



Second 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
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
JACKSON, Grant	Spruce Woods	PC
JOHNSON, Derek	Interlake-Gimli	PC
KENNEDY, Nellie, Hon.	Assiniboia	NDP
KHAN, Obby	Fort Whyte	PC
KINEW, Wab, Hon.	Fort Rouge	NDP
KING, Trevor	Lakeside	PC
KOSTYSHYN, Ron, Hon.	Dauphin	NDP
LAGASSÉ, Bob	Dawson Trail	PC
LAMOUREUX, Cindy	Tyndall Park	Lib.
LATHLIN, Amanda	The Pas-Kameesak	NDP
LINDSEY, Tom, Hon.	Flin Flon	NDP
LOISELLE, Robert	St. Boniface	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Malaya, Hon.	Notre Dame	NDP
MOROZ, Mike, Hon.	River Heights	NDP
MOSES, Jamie, Hon.	St. Vital	NDP
MOYES, Mike, Hon.	Riel	NDP
NARTH, Konrad	La Vérendrye	PC
NAYLOR, Lisa, Hon.	Wolseley	NDP
NESBITT, Greg	Riding Mountain	PC
OXENHAM, Logan	Kirkfield Park	NDP
PANKRATZ, David	Waverley	NDP
PERCHOTTE, Richard	Selkirk	PC
PIWNIUK, Doyle	Turtle Mountain	PC
REDHEAD, Eric	Thompson	NDP
SALA, Adrien, Hon.	St. James	NDP
SANDHU, Mintu, Hon.	The Maples	NDP
SCHMIDT, Tracy, Hon.	Rossmere	NDP
SCHOTT, Rachelle	Kildonan-River East	NDP
SCHULER, Ron	Springfield-Ritchot	PC
SIMARD, Glen, Hon.	Brandon East	NDP
SMITH, Bernadette, Hon.	Point Douglas	NDP
STONE, Lauren	Midland	PC
WASYLIW, Mark	Fort Garry	Ind.
WHARTON, Jeff	Red River North	PC
WIEBE, Matt, Hon.	Concordia	NDP
WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC
<i>Vacant</i>	Transcona	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, March 19, 2025

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

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

Please be seated.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

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

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**River Heights Faith Council**

Hon. Mike Moroz (Minister of Innovation and New Technology): Honourable Speaker, it's my pleasure to rise in this House to recognize the incredible work of the River Heights faith council. Since being elected, members of churches and synagogues in my constituency have given their time to come together to tackle the challenges we face, not only in River Heights, but across our city and province.

These faith locations share a commitment to social justice and equity, not only for their own members, but for the community at large. By bringing multiple perspectives to our quarterly meetings, and then to subcommittee meetings on affordable housing, food security and child care in between, I've been

amazed by the level of interest in problem solving brought forward by these community champions.

In an era where we often seem more—we seem more divided than ever, the faith council brings forward a shared vision for a healthier, more vibrant and connected community. I'm honoured to play a small role in convening these key grassroots leaders as they bring their ideas forward to our government.

Many of the members of the council have expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to build relationships and learn from other faith locations facing similar challenges. While my role as MLA has been to bring these groups together, I'm incredibly excited to see what these community conversations will lead to.

I look forward to continuing our work with these groups, and I ask for leave for their names to be entered into Hansard.

Thank you.

Adas Yeshurun Herzlia, Congregation Etz Chayim, Congregation Shaarey Zedek, First Unitarian Universalist Church of Winnipeg, Harrow United Church, Holy Family Ukrainian Catholic Church, Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, St. Aidan's Anglican Church, St. Andrew's River Heights United Church, St. George's Anglican Church, St. Ignatius Parish, St. Mark's Lutheran Church, St. Peter's Anglican Church, Temple Shalom, The Saul and Claribel Simkin Centre, Westworth United Church

Genesis House

Mrs. Carrie Hiebert (Morden-Winkler): Today, we honour the incredible staff and volunteers at Genesis House Women's Shelter located in the constituency of Morden-Winkler. This safe haven for women just celebrated their 40th anniversary this past year.

Genesis House provides emergency shelter and crisis services to women of—all over Manitoba experiencing gender-based violence. It's not a secret that Manitoba has one of the highest percentages of intimate partner violence in the country.

Women from all walks of life find themselves in situations beyond their control and we need to remove the stigma that goes along with asking and needing for help.

Through counselling, advocacy and guidance, Genesis House empowers women to rebuild their lives. Their tireless efforts make a profound difference every day, and we are deeply grateful for their ongoing contribution to the community and to the province.

Their dedicated team offers not only emergency shelter but also essential support services like counselling, legacy—legal advocacy and skill build—skilled working—building workshops.

This holistic approach empowers women to rebuild their lives, offering them the strength and tools they need to regain independence. The compassion and—sorry—the compassionate and culturally sensitive environment they foster enjoy—is for every woman who walks through their doors, receives the support and care necessary to heal and thrive.

I have my own personal journey, and I needed to use a shelter services when I was a young mother. It set me on a path to my own healing.

We need to get the message out that it's not good—that it's okay for—to ask for help.

In Manitoba, intimate partner violence affects one in three women, a staggering statistic that highlights the urgent need for support and intervention. We must continue to work together to raise awareness and that provide the resources that are needed.

I want to thank the wonderful staff and volunteers at Genesis House. Your dedication, compassion and tireless efforts do not go unnoticed.

Please join me in honouring: Angela Braun, executive director; Angela [*phonetic*] Ross, program manager; Madison Fehr, housing outreach co-ordinator; and Denise Thiessen, board chair.

Thank you.

Filipino Health-Care Aide Association of Manitoba

MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): I rise this afternoon to introduce a relatively new association here in Manitoba. Today we are joined by five members of the Filipino health-care aide association of Manitoba.

They are a wonderful group of individuals who have made it their mission to ensure that health-care workers here in our province have a voice that is heard by bridging gaps in many areas.

Members of the group work in collaboration with health-care facilities, departments, union representatives and other groups in scenarios where, for

example, language could be a barrier or rights of workers could be better or further explained.

Honourable Speaker, as we know, health care in our province is in a dire situation, as it has been for several years now. Changes need to happen for improvements and better patient outcomes. They need to happen up north, rurally and here in Winnipeg, and they need to factor in what health-care workers are sharing.

I believe it is important that we empower groups such as the Filipino health-care aide association of Manitoba as they will provide ideas and advice to improve our health-care system and ensure people are being respected and action is being taken.

Now, to learn more about the group, everyone is invited to attend their first anniversary gala on May 17 at PCCM, the Philippine-Canadian Centre of Manitoba, located at 737 Keewatin St., right in the heart of Tyndall Park.

In closing, I would like to introduce those who have joined us here today in the gallery. We have Tita Edda Pangilinan, Tita Malda Macalino, Tita Digna Arcedo, Ate Charmaine Hernandez and Ate Stacy Balding.

And I ask that my colleagues join me in recognizing them for the important work that they do.

* (13:40)

Randy and Joyska Tkachyk

Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye): It always brings me great pleasure to recognize the outstanding residents of La Vérendrye. Just recently, Sundown farmers, Randy and Joyska Tkachyk, who we have with us today, have won the Manitoba watershed association's Seine Rat Roseau Watershed District Award for regenerative agriculture practices.

Randy and Joyska have been practising regenerative agriculture for 15 years largely due to their passion for responsible farming and their eagerness to protect our environment.

I have known Randy my entire life and he has forever been open to new and innovative ways of responsibly farming the land and caring for his livestock.

