads further benefit both commuters and commercial vehicles, minimizing accidents and damage.

(5) Upgrading to RTAC standards ensures resilience to challenges caused by climate change, such as thawing and flooding, which negatively impact road conditions.

(6) Efficient transportation networks contribute to Manitoba's economic competitiveness, as upgraded roads support interprovincial and international goods movement, benefiting both trade and commerce.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure to take the necessary steps to upgrade Provincial Trunk Highway 45 from Russell to Provincial Trunk Highway 10 to meet RTAC standards.

This petition has been signed by Annette Mansell, Dennis Juba, Rose Kastryniuk [*phonetic*] and many other Manitobans.

Education Property Taxes

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly, and the background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The provincial government's decision to cancel the Education Property Tax Credit and the property tax offset grant has enabled and encouraged school divisions to introduce massive tax increases.

(2) These massive increases have been felt by all Manitobans and compounded by arbitrary and punitive changes to the education property tax rebate, and those changes have made many Manitobans ineligible to receive the \$1,500 rebate.

(3) Secondary property owners are subject to taxation without representation as they are ineligible to vote for trustees who set the rates; yet, second property owners are still required to pay full education taxes in their division.

(4) Additionally, families can only claim the reduced Education Property Tax Credit on their primary residence.

(5) These increases and the revocation of rebates were done with no consultation, punishing Manitobans who maintain family cabins by tying education taxation to assessed property values.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to remove education funding and taxation from property taxes and find a fair and equitable way to fund education in Manitoba.

This petition is signed by Sally Lawler, Peggy Anson, Sharon Kreutzer and many, many more fine Manitobans.

The Speaker: No further petitions?

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

The Speaker: Then, orders of the day.

Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Can you please interrupt budget debate and call all stages of Bill 52, interim supply.

The Speaker: It's been announced that we will now call Bill 52, interim supply. So the House will resolve into Committee of Supply to consider the resolutions respecting the Interim Supply bill.

Will the Deputy Speaker please take the Chair.

* (15:50)

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Interim Supply

The Chairperson (Tyler Blashko): Will the Committee of Supply please come to order.

We have before us for our consideration four resolutions respecting the Interim Supply bill.

The first resolution pertaining to part A, Operating Expenditures for Interim Supply, reads as follows:

RESOLVED that there be granted to His Majesty for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2027, a sum not exceeding \$15,636,200,000, being 75 per cent of the total amount to be voted for the purposes set out in part A, Operation Expenditures, of those Estimates.

Does the Minister of Finance have any opening—*[interjection]*

Apologies. It is part A, Operating Expenditures, of those Estimates.

Does the Minister of Finance have any opening comments?

Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister of Finance): Today we are considering the Interim Supply motions to provide for the funding of the government until the budget and appropriation act, 2026, are passed.

As members likely know well, Interim Supply keeps the lights on and government operating on April 1, which is the beginning of the new fiscal year. I'm happy to answer any questions that might arise before we proceed to the consideration of the resolutions, but I'll emphasize here that this is Interim Supply that the government is requesting of this Assembly.

I look forward to the substantive debate to come on our main budget, because it's a budget that we were exceedingly proud to deliver yesterday, a budget focused on creating good jobs, lower costs and better health care.

Thanks, honourable Chairperson.

The Chairperson: Does the official opposition critic have any opening remarks?

Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland): We understand the importance of Interim Supply, as it is critical to ensuring our civil service and public sector gets paid and that government can continue its day-to-day operations during this period in between budgets.

With that said, what is concerning is this NDP government's inability to properly budget and plan for the challenges facing Manitoba. We are in the middle of a trade war, there are geopolitical challenges that are impacting cost of living and Manitoba is currently in a cost-of-living crisis. What we saw last year, and since Interim Supply is an extension of last year's budget, this government projecting a deficit of \$800 million, which then shot up to \$1.6 billion, this minister then added a \$200-million special warrant with no accountability to these Chambers or to

Manitobans and no emergency debate as to being able to scrutinize where those dollars are going and how that \$200-million special warrant is being spent.

In fact, this is this government's second time adding a special warrant without that level of scrutiny to Manitoba taxpayers, and this government has added, since they've come into office, \$1 billion in unbudgeted special warrants.

However, since this Interim Supply is an extension of last year's budgets, Manitobans should be concerned with the current budget that this minister presented yesterday. We have seen that they cannot stick to their deficit projections; they've missed every single deficit projection that they have ever made for themselves, and not by a little but by a lot; double what they had projected last year. They rely on rosy economic projections and they rely on Manitoba Hydro having significant revenue increases, and that did not work out so well for this minister last year when Manitoba Hydro lost money. They cut the emergency expenditure budget last year; we didn't see any major increases into that this year, so clearly this is a government that has the inability to plan for situations that may arise within this province.

With that said, I look forward to moving ahead with the process today and the bill that will be in front of us.

Thank you.

The Chairperson: The floor is open for questions.

Is the committee ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

The Chairperson: Shall the resolution pass? *[Agreed]*

The second resolution pertaining to part B, Capital Investments for Interim Supply, reads as follows:

RESOLVED that there be granted to His Majesty for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2027, a sum not exceeding \$865,751,000, being 90 per cent of the total amount to be voted for the purposes set out in part B, Capital Investments of those Estimates.

Does the Minister of Finance (Mr. Sala) have any opening comments?

Does the official opposition critic have any opening comments?

No. The floor is open for questions.

Seeing no questions, is the committee ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

The Chairperson: Shall the resolution pass? *[Agreed]*

The third resolution pertaining to part C, Loans and Guarantees for Interim Supply, reads as follows:

RESOLVED that there be granted to His Majesty for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2027, a sum not exceeding \$835,810,000, being 90 per cent of the total amount to be voted for the purposes set out in part C, Loans and Guarantees of those Estimates.

Does the Minister of Finance have any opening comments?

Does the official opposition critic have any opening comments?

The floor is open for questions.

Seeing no questions, is the committee ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

The Chairperson: Shall the resolution pass? *[Agreed]*

The fourth resolution pertaining to part D, Capital Investments by Other Reporting Entities for Interim Supply, reads as follows:

RESOLVED that there be granted to His Majesty for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2027, a sum not exceeding \$1,924,889,000, being 90 per cent of the total amount to be voted for the purposes set out in part D, Capital Investments by Other Reporting Entities of those Estimates.

Does the Minister of Finance have any opening comments?

Does the official opposition critic have any opening comments?

The floor is open for questions.

And seeing no questions, is the committee ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

The Chairperson: Shall the resolution pass? *[Agreed]*

That concludes the business before the committee.

Committee rise.

Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

The Speaker: The honourable Chairperson of the Committee of Supply.

Mr. Tyler Blashko (Chairperson): Honourable Speaker, the Committee of Supply has considered and adopted four resolutions respecting Interim Supply.

I move, seconded by the honourable member for Burrows (Mr. Brar), that the report of the committee be received.

The Speaker: My mistake. I should have recognized you as the member for Lagimodière.

So, the honourable member for Lagimodière.

Committee Report

Mr. Tyler Blashko (Chairperson): Honourable Speaker, the Committee of Supply has considered and adopted four resolutions respecting Interim Supply.

I move, seconded by the honourable member for Burrows, that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

* (16:00)

Interim Supply Motion

Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister of Finance): I move, seconded by the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Kostyshyn), that there be granted to His Majesty on account of Certain Expenditures of the Public Service for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2027, out of the Consolidated Fund, the sums of \$15,636,200,000, being 75 per cent of the total amount to be voted as set out in part A, Operating Expenditures, of those Estimates; \$865,751,000, being 90 per cent of the total amount to be voted as set out in part B, Capital Investment, of those Estimates; \$835,810,000, being 90 per cent of the total amount to be voted as set out in part C, Loans and Guarantees, of those Estimates; and \$1,924,889,000, being 90 per cent of the total amount to be voted as set out in part D, Capital Investments by Other Reporting Entities, of those entities—or those Estimates.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

The Speaker: It's been moved by the honourable Minister of Finance, seconded by the honourable Minister of Agriculture, that there be granted to His Majesty, on account of Certain Expenditures of the Public Service for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2027, out of the Consolidated Fund, the sums of \$15,636,200,000 being 75 per cent—

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

The Speaker: Dispense?

Can't dispense, sorry.

So being—\$15,636,200,000, being 75 per cent of the total amount to be voted as set out in part A, Operating Expenditures of those Estimates; \$865,751,000, being 90 per cent of the total amount to be voted as set out in part B, Capital Investments, of those Estimates; \$835,810,000, being 90 per cent of the total amount to be voted as set out in part C, Loans and Guarantees, of those Estimates; 1 billion, 924 million, 899 million being 90 per cent—just being \$1,924,889,000, being 90 per cent of the total amount to be voted as set out in part D, Capital Investments by Other Reporting Entities of those Estimates.

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

The motion is accordingly passed.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 52—The Interim Appropriation Act, 2026

Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister of Finance): I move, seconded by the Minister of Education, that Bill 52, The Interim Appropriation Act, 2026; Loi de 2026 portant affectation anticipée de crédits, be now read a first time and be ordered for second reading immediately.

Motion agreed to.

SECOND READINGS

Bill 52—The Interim Appropriation Act, 2026

Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister of Finance): I move, seconded by the Minister of Education, that Bill 52, The Interim Appropriation Act, 2026; Loi de 2026 portant affectation anticipée de crédits, be now read a second time and be referred to Committee of the Whole.

Motion presented.

MLA Sala: Honourable Speaker, The Interim Appropriation Act, 2026, provides interim spending authority for the '26-27 fiscal year, pending approval of the 2026 appropriation act, which we commonly refer to as the budget.

As members of this Assembly likely know well, under our parliamentary system, the 2025-26 appropriations end on March 31, 2026. This bill provides for interim appropriations that allows government to continue operating, keeping the lights on, programs running, staff getting paid, hospitals running on April 1 of this year.