The Tkachyk farm is a third-generation farm that was established in 1907 and boasts about 1,200 acres with 80 rotational grazing paddocks, ranging in size from two to 25 acres, used to raise cow calf pairs. Cattle are placed on fresh grass every three to five days during the summer and bale graze in the

winter, which allows for them to fertilize a patch of new land and minimize their tractor use.

You can see Randy's passion when he explains how rotational grazing helps soil health by improving soil biology, organic matter and carbon sequestration. Randy and Joyska have tremendous appreciation of the land and livestock that have provided their livelihood for generations, and this award is a terrific example of that.

I encourage everyone who is interested in learning more about the Tkachyk farm and regenerative agriculture to follow Randy on their YouTube channel, called Life on a Manitoba Farm.

Join me in congratulating Randy and Joyska, who we have here today.

Vincent Massey Trojans Hockey Team

Mr. Mark Wasyliv (Fort Garry): Honourable Speaker, today, I'm proud to rise in the House and recognize the Vincent Massey Trojans hockey team, who join us in the gallery after an absolutely historic season.

This team started the year strong, winning the Husky Classic tournament in October. They then had the incredible opportunity to represent their league in Anaheim, California, at the Thanksgiving Day classic, showcasing Manitoba talent on the international stage.

Throughout the season, the Trojans proved themselves as a dominant force, boasting the best goal differential in the league and demonstrating their resilience with four thrilling overtime victories. But it was the playoffs where they truly made history.

The Trojans went undefeated in the post-season, securing their first-ever high school championship in Vincent Massey history. And just this Monday, they claimed the provincial championship, earning a hard-fought 3-2 victory over the River East Kodiaks; a rare and remarkable feat to win both the city and provincial titles in the same year.

This victory is only the second provincial title in school history. The Trojans achieved this incredible season with only five grade 12 players, meaning this young and talented team will be a powerhouse next year as well.

Today we celebrate the dedication, skill and teamwork of these student athletes. Their commitment to excellence has brought pride not only to Vincent Massey Collegiate but to the entire Fort Garry community.

I invite all members to join me in celebrating these players and coaches of the Vincent Massey 2025 provincial championship team, and I ask that the team roster be included in Hansard.

Will Bader, Adam Blair, Colby Bru, Luca Buoncore, Braxten Cockell, Aiden Dilay, Nathan Dyck, Rhett Forbes, Karst Gruener, Trevor Johnstone, Carter Kaczmarz, Sam Kinnear, Emmett Kraft, Ben Penner, Kyle Peters, Colton Roberts, Gavin Savage, Theo Sie, Aapo Tuominen.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: Prior to preceding to oral questions we have some more guests seated in the public gallery. From Maples Met School, 30 students under the direction of Sara Germain, and they're from the constituency of the honourable member for The Maples, the honourable Minister of Public Service Delivery (MLA Sandhu).

We welcome you here today.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Transcona By-election Results Candidate and Volunteer Appreciation

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Leader of the Official Opposition): I'd like to give a big shout-out today to Mr. Shawn Nason and his wife Jen and their family for competing and putting their name forward to try to represent Transcona under the PC banner.

I'd like to thank all the volunteers who came out in addition to all of the voters and constituents of Transcona who came out to vote and participate in their democratic rights. And at this time as well, I would like to also extend a congratulations to the NDP candidate, Shannon Corbett, on her victory last night and look forward to greeting her in this Chamber in the next couple weeks.

Thanks, Honourable Speaker.

Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier): I want to take this opportunity to congratulate the Vincent Massey hockey team on being able to lift that cup in this amazing Chamber. Congrats, everybody.

And I also want to say welcome to the students from Maples Met and I hope that you feel like this is your building, the people's building. I celebrate both of you. Still got to say, I'm a Kelvin fan for life.

When it comes to the people of Transcona, a great honour. An amazing person was elected yesterday. Congratulations to the new MLA for Transcona, who will soon take her seat in this amazing Chamber.

We're so proud that the people invested their trust in our team to keep fixing health care and keep standing up to Donald Trump.

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

Crime and Public Safety Release of Repeat Offenders

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Leader of the Official Opposition): Honourable Speaker, the Premier said multiple times, there is no need to wait for other levels of government to take action when it comes to public safety.

But what have we seen? Just this morning, arson is up, crime is up, sex offenders are being released, drug traffickers are being released, pedophiles are being released.

What's next, Honourable Speaker? Robbery? Possession of a weapon? And a failure potentially to comply, not just once but twice, while attacking another innocent person with a weapon?

So I ask the Premier, he says his Justice Minister is doing a great job—doing a great job at releasing criminals?

Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier): That's why they lost in Transcona yesterday and it's why they're going to continue losing. They talk down to you, the people of Manitoba. They insult your intelligence.

Everybody knows that it's judges and the judiciary who run the justice system. The thing that we do here with the Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe) leading is we invest in law enforcement.

So I would ask you, the people of Manitoba, what do you think makes this city safer, the PCs who cut 50 members of the Winnipeg Police Service? Or this Minister of Justice, who has added 36 new police officers to the streets since we took office?

But at the same time, we're not just tough on crime; we're tough on the causes of crime. That's why we're investing in recreation; we're investing in education; we're addressing the needs in the community to keep you safe for generations to come.

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

Mr. Ewasko: Honourable Speaker, these are not my words; they're his. He said he would fix it, and he hasn't. He's failed.

Crime is up. Arson is up. People are feeling less safe today than they were 18 months ago, Honourable Speaker.

March 18, Brandon police received a call for a male walking on 21st Street wearing a mask, dressed in black, with a machete in his hand. He also had possession of a long-handled spade modified to be a weapon. He was also charged for possession of a weapon from a previous incident on March 15. We thank the Brandon Police Service for their work in arresting this dangerous criminal.

But what was the Minister of Justice's response on the 15th? You let him go. When he was charged again only three days later, what was the Minister of Justice's response? Let him go.

* (13:50)

So when can victims expect this Premier to stand to his word, make—do some action, instead of just adjusting his tie and smiling for the camera—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Mr. Kinew: All the students here, you know you're losing an argument when you go personal, right? And you just saw that. I see the head nods in the gallery.

Here are the facts: this Minister of Justice banned the sale of machetes to young people in Manitoba. You know what happened as a result? Walmart took them off the shelves nationwide. So not only is this minister making things safer in Manitoba, he's making it safer right across Canada.

The members opposite, you know, where were they yesterday in Transcona? Well, they weren't talking to the people. In fact, they were having a fundraiser in—[interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: —west Winnipeg, the complete opposite end of town.

Again, they don't want to talk to the people in a real, straightforward fashion. They want to have a little insular club where they can keep telling themselves that if they keep repeating the mistakes of the past, everything's going to be okay.

Well, they can keep doing that. We're going to keep—

The Speaker: The member's time has expired.

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

Removal of Interprovincial Trade Barriers Economic Benefit for Manitobans

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Leader of the Official Opposition): Honourable Speaker, just last week, a 15-year-old stabbed a man—just last week. Nobody's buying anything that this Premier is selling.

Trump's on-again, off-again tariffs and disrespectful language has created an unprecedented wave of support for Canadian products. Manitobans want to shop Canadian and shop local, whether it's in Hamiota or Halifax. Interprovincial trade barriers and regulations remain an obstacle. Their removal would support Canadian consumers and companies.

Can the Premier table any analysis on the economic benefits of internal trade for Manitobans?

Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier): I invite the member to stick around for tomorrow when we table the budget that's going to be full of great economic news for the people of Manitoba.