This interim appropriations act is effectively to bridge funding until such time as the main business of

the Committee of Supply is concluded and the main appropriation act is passed. Or, in even simpler terms, this is bridge funding until such time as the main budget is debated and passed. We're very proud of the budget and looking forward to debating the main budget at length in the not too distant future.

Honourable Speaker, on to the task at hand here. The amount of interim operating expenditure authority requested is \$15,636,200,000. This authority represents 75 per cent of the sums included in the part A, Operating Expenditures, of the 2026-27 Estimates of Expenditure.

The amount of interim capital investment spending authority in part B requested is \$865,751,000. This authority represents 90 per cent of the sums included in the part B, Capital Investments, of the 2026-27 Estimates of Expenditure.

The amount of loans and loan guarantee expenditure authority requested is \$835,810,000. This authority represents 90 per cent of the sums included in part C, Loans and Guarantees, of the '26-27 Estimates of Expenditure.

And the amount of expenditure authority for capital investments provided as loans to other reporting organizations is \$1,924,889,000. This authority represents 90 per cent of the sums included in part D, Other Reporting Entities Capital Investment, in the '26-27 Estimates of Expenditure.

The amount of expenditures that are authorized for developing or acquiring inventory for subsequent years is \$4 million, the amount of payments for long-term liabilities is \$167,883,000 and the amount of future commitment authority included in this Interim Supply bill is \$1,500,000,000.

This authority provides for the commitment of expenditures to ensure the completion of projects or fulfilling contracts initiated but not completed during the fiscal year ending March 31, 2027.

When this bill reaches the committee stage, I can provide members with a section-by-section explanation of the bill.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Questions

The Speaker: So a question period of up to 15 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed to the minister by any member in the following sequence: first question by the official opposition critic or designate; subsequent questions asked by

critics or designates from other recognized opposition parties; subsequent questions asked by each independent member; remaining questions to be asked by any opposition members. And no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

* (16:10)

The floor is open for questions.

Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland): I want to ask the minister a little bit about the history of Interim Supply and where he's getting his numbers and percentages for this year's requests.

Can the minister please explain how he has gone from moving from 35 per cent of part A, Appropriations in 2017 for operating to what is now 75 per cent part A, Appropriation in 2024, and again in 2025, and now he's again asking for 75 per cent.

So how did he move from 35 per cent of what was asked for under the previous PC government in 2017 to now being 75 per cent under his government?

Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister of Finance): Honourable Speaker, I'm surprised to know that the member doesn't recognize that, under her party, they requested 75 per cent in 2019-20, in 2021 and in 2020-21, '21-22 and again in '22-23. Today's request is consistent with the approaches taken over the last many years, as well as the approach taken by the former government.

Mrs. Stone: Can the minister please explain how he has gone from, in 2017, a request for part A, Operating being \$4.7 billion to quadrupling that now as over \$15 billion that he's presenting today?

MLA Sala: Well, again, the last year before the members opposite left government, it was at \$12,000,687,000, so we see that the numbers represent the type of growth you'd expect that's consistent with growth of an economy, growth of the province. And again, today's requests are no different than what the members opposite brought forward for the many years they were in government.

Mrs. Stone: Can the minister please explain how this interim appropriations reflects and adjusts for the wild swings we saw within his deficit in this past year's budget, being an \$800-million deficit projection to \$1.6 billion and then adding a \$200-million unbudgeted special warrant?

MLA Sala: Well, these requests are reflective of this budget which we just brought forward, which is, of course, a very good budget focused on good jobs, lower costs and better health care. We're making the

investments that Manitobans want to make after years of cuts under the members opposite.

Mrs. Stone: This bill that we're speaking to today is an extension of last year's budget, and so it's a very fair question to ask: Does this interim supply appropriations bill adjust for the wild swings that we saw in the deficit that this minister doubled from \$800 million to \$1.6 billion, while also adding a \$200-million unbudgeted special warrant?

MLA Sala: The bill reflects 75 per cent of the total amount of part A, Operating Expenditures that were included in the 2026 Estimates of Expenditure.

So, again, what we're bringing forward here today is consistent with what we've done in the last two years and consistent with what the members opposite did during their final few years in government.

We hope they'll support this so we can ensure that we can keep the lights on and ensure that employees across the province can get paid.

Mrs. Stone: Can the minister please tell us how much this year's appropriations have increased over last year's appropriations and the 2023 appropriation?

MLA Sala: Last year's part A request was \$14,708,000,000. This year is \$15,636,000,000, again reflecting that slow and steady growth and investment that we're making in supporting Manitobans after years of cuts under the PCs.

Mrs. Stone: Can the minister please tell the House how this interim supply appropriations that he's asking for will reflect Hydro revenues?

MLA Sala: Well, again, we're planning for a year that is a return to normal. We've seen Hydro bring forward a net income level that I think is around \$140 million for this year. Hoping that we get good water and, again, this is just a reflection of the important work that we're doing in bringing forward investments to support Manitobans after many years of cuts from the members opposite.