Now I guess we know what went—they were doing instead of campaigning in Transcona yesterday: huddled together comparing notes; I think we've got to be tougher on Trump tomorrow. Because for the people watching in the gallery who weren't here yesterday, you know what he was doing yesterday? Please, Mr. Premier, take it easy on Donald Trump. Don't say anything mean about the American President while he's attacking our economy, while he's attacking our jobs.

You know what? I won't buy any—[interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: —lessons from you today when you were begging me yesterday to take it easy on Trump.

I say that respectfully through you, the Chair.

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

Mr. Ewasko: Once again, Manitobans watching, people in the gallery are watching how this behaviour of this Premier is absolutely unbecoming of a premier to represent us, not only in Manitoba but across the world, Honourable Speaker.

The federal Transport and Internal Trade Minister has stated that interprovincial trade barriers could be wiped out in 30 days. Unfortunately, Honourable Speaker, that was many, many months ago. President Trump's irrational behaviour and messaging will continue negatively impacting our economy, and

Manitobans want local shopping options. They want Canadian options.

This Premier is getting in the way of entrepreneurs' success right here at home.

When can Manitobans expect free trade in Canada, Honourable Speaker?

Mr. Kinew: I want to invite people right across the province to come down to your building, the people's building, take a selfie out front of the amazing, huge, giant Canadian flag, post it on social media and let's build up that Canadian pride. [interjection]

I can't believe that the PCs are heckling while I'm talking about how great Canada is. How far that party has fallen. Shame on you. We stand up for Canada; you're heckling somebody who's talking about Canadian pride.

When it comes to supporting our economy, we've got an amazing shop local campaign going on. Our minister of trade, who is over my right shoulder, later this week will be meeting with his colleagues from every province and territory and the federal government, and you know what he's going to do? He's going to do even more great work to stand up for business here.

So here's the thing: this party on this side of the House, we put in the work.

You know what they do? They complain.

When there's—

The Speaker: The member's time has expired.

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

Mr. Ewasko: As the weeks go on, Honourable Speaker, we will point out how similar our Premier of Manitoba is to the President, Donald Trump.

The NDP called the New West Partnership—[interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Ewasko: —bogus. The Premier even urged the Manitoba government to walk away from the New West Partnership.

But since the MLA for Fort Rouge has come into power, he's changed his tune.

What's not changed is the Premier's resistance to free trade.

The premiers are meeting with the Prime Minister Friday.

Will the Premier commit Manitoba to immediately fast-tracking the removal and alignment of internal rules and regulations as part of that call, or will he just sit there, listening to his music?

Mr. Kinew: Well, you know, I'll be listening to my Kendrick Lamar, thinking about the PCs, saying, they not like us.

Then I'll skip a—forward to another track by Kendrick, and you know what the words are to that one: don't tell lies about me and I won't tell the truth about you.

So here's the thing about the members opposite: we stand up for business; we stand up for you and health care; we stand up for rural; we stand up for people inside the city—every step of the way complain, complain, complain.

The only barriers we're knocking down are the PC barriers that stand in the way of Manitoba's future success.

Come back for the budget tomorrow. Great news on health care, great news on jobs, great news for Manitoba's future.

Removal of Interprovincial Trade Barriers Need for Legislation to Address

Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland): Honourable Speaker, the reality is, is the NDP has had months to come up with a solid trade strategy. Businesses and stakeholders across the province had said that this NDP government is not moving fast enough. Other provinces and other jurisdictions are well ahead of Manitoba when it comes to a solid trade strategy.

So will this minister stand up and commit to bringing forward legislation to break down interprovincial trade barriers.

Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister of Finance): Honourable Speaker, this team is fighting against those Trump tariffs, and that's very different from what we're hearing from the members opposite, some of which have expressed support for those same tariffs.

We brought in, right out of gate, tax deferrals to support businesses with better cash flow. We've invested in—ensuring we're standing up a Washington trade office to make sure Manitoba's voice is represented at the tables where it needs to be represented. We're standing up a US trade advisory council that's providing us with great insights daily from industry

and labour, making sure we're up to speed on what we need to know so we can keep fighting for Manitobans. We're doing the work.

And, again, that's very opposite and very different from what we've seen from the members opposite, who seem to be supporting Donald Trump and his tariff measures.

In fact, one of the individuals running to be the leader of the members opposite is fighting to support those tariffs and has expressed his support for their engagement—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

The honourable member for Midland, on a supplementary question.

Credential Recognition to Address Skill Shortage

Mrs. Stone: Honourable Speaker, it was a very simple question as to whether legislation is going to be brought forward that reflects other legislation across the country to remove interprovincial trade barriers.

Fixing labour and skill shortages in the province of Manitoba is key to supporting businesses here in this province. Nova Scotia and other provinces are moving forward with legislation to break down these trade barriers and to recognize equivalency for licences and certifications.

Will this minister commit to also recognizing equivalency for licensing and certification regimes here in Manitoba?

MLA Sala: Honourable Speaker, this team is on team Canada. And I know our minister got it right. Our minister responsible for Trade is doing incredible work, working with colleagues across the country to work together to break down interprovincial trade barriers. Of course, our Premier (Mr. Kinew) is also leading that work and building those relationships across the country.

Our team is fighting on team Canada. We're fighting for Manitobans, we're fighting for jobs and we're going to keep doing that work.

And we've got a lot more exciting things to say tomorrow when we table our budget, which is going to be a budget that's going to focus on fighting for jobs, fighting for health care, fighting for affordability.

We stand on the side of team Canada.

* (14:00)

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

Canadian Energy Independence Support for East-West Pipeline

Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland): Honourable Speaker, if this government is truly team Canada, then they will have no problem saying yes to this next question.

Leaders in Canada have stood up and supported energy projects built on national self-reliance. Premiers Moe and Smith have been vocal on this. Premier Houston is calling on Quebec to embrace a team Canada approach.

Last week, I asked this Premier (Mr. Kinew) if he would also commit to supporting east-west pipelines. I did not get an answer.

So I will ask him again, a very simple yes or no question: Will the Premier commit to supporting and approving all east-west energy pipelines for energy independence here in Canada?

Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister of Finance): On this side of the House, we're getting it done when it comes to energy. We released our affordable energy plan where we committed to developing 600 megawatts of new wind energy in partnership with First Nations.

Now, the members opposite have a lot to answer for, Honourable Speaker. Again, someone running to be their leader celebrated an interference in our sovereignty. Let's let that resonate for a second. What members on the opposite side of the House stand with that member who made those comments? Who on that side of the House stands—actually stands on team Canada? Manitobans are confused. Whose team are they on?

Are they fighting for Manitobans, or are they fighting for Donald Trump?

Education Property Tax Increase Impact on East St. Paul Homeowners

Mr. Grant Jackson (Spruce Woods): The municipality of East St. Paul has confirmed that the River East Transcona School Division's notice of tax requirements for 2025 is increasing school-based property taxes by 25.75 per cent on homeowners in that municipality this year. I will table confirmation of that for the House.

How does the Minister of Education feel that a 25 per cent increase is acceptable for homeowners in East St. Paul?

Hon. Tracy Schmidt (Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning): Well, since we're talking about the River East Trans School Division, Honourable Speaker, what I'd like to say first is the only thing better than a new school in Devonshire Park is a New Democrat in Transcona.

We are bringing relief to the—Manitobans when it comes to affordability, thanks to the great work of our Minister of Finance and the Homeowners Affordability Tax Credit, which we know, despite what the member wants to get up here and say and put misinformation on the record, we know that the vast majority of Manitobans, including the vast majority of folks that live in River East Transcona School Division, are going to see a reduction in their school property taxes, thanks to the Homeowners Affordability Tax Credit.