Mrs. Stone: Sounds like a lot of hope on Manitoba Hydro and rain this summer in order to—for this minister to balance the budget or have any sort of revenue growth within this province.

So can the minister please tell the House how much he is borrowing for Manitoba Hydro outside of this interim appropriations bill?

MLA Sala: Our part D borrowing request for '26-27 and what we're looking for, for support on today, is a total of \$1,924,889,000. And that reflects—much of

which is reflective of Hydro's capital requirements for the upcoming year.

Mrs. Stone: I thank the minister for that answer. Following up on that, how much interest will be paid this year on Manitoba Hydro's borrowing?

MLA Sala: That is not a piece of information that I have here today, Honourable Speaker.

But we do know that after years of the PCs failing to ensure that Manitobans would have the energy we need in the 2030s, we know that Manitobans are very excited and supportive of our government's work to build new energy in partnership with the First Nations and the Métis nation here in Manitoba so we can ensure that we can power homes and our businesses. And that's after years of negligence and a complete lack of vision from the members opposite in ensuring that we have access to the power we need and that we keep it affordable and reliable.

Mrs. Stone: Manitoba Hydro is over \$25 billion in debt and is a highly indebted and highly leveraged Crown corporation. Will the minister commit to tabling that question that I asked earlier about how much interest is being paid on Manitoba Hydro's borrowing?

MLA Sala: What I am happy to speak to is that when we came into government and we inherited a \$2-billion deficit from the members opposite, 9.9 cents on every of dollar of revenue generated was going towards paying down debt servicing. This year, with the work we've done in reducing the deficit, we're now down to 8.9 cents of every dollar going towards debt servicing. And that's added \$270 million of new spending that we can use to support health care and investments in education.

That's the good work that this team is doing that shows our fiscally sustainable approach. Very different from what the members opposite left Manitobans to deal with.

Mrs. Stone: Honourable Speaker, since this NDP came into office, debt-servicing costs have now become the third largest budget expenditure. They have actually grown Manitoba's debt with their back-to-back billion-dollar deficits since they have come into office.

With that said, I asked a very simple question. I'm looking for a yes or no response from this minister. Will this minister tomorrow table how much interest is being paid on Manitoba Hydro's borrowing?

MLA Sala: Again, we're happy to speak to the important work that we're doing here in reducing the level

of debt servicing tied to the huge deficit that the members opposite left us before they left government. That \$2-billion hole they left us was also paired with 9.9 cents on every dollar going towards paying down debt servicing.

And now we're really proud that we've done that important work of not only reducing the deficit but also building strong relationships with investors to ensure that we can pay less on our borrowing.

And ultimately this year, with this budget, that 9.9 cents from every dollar of revenue going to debt servicing has now been reduced. And we've got 270 million more dollars to put to work. That's a reflection of the good work that this team is doing in putting forward a sustainable path for the province.

Mrs. Stone: Since this minister failed to be accountable to Manitoba taxpayers, I will ask him now. Earlier this year, he added a \$200-million unbudgeted special warrant onto Manitoba's books. Manitoba and this Chamber did not get the opportunity to ask questions and to scrutinize where that was going and how it was going to be spent.

So if the minister could tell the House today where that \$200 million was being spent so that Manitoba taxpayers—it reflects Manitoba taxpayers' accountability to Manitobans.

MLA Sala: Honourable Speaker, I'll note for the record that the members opposite used special warrants repeatedly. So they used that instrument multiple times while they were in government.

In terms of the special warrant that's being referred to, the vast majority of those dollars went to support investments in health care, which, of course, we know for years the amount of damage that the members opposite did, starting with cutting three ERs in Winnipeg. That created untold chaos and harm for Manitoban families. Their many cuts to getting rid of nurses and beyond, closing clinics across the province.

* (16:20)

So we had a lot of catching up to do. That \$200-million investment, the vast majority of that, was used to invest in health care and, again, continuing to do the good work led by our Minister for Health to ensure Manitobans can get the care they need when they need it.

Mrs. Stone: Honourable Speaker, in fact, under the PC government, this was during the pandemic, and they had an emergency debate when it came to those special warrants.

So I'll ask the minister: He has now added \$1 billion, since coming into office, on unbudgeted special warrants. Does he think it's appropriate to add those unbudgeted special warrants without scrutiny and accountability to these Chambers? Does he think that that's appropriate and the right thing for Manitoba tax dollars?

MLA Sala: We are absolutely committed to ensuring that we bring full transparency to the decisions that we bring forward as a government, and that's very different than what Manitobans saw under the members opposite. We can look at what they did after the last election concluded where their former leader and members of their team were actually found to be guilty of being in breach by the Ethics Commissioner of the rules and ultimately broke the law.

That's the kind of lack of transparency that Manitobans are concerned about. They know they can trust our team and they know they can't trust the members opposite.

Mrs. Stone: Will this Minister commit to bringing any unbudgeted special warrants to this House for proper debate of transparency and accountability this year and into the future should he choose to add a special warrant? Yes or no question. Will we have an emergency debate on those special warrants?