Thank goodness—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

The honourable member for Spruce Woods, on a supplementary question.

Mr. Jackson: For the record, Honourable Speaker, the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning just called a letter, on official letterhead from the rural municipality of East St. Paul, signed by their chief administrative officer, as misinformation.

I would encourage the minister to read the letter and then reflect on this document that I will also table, which say that the gross levy going up on River East Transcona School Division residents living in East St. Paul is going up by almost \$1,000 this year—a \$1,000 increase—and this is based on the average home value, which is higher than qualifies for their \$1,500 tax rebate. So this is a \$1,000 increase on municipal property taxes.

How—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

MLA Schmidt: Manitobans know who they can trust when it comes to education, and that's the Manitoba NDP.

Just yesterday, Honourable Speaker, we elected yet another educator to this Legislative Assembly to join the team of many educators that we have elected that Manitobans have sent here because Manitobans know that the Manitoba NDP understand education. The people of Manitoba know that it's the Manitoba NDP that have finally ended the freezes and the cuts

under the Tories and that they have reliable and predictable funding, thanks to our government.

Not only that, Honourable Speaker, we are building schools, we are hiring teachers—more than 630 teachers in only our first year—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

The honourable member for Spruce Woods, on a final supplementary question.

Mr. Jackson: The only thing that this minister has accomplished as education is the largest tax increase for school properties in the history of the city of Winnipeg. That's what this minister's largest accomplishment is: \$100 million more this year out of the pockets of Winnipeg families, and now a 25 per cent increase on the hard-working families of East St. Paul.

Will this minister apologize and increase funding in tomorrow's budget so that these school divisions can reduce these tax hikes and keep this money in the pockets of hard-working middle class Winnipeg families?

MLA Schmidt: The truth of the matter is, that on this side of the House—and you're going to see more details tomorrow in Budget 2025, which is a great budget—on this side of the House we are investing in kids, and that is because every child matters. We're going to continue to work with school divisions, including River East Transcona and divisions all across the province, to make sure that kids in this province are receiving the education that they need.

We believe in investing in kids. That is our plan on education. What was their plan on education? Defund and division. In fact, the front-runner in the PC leadership race is out there spreading lies and division, trying to convince Manitobans that there's pornography in Manitoban schools.

Honourable Speaker, if there's pornography in Manitoba schools, I will walk down there and remove it tomorrow.

The Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Safe Consumption Site in Point Douglas Community Safety Concerns

Mr. Wayne Balcaen (Brandon West): This week, the minister of addictions said in reference to the planned NDP public injection site that, quote, safety and security are our No. 1 priority.

Our Lady of Lourdes Church, which is located near the planned public injection site, recently took

steps to surround themselves with chain link fencing, topped by barbed wire as a security measure. I have the pictures to table for the House. The minister can't even protect the churches in her constituency, but now she's saying that the residents need to trust her.

Clearly, safety and security are nothing more than talking points for the minister.

Why should the residents trust this MLA to protect them when she hasn't done so to date?

Hon. Bernadette Smith (Minister of Housing, Addictions and Homelessness): And safety, security is our No. 1 concern on this side of the House. We've been working with the Winnipeg police. Enforcement is something that we are very concerned about; that's why under our fine Justice Minister we've hired 36 new officers. Under that former government they were firing police officers.

We're going to continue to meet with folks. We're going to continue to listen to their concerns. We have community wellness workers that are going to be working outside in and around. We also are working with Downtown Community Safety Partnership, something the members opposite never did when they were in government.

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

Mr. Balcaen: I think the Winnipeg Police Service would differ with this—that opinion. Safety and security is our No. 1 priority: empty words from this minister of addictions. Safety and security of local residents is so far down the list of priorities for this minister that it barely even registers, Honourable Speaker. The minister couldn't even be bothered to give the Winnipeg Police Service a heads-up.

To quote the WPS at the meeting, quote: The plan gets developed in response to the consultations and feedback provided, and so far we haven't been privy to this other than Tuesday.

For someone allegedly so concerned about security and safety, why did the minister fail to invite the Winnipeg Police Service until two days before the January 30 meeting?

Ms. Smith: And I can assure that member that the police have been at the table from day one. We've been working with them. We've been collaborating with them. We've been working with the City. We've—the mayor has even been at the table.

So I can assure that member I've been meeting with the mayor. Mayor was at—in this House a couple of days ago, along with superintendents. We've been talking about safety and security in and around the site. Wherever that lands, that is going to be our No. 1 priority.

They're on board; we're on board. They need to get on board.

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

* (14:10)

Mr. Balcaen: Honourable Speaker, local residents don't trust this minister of addictions. They stated unequivocally at the January 30 meeting that the minister of addictions was not representing them. Instead of representing her constituents, she chose to represent her boss.

For many residents, this is a safety issue for them and their children. But the minister made it clear that safety was not a topic she was prepared to discuss.

Is this the future of Point Douglas under the NDP: chain-link fences and razor wire?

The Speaker: Just before the member rises to answer, I'd remind all members, when speaking about a member, to use their constituency name or their proper ministerial title.

The honourable minister of addictions, homelessness—[interjection] Now I've got to do it right.

Ms. Smith: Under their leadership, they watched people die of overdoses. These are people. These are Manitobans. These are someone's loved ones.

On this side of the House, we are going to support these folks. We're going to make sure that they get the support that they need to get off of substance uses.

We are working with the Winnipeg police. Safety and security is our number one concern. We will have wellness workers. Wherever this site lands, we will have amped up more police service in and around. They have assured us that that will happen, because they are just as concerned as we are. So safety and security in and around.

So that member needs to get on board and help save Manitobans' lives.

Post-Secondary Institutions Equitable Funding Concerns

Mr. Richard Perchotte (Selkirk): Honourable Speaker, the NDP has no darn plan when it comes to funding our many post-secondary institutions throughout Manitoba.

When I met with the student leaders at the University of Winnipeg, they highlighted the high tuition, lack of resources and chronic underfunding at their institution. The University of Winnipeg is facing a multimillion-dollar deficit, program cuts and layoffs because this NDP government refuses to fund them fairly and equitably.

The minister, in today's Winnipeg Free Press, dismissed the university's urgent call for equitable funding to be in line with the University of Manitoba and Brandon University.

When will this minister finally commit to fixing this unfair funding model?

Hon. Renée Cable (Minister of Advanced Education and Training): Honourable Speaker, it is a privilege to get up any day to talk about post-secondary, because in the last two years, funding to the U of W has increased by 22.6 per cent, \$14.5 million.

Members opposite took the wrong approach to post-secondary. They didn't talk to anybody at post-secondaries. In fact, year over year over year, they froze and cut funding to post-secondaries.

We have rebuilt that relationship. We are working on a long-term sustainable plan for post-secondary. And I will take no answers—questions—any advice from the member opposite on post-secondary. [interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

The honourable member for Selkirk on a supplementary question.

Mr. Perchotte: The NDP has no darn plan. The NDP should provide equitable multi-year funding for post-secondary institutions.

We hear that some students at the University of Manitoba are relying on music artist Jelly Roll to help pay off their student loans. This shines a light on the fiscal crisis facing Manitoba students under this NDP government. And I quote US singer at one of his recent concerts, I quote: I tell you what—you don't got any student loans no more. I'm going to pay them off. Unquote.

Is this minister and her NDP government embarrassed that Manitoba students have to rely on the charity of Americans instead of adequate funding and support from their own government?

MLA Cable: Honourable Speaker, while I didn't have the privilege of attending that concert, I've heard from the member from Point Douglas that it was awesome. I want to congratulate those two students for catching the attention of Jelly Roll. That's pretty amazing.

And I want to just point out to the House that student loans in Manitoba continue to be interest-free. We have enhanced Manitoba student bursary initiatives. We've provided additional supports for Indigenous scholars. And we will continue to work to make sure that post-secondary education in Manitoba is accessible, affordable and open to all Manitoba students.

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

Mr. Perchotte: Again, Honourable Speaker, the NDP has no darn plan, plain and simple.

Institutions are chronically underfunded, hiring freezes are in place and international students are not coming to study in Manitoba, all because—a failed NDP government and inaction with the changing post-secondary landscape.

Tuition has gotten so out of control under the NDP that Manitobans will need to look south to music artists to bail them out. The Premier (Mr. Kinew) and member for Fort Rouge is just not up to the job of keeping higher education affordable for Manitoba youths.

I ask the Premier and his minister: Do they have a made-in-Manitoba solution when it comes to post-secondary education in Manitoba?

MLA Cable: Honourable Speaker, I am proud to get up every day to talk about the great things happening in post-secondary in Manitoba. We have great working relationships with all of our institutions and we are welcoming more students than ever to our post-secondary institutions.

I want to take the member for a walk down memory lane here. So when the folks on that side of the House, where we know how they got there, were in power, there was extended times of freezes and cuts.

Dr. Lynda Balneaves, who is now the associate dean of research of College of Nursing, has to say this about the PCs' push to illegally freeze wages: If we're

not able to attract our instructors and lecturers to come to a university setting, if they are choosing—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

University of Winnipeg Funding Challenges

MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): Last month, I met with executives and student representatives from the University of Winnipeg Students' Association to discuss their concerns regarding the lack of funding from this provincial government.

During our meeting, it was shared with me the unique challenges that the University of Winnipeg is facing. One example is the significant amount of their budget that has to be spent on security to keep their students safe.

Does this government feel it is equitable that the amount of money they are being forced to spend on security detracts from the money that could be spent on programming supports and services necessary for students?

Hon. Renée Cable (Minister of Advanced Education and Training): Honourable Speaker, I thank the member opposite for the question.

The University of Winnipeg is a beloved jewel in our city and in our province and I know a number of us attended that school, are proud alumnus of that school, and we want the best for the students who attend there. That includes, first and foremost, safety on campus and ensuring that every student is able to attend in their—as their full selves.

We continue to work with the University of Winnipeg to ensure that their financial needs are met and that the student outcomes are as positive as possible.

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

MLA Lamoureux: In today's Free Press, which I table, the U of W clearly explains the dire financial situation, reporting a \$4-million deficit due to the chronic underfunding.

As a result, the U of W has implemented a hiring freeze and has had to cut critical programs, including ESL and the women's soccer team. The president of the faculty has indicated that there was nothing left to cut other than programs and faculty, and I quote, which are already bleak in comparison to other campuses.

Does this government believe it is fair and sustainable for the U of W to have to depend on declining student tuition more than any other post-secondary institution in Manitoba?

MLA Cable: Honourable Speaker, again, I thank the member for the question and I thank her for putting some key words on file here. She used the word chronic underfunding. That chronic underfunding is thanks to seven and a half years of PC freezes and cuts.

The other contributing factor is thanks to her federal cousins. So the federal—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

MLA Cable: —government cut international student allotments across the board, across the country, without consultation. We knew there would be impacts and this is part of the result.

Again, we're working with every post-secondary institution to ensure that every student has the best possible outcome.

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

MLA Lamoureux: Honourable Speaker, again, in today's Winnipeg Free Press, the article that I just tabled, a consulting firm shared how this NDP government continues to underfund the University of Winnipeg.

The minister, in response said, and I quote: You can't compare apples to oranges.

Honourable Speaker, does the minister believe that students at the University of Winnipeg deserve the same level of education, services and experiences as those at other post-secondary institutions here in Manitoba?

* (14:20)

MLA Cable: Honourable Speaker, on this side of the House, we believe in equity. We believe in lifting people up. And we believe in ensuring that every individual has the best opportunity possible to become the best version of themselves. Of course, I believe that every student deserves an equal opportunity to achieve greatness.

I want to put some facts on the record. In the last two years, funding to the University of Winnipeg has increased by 22.6 per cent. That's \$14.5 million. We continue to work with them to address the financial challenges that are long-standing, and will continue to

enhance that partnership and make sure that we take care of every student that's in Manitoba.

Transcona Constituency Investments New School and Personal-Care Home

MLA JD Devgan (McPhillips): Honourable Speaker, there are a lot of exciting things happening in Transcona these days, including the investments our government's been making: a new school with capacity for 600 students and 104 child-care spaces; and a 90-bed personal-care home at Park Manor.

Our government is listening to communities across the province and delivering on our mandate that the good people of Manitoba sent here—sent us here to deliver on.

Can the Premier tell us more about these awesome investments and how they'll benefit the good folks of Transcona?

Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier): I thank the MLA from McPhillips for the best question so far today. Great job.

Amazing investments being brought forward by Health and Finance and Education: a new school coming forward for Transcona, a new personal-care home that was cut by Brian Pallister, back on the table so people can age in place.

People in Transcona go to work every day and work super hard. They have a humble attitude and a great sense of humour. My heart is full from the fact that they've elected one of their own, Shannon Corbett, to elect that great constituency right here in the Manitoba Legislature.

On the other side of the aisle, what do they have to offer? Well today, Brian Pallister's former campaign manager David McLaughlin said, Big Manitoba NDP win: 64 per cent. PC Manitoba has a lot of work ahead.

I don't know how many times I'm going to be able to say this in my life—maybe just one—this one time—but you know what? For this one time, I agree with David McLaughlin.

Tariffs on Canola Producers Support for Manitoba Growers

MLA Jeff Bereza (Portage la Prairie): Honourable Speaker, canola is one of Manitoba's most valuable crops, contributing billions to our economy and supporting thousands of farm families.

With the United States imposing tariffs and China shutting out Canadian canola, our farmers are faced with tough hardships, including new crop canola pricing coming out at between 30 and 50 per cent below what it was last year.

Will the minister commit to immediate financial support for affected producers to offset these devastating losses?

Hon. Ron Kostyshyn (Minister of Agriculture): Thank you to the member opposite for asking an important question about agriculture.

And it's no doubt, being a farmer for 40 years of my life, for a farmer who went through the BSE scenario, it's a small example. But I can relate to the challenges we face today—the farmers face—of tariffs that have been brought in by the US government and the Chinese tariffs as we move forward.

I want to assure member opposite, we work on a team Canada approach. That is why we've been in contact twice with all agriculture ministers in the last two months, that we start to work toward something in a united front.

We're not going to run rogue, being an independent province. We work together as team Canada for the betterment—

The Speaker: Member's time is expired.

Large Grocery Retailers Price Manipulation Concerns

Mr. Mark Wasyliv (Fort Garry): Last year, Manitoba had the largest increase in grocery store prices in the entire country. This Premier (Mr. Kinew) promised—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wasyliv: —Manitobans that if the big grocery store chains didn't lower prices, that he would make them.

Not only has he broken this promise, grocery store prices have skyrocketed in Manitoba. He is making—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wasyliv: —it easier for the big grocery store chains to gouge Manitoba families.

CBC News revealed that Walmart was breaking Manitoba law. In fact, they were charging 30 per cent more than the law allows for milk. And I'll table the article.