MLA Sala: We are committed to continuing to ensure we invest and move us forward when it comes to better health care, good jobs and lower costs, again, something the members opposite would not do for years: make the investments needed to move Manitoba forward. Instead, cut health care, cut education, cut child care, cut municipalities, cut across the board.

We're doing a lot of catching up. Very proud of the work that we've done and very proud of the budget we released yesterday.

Mrs. Stone: Honourable Speaker, we're talking about this government and this budget and \$1 billion in unbudgeted special warrants that didn't have the proper scrutiny that they should have within these Chambers.

It's a very simple yes or no question to this minister: Will he commit to bringing any future unbudgeted special warrants to these Chambers for an emergency debate, and the scrutinization and accountability that they deserve, to Manitobans with their tax dollars?

MLA Sala: We are accountable to Manitobans for their tax dollars. And, again, that's very different than what we saw for years under the members opposite.

We're proud to be bringing forward transparency. In fact, our government had the first clean audit opinion for the province since 2017. And I'll ask, Honourable Speaker, you note the year that the last time we had a clean audit was just before the PCs took office.

So we're doing that good work of cleaning up the books after years of the mess that they left us to clean up. Looking forward to more clean audit opinions going forward. And Manitobans know, and the evidence is there for them to see, when it comes to managing the books, the clean audit opinion and the good work we're doing speaks for itself.

The Speaker: No further questions?

Then is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

The Speaker: So the question before the House is the second reading of Bill 52.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

The Speaker: My mistake. The floor should be open for debate before we pass the question.

Debate

The Speaker: So the floor is open for debate.

Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland): I know we recognize every year this is a non-standard process when it comes to Interim Supply and appropriation.

So I do rise today to speak to Interim Supply, and let us be very clear what this is and what it is about. As I mentioned in my comments during Committee of Supply, we do understand the importance of Interim Supply to ensure that our civil service and our public-sector workers get paid and that government can continue its day-to-day operations as we go through this interim period between budgets.

So Interim Supply is not new or a correction but essentially an extension of last year's budget, and what we know is that last year's budget failed Manitobans and failed Manitoba families. And it's unfortunate that this government continues to fail in its budget planning.

So, what concerns me today, Honourable Speaker, as we've seen, last year's budget versus year's budget, there really isn't much of a difference, and with yesterday's 2026 budget this government has chosen not to fix those failures, but, in fact, has doubled down on them.

So, again, Honourable Speaker, this is an extension of last year's budget. What we saw last year is, in the midst of an affordability crisis, and we're experiencing it even more so this year, is this government failed to provide any meaningful affordability relief to Manitobans. They had no plan to make life more affordable for Manitoba families.

As we saw again this year, where is the relief? Where is the urgency, and where is the recognition that families are struggling right now, not next year, not in 2027, but right now, and all we've seen over the past couple of years with this NDP's budget is delay and delay on affordability relief. They did a measly \$100 increase last year to the education property tax that did not cover increase in school division taxes that have skyrocketed by 20 per cent under this NDP government. They didn't learn their lesson last year; they're not learning this lesson this year. They've now again increased \$100, which doesn't even account for the increases Winnipeg families and Manitoba families will be seeing this year.

Tax bills come out in a month, two months, within the city of Winnipeg and in the next few months across the province. And so there's really no affordability relief that are helping Manitobans, and the NDP just created another band-aid solution, not actually fixing the problem that Winnipeg families are seeing with these school tax division hikes by not funding education adequately and by not coming up with a fair and sustainable and equitable education funding model.

But what have we seen today? Over 50 per cent of Manitobans are reporting that they are within \$200 of insolvency. Manitobans are struggling to put healthy food on the table for their families: beef, chicken, lettuce, carrots, vegetables. They're struggling to pay their hydro heating bills. Under this minister's watch, hydro rates are soaring, over the next few years up to 12 per cent, and Manitobans are struggling to make ends meet at the end of the month. And the reality is that Manitobans are struggling because of the unbearable tax burden that this NDP government has created.

In last year's budget we saw this NDP government remove indexation from income taxes. What that means is it pushes more Manitobans into higher tax brackets, so any sort of increases to wages that Manitobans would see, they would not actually feel in their pockets because they are now paying higher income taxes as a result of being in a higher tax bracket.

And it was very disappointing to see yesterday that this minister did not bring indexation back. He did

not increase the basic personal amount and basic personal exemption that actually puts more money into the pockets of Manitoba families; that's money that they choose in how they spend.

Every family's budget is different. Some families are struggling to afford healthy food at the grocery store. Other families are struggling to decide on how they might pay for a kid going to camp in the summer or put their kid into sports. Every family is different, and by increasing the basic personal exemption and basic personal amount, you're telling Manitobans: You know where you need money; you know best how to spend your hard-earned dollars. And what this NDP government is doing by removing indexation is they're taking money away; they're taking money away from Manitobans, \$82 million last year alone, by ending indexation.

The NDP have driven up education property taxes, as I have already mentioned, 20 per cent property tax increase across Manitoba since last year alone. Up to 43 per cent increases in school divisions in Winnipeg since this NDP came into office. That is not sustainable.

And this NDP government thinks that just adding \$100 is going to help solve the problem. Well, perhaps, since this minister didn't learn his lesson last year here, clearly hasn't learned it again this year, perhaps the minister forgot that property values are rising and there's another general assessment next year.

Manitobans saw it last year when their property tax bills came and they were shocked. They were shocked at the amount that they were having to spend on school taxes and education property taxes. And this minister knew it.

* (16:30)

We brought forward property tax bills. We spoke about it in the House. We were receiving calls from their constituents complaining that they weren't doing anything about this increasing problem.

And as we know, Honourable Speaker, Interim Supply is an extension of last year's budget. And it's this comparison as to why this NDP government has not learned their lessons. When we look at last year's budget to this year's budget, they are not providing the tax relief that Manitobans need on the skyrocketing education property taxes.

And now through Interim Supply, they are continuing with that failed approach. So let's talk about the reality that Manitobans are facing. As we know,

Stats Canada report shows that property taxes have increased by 20 per cent since last year. Some school divisions have increased education taxes by up to 43 per cent, just since this NDP government took office. Over 50 per cent of Manitobans are reporting—they continue to report—that they are within \$200 of insolvency. They are within \$200 of not being able to pay off their debt and their credit cards. That is not manageable, that is not sustainable, and this shows that this is a government that has completely lost control of the tax situation in Manitoba with no plan to improve it or solve the underlying problems that will continue to exist into the future.

Families don't live in 2027, families are living right now. And the reality right now, where their property tax bills are going through the roof, and this NDP government is taking away money from them by not indexing and not increasing the basic personal amount. So any sort of savings that they announced yesterday aren't even going to come close to what Manitobans need right now. We heard it over and over again in last year's budget and again this year's budget: disappointing; Chamber of Commerce, disappointed; City of Winnipeg, disappointed; families disappointed; Manitobans disappointed.

This NDP government did not respond to the moment and the crisis that Manitobans are currently living in. And this is not new, Honourable Speaker. Since Interim Supply is an extension from last year's budget to this year, we have seen that this NDP government is not learning their lessons. They failed to plan last year. They projected an \$800-million deficit and exploded it to \$1.6 billion. They then added another \$200 million to that through an unbudgeted special warrant that did not have the accountability and the scrutiny it deserved by coming to these Chambers.

In the past, unbudgeted special warrants have had emergency debate. I asked this minister during question period if he would commit to bringing any future special warrants to this House so that they can receive the proper scrutiny and accountability that they deserve, and he refused to answer that question. I then asked again, to give him another chance, and he refused to provide a response.

So this is what we're seeing with this NDP government. We saw it last year. We saw it again this year. Last year—two years ago, they added an \$800-million special warrant. This year, they added a \$200-million special warrant, all unbudgeted; \$1 billion in poor planning by this NDP government. And that's what

this shows—and that's what this Interim Supply bill shows today, is this NDP's inability to properly budget and plan.

They're basing their revenue off of Manitoba Hydro, which we saw did not work well for them last year as Manitoba Hydro lost money. If anything, in Manitoba, we recognize that Manitoba goes through floods and we go through droughts, and we don't know what's going to happen. And certainly, this Finance Minister does not know what's going to happen.

So this comes down to poor planning and being so overly dependent on Manitoba Hydro's revenues, and, quite frankly, the federal transfers, with Manitoba being the second highest in receiving of equalization payments. There should be no deficit at all with \$5 billion in equalization payments that this Finance Minister received this year. Other provinces didn't get that, yet we're competing against other provinces for that investment and attraction.

We are so far away from being a have province underneath this NDP government. They're pushing away investment and they're pushing tax dollars out of our province. They're not growing the economy. My colleague, the MLA from La Vérendrye, has spoken very eloquently about this. Manitoba has the lowest economic growth rate in the entire country, just 1.1 per cent. But yet, this NDP government, two years in a row, have failed to even mention growing the economy in the budget.

Last year, they completely missed the moment in last year's budget as Manitoba was facing a trade war. In fact, I sat down at committee—Hydro committee, with the Minister of Finance, and asked how a trade war with the US would impact Manitoba Hydro's revenues. And what did he say? We're not going to talk in hypotheticals.

We were already living in that reality, Honourable Speaker. You could have asked every single business in Manitoba if that was an adequate response, and it was not.

You ask Manitobans this year what they're seeing—well, they're in an affordability crisis; we're in a geopolitical crisis with challenges going on across the world that have skyrocketed our fuel prices to numbers we have never—or, I certainly have never seen in my recent memory; and Manitobans are still living through a trade war.

But yet, there are no supports for businesses. There was no—very—any support last year for businesses in last year's budget. And, again, there's no

supports this year. And we heard it very clearly from the chambers of commerce.

So, anyways, Honourable Speaker, with that being said, recognize with this being Interim Supply bill and we recognize that civil service and the public sector does need to get paid.