Why has this Premier allowed Walmart to gouge Manitoba families, and why is he—refuse to prosecute them for price gouging?

The Speaker: Before we hear the answer to that question, I would ask all members, but particularly on the government side, to calm down a little.

Hon. Mintu Sandhu (Minister of Public Service Delivery): Thanks to the member for that question.

Bill 31 will open up the market and create competition in the grocery sector. Our priority is stabilizing the grocery prices in Manitoba. That's why we are taking action. This bill gives Manitobans more access to their groceries.

We will keep working hard and make more—life more affordable for all Manitobans.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

The Speaker: The time for oral questions has expired.

PETITIONS

Opposition to Releasing Repeat Offenders

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

The background 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. 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 of the available tools to address this issue effectively.

Mr. Tyler Blashko, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

(5) The provincial government has the ability and the responsibility to advocate for the implement—for and implement measures that protect its citizens by ensuring that repeat violent offenders are not released

into our communities without prior—or, sorry, without proper safeguards.

(6) Immediate action is required to close gaps in the justice system that allow dangerous criminals to remain free, which puts 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 continued victimization of law-abiding Manitobans while granting repeat offenders additional rights.

* (14:30)

This petition has been signed by Doug Denning, Colleen Robbins, Eileen Clarke and many, many other fine Manitobans.

New Neepawa Health Centre

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

(2) The new hospital is being built east of Neepawa, on the north side of the yellow quill highway. It will be nearly double the size of the existing hospital and will better serve patients from this broader, western Manitoba geographical area.

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

a wide range of injuries and disease, and the new equipment will be able to complete these important scans faster, with sharper and clearer images.

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This is signed by Lorri Pederson, Leslie McLaren, Rosalie Bautista and many, many more Manitobans.

Thank you.

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

(3) CT scanners are standard equipment that combine X-ray images from several angles to create detailed,

three-dimensional models of structures inside the body. They perform critical diagnostic procedures that support the diagnosis and treatment of a wide range of injuries and diseases, and the new equipment will be able to complete these important scans faster and with sharper and clearer images.

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition has been signed by Kelly Malanik, Elsie [phonetic] Malanik, Ruth Hanke and many, many more Manitobans.

Thank you.

Phoenix School

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

And this petition is signed by Jessica Gillespie, Scott Lillie, Taylor McMillan and many, many other Manitobans.

Support for Border Communities

Mr. Josh Guenter (Borderland): Honourable Speaker, I wish to present the following petition.

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

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

* (14:40)

(2) Changes to the Canada-USA third country agreement have driven migrants deeper into hiding to

avoid apprehension, making law enforcement efforts more difficult.

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

And this petition has been signed by many, many Manitobans.

Morden Waste Water Project

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

(2) While growing—sorry, while growth is welcome and encouraged, Morden was—has long faced the critical

need for infrastructure upgrades to meet current demands and support future development.

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

This petition has been signed by Mary Anne Dyck, Josephine Obordo and Gillian Douglas and many, many other Manitobans.

Provincial Trunk Highway 34

Mr. Grant Jackson (Spruce Woods): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition has been signed by K. Mawby, Tracy Mawby *[phonetic]*, Ron Hofman and many other fine Manitobans.

Opposition to Releasing Repeat Offenders

Mr. Trevor King (Lakeside): I wish to present the following petition.

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

(1) 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.

* (14:50)

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 contained victimization of law-abiding Manitobans while granting repeat offenders additional rights.

This petition is signed by Sheena Westwater, Kailey Langrell and K. Petrie.

Thank you.

Provincial Trunk Highways 12 and 210

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

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

The intersection of Provincial Trunk Highways 12 and 210 is known as a dangerous intersection, resulting in a safety review published in the fall of 2023.

In the summer of 2024, the Province presented four options for public consultation, and area residents were promised a presentation of a final option by the fall of 2024.

Delays in the renovation of this intersection have put Manitobans at risk, as the safety review identified that changes are needed.

The provincial government failed to meet its own timeline of the fall of 2024, and as such, area residents are concerned that the project has not been designated as a priority.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to immediately implement work on renovating the intersection of Provincial Trunk Highways 12 and 210, to keep area residents and travellers safe.

This has been signed by many Manitobans.

Green Valley School Expansion

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

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

(1) The residents of La Vérendrye and other areas around Manitoba are extremely frustrated and concerned by the provincial government's decision to cancel the school expansion project for Green Valley School in Grunthal.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

This petition has been signed by Jasper Falk, Celeste Esau, Ernest Toews and many, many other Manitobans.

Teaching Certification

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

(5) Key stakeholders, such as parents, post-secondary educators outside the faculties of education

and business partners were not consulted about the changes.

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

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

Thank you, honourable Deputy Speaker.

Carbon Tax and Rising Food Prices

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

* (15:00)

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

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

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

(5) Grain drying, fertilizer and chemical production, mushroom farming, hog operations, the cost of

heating a livestock barn, machine shops and utility buildings are all examples of how the carbon tax on natural gas and other fuel costs farmers and consumers more each year.

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition has been signed by Kent Shackleford, Barry Harrosh [*phonetic*] and Rick Rivers, as well as many other Manitobans.

Support for Border Communities

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Illegal border crossing in Manitoba has increased 14 per cent in 2024, raising significant public safety and security concerns, particular in border communities.

(2) Changes to the Canadian-US Safe Third Country Agreement have been—migrates deeper into hiding to avoid apprehension, making law enforcement efforts more difficult.

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

This has been signed by Scott Samberg [*phonetic*], Glenn Vercaigne and Garry Serruys, and 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 centrally located in Manitoba and is on the No. 1 Highway in the Southern Health/Santé Sud Health Authority. Currently there is only one MRI machine in the regional health authority.

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

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

* (15:10)

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

And this is signed by Agnes Campbell, Eugenia Vasilarakis, Nicolas Vasilarakis and many, many other Manitobans.

Breast Screening

Mr. Jeff Wharton (Red River North): Honourable Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background of this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Honourable Speaker, we petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba:

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

This petition is signed by Jennifer Decasio [*phonetic*], Curtis Velum [*phonetic*] and Danielle Renée Smith.

Thank you, honourable Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Seeing no more petitions, grievances?

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

House Business

Hon. Bernadette Smith (Acting Government House Leader): On House business.

The Deputy Speaker: The honourable Minister of Housing, Addictions and Homelessness.

Ms. Smith: I'd like to announce that the Standing Committee on Justice will meet on Tuesday, March 25, 2025, at 6 p.m., to consider the following: Bill 2, The Provincial Court Amendment Act; Bill 5, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Impaired Driving Measures); Bill 31, The Property Controls for Grocery Stores and Supermarkets Act (Various Acts Amended).

The Deputy Speaker: It has been announced that the Standing Committee on Justice will meet on Tuesday, March 25, 2025, at 6 p.m., to consider the following: Bill 2, The Provincial Court Amendment Act; Bill 5, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Impaired Driving Measures); and Bill 31, The Property Controls for Grocery Stores and Supermarkets Act (Various Acts Amended).

Ms. Smith: I'd like to announce that the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs will meet in camera on Thursday, March 27, 2025, at 6 p.m., to consider the following: the hiring process for a seniors advocate.

The Deputy Speaker: It has been announced that the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs will meet in camera on Thursday, March 27, 2025, at 6 p.m., to consider the following: the hiring process for a seniors advocate.

* * *

Ms. Smith: Can you please call second reading of Bill 42, The Buy Canadian Act (Government Purchases Act Amended), followed by Bill 32, The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act (Measures to Address Unlawful Activities).