I would urge the minister in the future to bring any sort of unbudgeted special warrants to the Legislative Assembly and to these Chambers so they can receive the proper scrutiny and accountability and transparency that Manitoba taxpayer—tax dollars deserve and Manitoba taxpayers deserve.

And, quite frankly, I would urge the minister to actually step into reality and budget and plan for today's challenges because Manitoba families certainly did see that yesterday.

The Speaker: No other members wishing to speak in debate?

Then, is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

The Speaker: The question before the House is second reading of Bill 52, The Interim Appropriation Act, 2026.

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

The motion is accordingly passed.

The House will now resolve into Committee of the Whole to consider and report on Bill 52, The Interim Appropriation Act, 2026, for concurrence and third reading.

Honourable Deputy Speaker, please take the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill 52—The Interim Appropriation Act, 2026

The Chairperson (Tyler Blashko): Will the Committee of the Whole please come to order.

We will now consider Bill 52, The Interim Appropriation Act, 2026.

Does the Honourable Minister of Finance have an opening statement?

Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister of Finance): No.

The Chairperson: Does the official opposition critic have an opening statement?

We shall now proceed to consider the bill clause by clause. The title and enacting clause are postponed until all other clauses have been considered.

Clause 1—pass; clause 2—pass; clause 3—pass; clause 4—pass; clause 5—pass; clause 6—pass; clause 7—pass; enacting clause—pass; title—pass. Bill be reported.

That concludes the business before the committee.

Committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

* (16:40)

IN SESSION

Committee Report

Mr. Tyler Blashko (Chairperson): Honourable Speaker, the Committee of the Whole has considered Bill 52, The Interim Appropriation Act, 2026, and reports the same without amendment.

I move, seconded by the honourable member for Radisson (MLA Dela Cruz), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS

Bill 52—The Interim Appropriation Act, 2026

Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister of Finance): I move, seconded by the Minister for Sport, Culture, Heritage and Tourism, that Bill 52, The Interim Appropriation Act, 2026; Loi de 2026 portant affectation anticipée de crédits, reported from the Committee of the Whole, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

The Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to—the floor is open for debate.

Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye): Thank you for the opportunity to speak to interim budget and put some words on the record at this very important stage of the budget process.

We know the importance that this process plays in continuing to keep the wheels of government moving. It's a process that's actually an overlay from other levels of government as well. We see it—a municipal level of government and we know the importance that it plays. It's an opportunity to also hold the government accountable for the actions that they take in a time that doesn't hold a whole lot of accountability to the taxpayer.

This is a time when the government is able to carry forward the budget that they had from the previous year to continue spending in the same similar ways. Government holds responsibility to act during

this time as responsibly as possible so that expenses aren't made on—borne to the backs of the Manitoba taxpayer or taxpayers within, you know, the Canadian taxpayer at the federal level or the municipal taxpayers at the municipal level.

We want to highlight the concerns that we have: the direction that we saw of the previous budget, the concerns that we see in the current budget as well. The increase in taxation for Manitobans, the increase in government spending and in government spending in areas that does not support and grow our Manitoba economy.

So we see the portions of and percentage of the budget that is allowed in—we're being asked to be allowed in Interim Supply. And we need to ask, as representatives of Manitobans—but Manitobans need to hold their government accountable to this process. We've asked in the past to have more budget accountability to Manitobans. We've brought forward legislation that would allow Manitobans to have that opportunity. And it hasn't seemed as though this government has been interested in that, in a process along those lines. So we feel that it's important at this stage of the process that Manitobans have the opportunity.

You know, the budget that we had seen last year that this would be a continuation of for that interim process has increased taxation on Manitobans. We see an affordability crisis across our province. We see that now Manitobans that are needing to keep up with inflation—and inflation exists everywhere we turn. We see inflation on household items like groceries and the items that are necessary to run a household. We see that in agriculture input products. We see it—inflation in the goods that are necessary to create the products that Manitoba businesses and manufacturers create.

And Manitobans are looking for a plan. They're looking for a change in direction. As Manitobans try to keep up, like I say, with inflationary pressures, they're faced with income tax bracket creep. We see that the more you make, the more you're punished and the more that you pay. We need a plan that makes life more affordable.

And the previous year's budget did not do that and we've seen the results. We see—we've seen the lack of planning has resulted in increased deficit, an over-projection of revenues as we're seeing in this year's budget as well. And it brings great skepticism to the ability of minimizing the deficit for our province.

We saw a wildfire season that was the blame of a great deal of additional expenditures, and we've seen

a drought that has contributed to that wildfire season as a contributing factor to the reduction in the revenue for Manitoba Hydro. But it was last year through the budget process, and it started through the interim budget process, that we had asked this minister—you know, now the minister's going on his third budget—we'd asked him some serious questions regarding the projections of revenue for the government and how that would translate into an economic—the economic position of our province and also the deficit position of our finances.

* (16:50)

And if you remember, Honourable Speaker, last year, this minister brought forward a two-part budget, a budget with a contingency plan, a contingency plan for the uncertainties of a trade war between us and our neighbours to the south.

You know, I think Manitobans, at face value, were able to buy into that. They were able to accept the uncertainty that was facing Canada, knowing—and in turn Manitoba—knowing our dependency on trade with the United States. Definitely constituents of mine in La Vérendrye in the southeast corner of the province that depend on trade, whether it be for manufacturing or agriculture production, they know that.

So I think me as a representative and us as the PC caucus gave the benefit of the doubt to the Finance Minister to come up with a plan that would support that. Unfortunately, we didn't really see a clear plan and a clear path forward in that contingency budget. But what we did do is we did accept that the government needed some rein in budgeting for uncertainty, and that's why, you know, the questions were tailored around what ifs and what would they do and where would that support actually lie. We didn't see a whole lot of answers regarding that, but, again, we had some skepticism on the projections of revenue and where exactly the money would come from if—if—we needed to fall back on a contingency budget because of trade uncertainties.

We didn't see any immediate trade disruption with our neighbours to the south. You know, we saw some temporary uncertainty, but for the most part, products that are produced in Manitoba and traded with United States were honoured under the CUSMA agreement. But yet what changed is we saw a deficit in alignment with the contingency budget for a trade war. Well, we didn't have a trade war, but this government took that as an opportunity to not stay accountable to Manitobans and tax and spend according to the contingency budget.

Similar questions during that time were if you're going to increase the spending, increase the debt that Manitobans need to bear, where would that money go and how would it support industry? How would it support those manufacturers? How would it support those producers that are dependent on trade? And we didn't get the answer. You know, basically it was the Minister of Finance (MLA Sala), also the minister for trade, job creation and economic development, saying that they basically—they need the free rein to act quickly.

Again, we gave them the benefit of the doubt and the allowance to act quickly and act on behalf of the best interests of our economy. What that had turned into was the contingency spending, but we did not see the support for the industries that were used as the excuse. That drove up the deficit of our province. That drove up spending in areas that did not support economic growth in our province.

So, unfortunately, we've got the worst of the worst. You know, I've said before that we lead the country in two things. We lead the country in food inflation and tax inflation. I don't know if that's something that the Finance Minister or the minister responsible for economic development should really be writing home about, but that's the reality of our economic position in this province, and that's all on the backs of Manitobans who have now needed to take on the increased inflationary debt of this budget and this economy.

And the Finance Minister is coming to us and Manitobans and saying that we need more of it. And next year is even going to be better, but we're unsure of how it will be better when we see the exact same concerns.

We raised the question before the wildfire season as to why funding would be cut to emergency measures, and we were told, well, you know, emergency measures, it doesn't really matter; we—it's something that doesn't often happen, these large-scale emergencies and the money's going to be there. Well, the money's going to fall out of the sky. We don't really need to budget money for certain things because we just make it available. And then, unfortunately, we saw an absolutely devastating wildfire season and drought-like conditions that came along with it.

So I think Manitobans now, when they see that there's been a—you know, a similar cut and same budget for emergency measures, the same type of projection for revenue from Manitoba Hydro and no additional spending for emergency measures, we have similar questions as to where would that money come from and why was it now acceptable that we spent at that

rate for a drought that wasn't to be expected, but yet we've got similar snowfall levels, similar level–water levels in the rivers that supply our generation stations, but yet we are budgeting a very similar revenue.

So, Honourable Speaker, these are the reasons why we have concerns with the budget planning of this Province, and this is why we stand up to highlight this important process of the interim budget process. Because this is where the government should remain accountable to the taxpayers of Manitoba, and it shouldn't be taken for granted that Manitobans will allow the government to continue to tax and spend without accountability for the dollars that they ask in good faith from Manitobans.

So with that, Honourable Speaker, thank you for the opportunity.

The Speaker: Other members wishing to debate?

Seeing none, then, is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

The Speaker: So the question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 52, The Interim Appropriation Act, 2026.

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

* (17:00)

The motion is accordingly passed.

We will now prepare the House for royal assent.

ROYAL ASSENT

Sergeant-at-Arms (Dave Shuttleworth): Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor.

Her Honour Anita R. Neville, Lieutenant Governor of the Province of Manitoba, having entered the House and being seated on the throne, The Honourable Speaker addressed Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor in the following words:

The Speaker: The Legislative Assembly of Manitoba asks Your Honour to accept the following bill:

* (17:10)

Clerk Assistant (Ms. Vanessa Gregg):

Bill 52 – The Interim Appropriation Act, 2026;
Loi de 2026 portant affectation anticipée de crédits

Clerk (Mr. Rick Yarish): In His Majesty's name, the Lieutenant Governor thanks the Legislative Assembly and assents to this bill.

Her Honour was then pleased to retire.

O Canada was sung.

God Save the King was sung.

* * *

The Speaker: Order, please.

The hour being past 5 o'clock, this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 tomorrow.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, March 25, 2026

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are also available on the Internet at the following address:

<http://www.manitoba.ca/legislature/hansard/hansard.html>