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

The Deputy Speaker: It has been called for second reading, Bill 42, The buy Canadian government—The Buy Canadian Act (Government Purchases Act amendment—Amended), followed by second reading of Bill 32, The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act (Measures to Address Unlawful Activities).

**Bill 42—The Buy Canadian Act
(Government Purchases Act Amended)**

Hon. Mintu Sandhu (Minister of Public Service Delivery): In the light of pressing economic—

The Deputy Speaker: Sorry, just one second. Oh.

The honourable Minister of Public Service Delivery, with unlimited time.

MLA Sandhu: In light of the pressing economic challenges imposed by US tariffs, our government is standing up for Manitobans, standing up for Canadians.

This will signal our government's commitment to prioritizing goods and services that are made in Canada. This will direct government to establish a buy Canadian policy. This policy will outline the steps government will take to stand up for Manitoba jobs and our local economy. It establishes a framework to prioritize the procurement of Canadian-made goods and services.

Honourable Speaker, we know that in these challenging times, we must all work together to support our local economy. Our government is committed to standing up for Manitobans and changing our practices in order to protect the jobs of Manitobans and Canadians.

In response to the US tariffs, we are bringing forward this legislation to support Canadian suppliers. This will reinforce our commitment to supporting local industries and protecting jobs. By supporting Canadian-made goods, we will aim to contribute to the overall growth of the Canadian and the Manitoba economy.

Thank you, honourable Speaker.

Questions

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

Mr. Josh Guenter (Borderland): I wonder if the minister could share with the House who he consulted with in the development of this legislation. Did he consult with the federal trade department, and did he

also talk to our New West trade partnership partners in British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Alberta?

* (15:20)

Hon. Mintu Sandhu (Minister of Public Service Delivery): Thanks to the member for that question.

Honourable Speaker, we are consulting with Manitobans, and the good folks of Transcona has given us a mandate that, you know what, we want to protect our jobs here in Manitoba, and we want to protect our economy in Canada.

We will listen to Manitobans, and we will listen to Canadians.

Thank you, honourable Speaker.

MLA Jeff Bereza (Portage la Prairie): The question that I might ask, honourable Speaker—honourable Deputy Speaker, is regarding who has been consulted with on here. Agriculture is a huge part of our economy in Manitoba, with billions of dollars being spent on it.

Could the minister please tell us what agriculture organizations that were spoken to—organizations like KAP, like Manitoba Pork. What was their—what were they saying about this, or were they consulted?

Thank you.

MLA Sandhu: We are listening to Manitobans and we are delivering on their priorities. And it's not only agriculture. Every Manitoban we are consulting with—that we were out on the doorsteps in Transcona, people were telling us, hey, you know what, protecting the jobs is—should be our No. 1 priority, and protecting the Canadian economy is also be—should our No. 1 priority.

So we are listening to Manitobans; we are listening to farmers; we are listening to everyone.

Thank you, honourable Speaker.

Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain): The minister states the purpose of the bill is to implement a buy Canadian policy, which gives direction to—or gives direction to have the purchasing authority to give priority and preferential treatment to Canadian suppliers wherever possible.

I guess my question today is—I'm assuming this bill is aimed directly at Donald Trump and the United States of America. My question today is: If a British or a Mexican company bids on a contract in Manitoba, will their bid be considered?

MLA Sandhu: Our No. 1 priority is protecting Manitoba jobs and Canadian economy. We will definitely follow the free trade agreements that we have signed with the Mexico and European countries. And, again, our No. 1 priority is looking after our Manitoba economy and Canadian economy.

Thank you, honourable Speaker.

Mr. Guenter: So the bill essentially sets—gives the government the ability—the power to develop a buy Canadian policy. So, unfortunately, the House doesn't have the opportunity today to take a look at the bill and debate the actual policy, the actual regulation.

Can the minister explain when will members of this House be able to see the regulation, what the details of the policy are?

MLA Sandhu: The member got it right. This legislation is asking the government to develop a policy. Once this bill passes—and work is already under way to developing that policy once this bill is passed, and Manitobans will have a chance to see it, and Canadians will have a chance to see it as well.

Thank you, honourable Speaker.

MLA Bereza: Honourable Deputy Speaker—you know, and I like what the minister had to say there about looking after the economy. One of the issues that our agriculture industry is running into right now is losing a whole sector of that business, being the canola business. Again, we all agree we want to look after the economy.

But, again, I'll ask the question: What agriculture groups were talked to regarding this buy Canada policy, and how will that affect the canola business in Manitoba?

MLA Sandhu: Again, this bill is asking the government to develop a policy that will prioritize Manitoba jobs and the Canadian economy.

Our government is working on that policy, and once this bill passes and that policy will be made available to Manitobans, as well as to our Canadian partners as well.

Thank you, honourable Speaker.

Mr. Nesbitt: There's no question we live in a global economy. And, you know, Canada and Manitoba deal with certain businesses throughout the world.

If a business is headquartered in the United States, but has retail, wholesale or subsidiary outlets in Canada, will that make it eligible as a Canadian supplier?

MLA Sandhu: This is exactly what this bill is asking the government to do.

As we speak, this bill should be passed—to pass today, and the policy work is already under way on this. And we are looking at what is Canadian and what is American companies, and how that will be—put it into policy to confirm which company is called Canadian and which is called as American companies.

Thank you, honourable Speaker.

Mr. Jeff Wharton (Red River North): The question I have for the minister: The minister's been talking about policy once a bill passes. Can I get some clarity for Manitobans today: is he referring to regulations after the bill passes or are they going to be writing new policy from—essentially from when the bill passes?

MLA Sandhu: This bill is asking the government to develop a policy, which is what we are talking about today.

And as I speak, my department is looking into this, because most of the procurement is done through Public Service Delivery and we are looking into this, and again, we want to protect Manitoba jobs, we want to protect local economy. That's our No. 1 focus. We want to make sure people are working in the sector that they are working in right now, so we don't want to lose jobs. And again, we will prioritize Canadian companies or Manitoba companies where we can.

Thank you, honourable Speaker.

Mr. Wharton: Just building on that last question, I really didn't hear an answer there, so I'd ask the minister again today. With this policy, I'm assuming it's going to be more along the lines of regulation, but my question is, for Manitoba businesses, will he be consulting on this policy once this bill passes this House?

MLA Sandhu: As I said, honourable Speaker, Manitobans will have a chance to see the policies where we will prioritize Canadian jobs and Manitoba jobs and the Canadian economy, Manitoba economy. We want to promote local, buy local, you know, on this.

And we want to put Manitobans to working—to putting working to—people to work wherever they are working right now.

We want to make sure our economy is strong and that we can stand up to the Trump's tariffs, and we will definitely prioritize Canadian and Manitoba companies over American companies.

Thank you, honourable Speaker.

Mr. Wharton: Again, just want to make sure the record is clear. The minister has just stated that they'll be presenting the policies post writing them to business owners, to present it to them instead of actually consulting with the grassroots and the businesses that we count on here as Manitobans that provide health care, social services, education and all those things Manitobans count on every single day.

I ask the minister again: Will he take the time to consult with Manitoba businesses before he presents the policy?

* (15:30)

MLA Sandhu: Honourable Deputy Speaker, our government is a listening government. We will live in—listen to Manitobans.

And we were out in Transcona the other day. The good folks of Transcona elected a very capable lady, that's like, the first female MLA from Transcona, so yes. So—can I even go back, honourable Speaker? Like, all three by-elections. The by-election in Tuxedo, we have a female elected. And Transcona, federally, we have a female elected as the NDP there.

Thank you, honourable Speaker.

Mr. Guenter: I'm—wonder if the minister could talk about why this bill is needed, in the sense of: what is it going—what's the immediate impact? What is it going to impact?

Government procurement, obviously, is a big—you know, a big subject. But when we're talking about, you know, ambulances, snowplows, a wide variety of things that government procures, what does the minister foresee being an immediate impact as a result of this bill?

MLA Sandhu: Thanks to the member for that question.

Again, we want to prioritize—doesn't matter what businesses. We want to prioritize the businesses here in Manitoba. We want to prioritize businesses in Canada. So those are our No. 1 priorities and we cannot do—wherever we can, give business to those local companies here and have more Manitobans working, and we can protect our economy.

Thank you, honourable Speaker.

MLA Bereza: Honourable Speaker, this bill proposal is to project—to protect jobs, buying Canadian. We're putting the cart somewhat before the horse without the policy being in place yet.

I'm wondering if the policies that will be put in place to protect Canadian jobs, if this government will be going to the Chinese government or through the Canadian government regarding the Chinese retaliatory tariffs on our canola, and will we be looking to reinstate so that the EV vehicles coming from China will be welcome—

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

MLA Sandhu: This is—the aim of the bill is to develop the policy for the government where we are prioritizing Manitoba jobs and we are prioritizing the Manitoba economy, so we want to work on those ones and we want to make sure we are protecting the jobs. And under this policy, the preference will be given to Manitoba jobs.

Thank you, honourable Speaker.

Mr. Nesbitt: The minister's leader, the Premier of Manitoba (Mr. Kinew), mentioned or mused that Manitoba Hydro may do procurement through countries like South Korea rather than the United States in the future.

How will that be taken into account under this buy Canadian policy? Will this policy run counter to the Premier's wishes?

MLA Sandhu: As I said, we will prioritize Manitoba jobs, local economy where we can. If we cannot have those things that we need for Manitoba Hydro, we will definitely look at the other countries, but we won't be looking at the United States of America.

Thank you, honourable Speaker.

Mr. Guenter: I would just like—and I think Manitobans would be interested in, because, you know, buy Canadian policy is something that we can all support, especially these days.

But I really wish the minister could provide some more details on timelines and also where the government would like to—where would the minister like to see the policy go? What direction, if he could give the regulators any—those who write the regulation, where would—what direction would he like to see them go in? I think Manitobans are interested in knowing.

MLA Sandhu: I know the member from Borderland wants to be the 51st state of the USA, but this will never happen. And he's free to choose if he wants to live in the States; he may move there. But our priority is Canadian jobs, Manitoban jobs, the Manitoba economy. We will deliver on these ones.

Thank you, honourable Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: And with that, time for questions has expired.

Debate

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

Mr. Josh Guenter (Borderland): I appreciate the opportunity to rise today to talk about this bill, buy Canadian initiative by the provincial government.

And, as I said and my colleagues indicated as well in our question and answer period, our side has long supported—we have a strong record on this side, of supporting our businesses through a competitive tax and regulatory regime in making Manitoba incredibly competitive. So, of course, we support buy Canadian in a buy Canadian policy initiative implemented by the provincial government.

It is disappointing, though, that the minister is unable to provide really any details about it. And that is a concern, you know, and it is also a concern when the minister chooses to get partisan and take cheap shots that are personal, and I understand this is something they want to make—turn into a political thing for them. This is their—you know, they see as a political opportunity for them.

But there are Manitobans and Canadians—all Manitobans and all Canadians—are concerned by the tariffs that are hurting our economy even as we speak. And I have had the opportunity to speak with constituents and with those who will feel the impact of these tariffs, and when you look at their faces, they're looking into the abyss. And priority No. 1 is no tariffs.

But in the meantime, we've got to support local and we've got to support our Manitoba suppliers and businesses and we've got to stand united as a country, and that is something that I have always called for and our caucus has as well.

We are proud Canadians on this side of the House, and we have also observed—it has not gone unnoticed—that members of that caucus, the NDP caucus, will not sing O Canada. Members of the NDP government will not sing O Canada. They will not sing God Save the King. They will not do that. They called for the cancellation of—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

The Deputy Speaker: Order. Order. Order.

When the Speaker stands—when the Speaker is standing, others in the room are expected to not be speaking.

Mr. Guenter: So my point was made. The member for Families—or the Minister of Families, the member for St. Johns (MLA Fontaine), did not sing O Canada. She cannot bring herself to do that. She believes Canadian nationalism is a racist project.

That side has torn down statues. It was—*[interjection]*

The Deputy Speaker: Order. Order. Order.

I will remember folks—or I will remind folks—what the topic of the bill before us is. It's a Buy Canadian Act, so it is about procurement, so I'd welcome comments to be kept to the topic of the bill.

Mr. Guenter: All Manitobans should remember it was the NDP members across the way and their supporters, their people who came onto the grounds of this Legislative Building with machetes and knives and took out—toppled statues on the grounds of this very Legislature, an outrage, an affront to our Canadian history, to Canadian symbols, to symbols of Canadian pride, and it hurt. It hurt Canadian patriotism, honourable Speaker, and they did that on Canada—*[interjection]*

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Guenter: —on Canada Day.

This for them—these days that we're living through, they will not acknowledge; they do not—they don't understand the realities of blue collar, hard-working Manitobans.

* (15:40)

The—but that doesn't mean that they won't capitalize on this opportunity and turn it into a political opportunity to try to showcase their anti-Americanism.

There's no Canadian patriotism on that side, as I said. As I said, the member for St. Johns has said that Canadian nationalism is a racist project.

So, unfortunately—*[interjection]*

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Guenter: Unfortunately, as with everything with this NDP government, it's window dressing, it's word salads, it's just—it's showmanship. That's all it is. It's government by TikTok. It's slogans, and that's their style—*[interjection]*

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Guenter: —but there's no substance. There's no substance.

In this buy Canadian bill, there's no substance.

The minister has told—[*interjection*]

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

I'd invite all members to take a deep breath and maybe take a moment so we can speak to the substance of the bill. And I will remind all members that while members might have opposing views, members need to treat each other with respect.

Mr. Guenter: A buy Canadian bill with no substance, no policy. The minister cannot share timelines, the minister has no idea what this will mean for Manitoba procurement. The minister has no idea about anything except that this is a buy Canadian bill, and that is it. That's all we're—that's all we're led to believe.

And this is the legislative body of Manitoba. We were sent here by Manitobans, and these days it's incredibly important. It's incredibly important.

With the threat that the tariffs pose on Manitoba workers, it's very important that Manitobans understand what direction the provincial government is going in and understand what the Manitoba government is doing to stand up for their jobs, for their incomes and for our economy.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker in the Chair

The Speaker: Order.

It's kind of a shame that—the way you carry on, particularly when the Deputy Speaker's in the Chair. So now we will have respectful debate.

The honourable member for Borderland has the floor.

Mr. Guenter: Honourable Speaker, I appreciate your intervention, because it is important. This is an important debate.

And I am disappointed, and along with my colleagues. I'm disappointed that there is no substance to this legislation. I'm disappointed that the minister can't provide, the NDP government can't provide answers beyond talking about a buy Canada bill.

So that's what it is. It gives them the opportunity to put out a press release and gives the Premier (Mr. Kinew) the opportunity to go to the media. And it gives them the—it gives them cover, because it was those members, again, that came onto these Legislative grounds and took down and defaced statues. And they celebrated that. They called for the cancellation of Canada Day. My Canadian flag on my property was flying high and has always been flying high.

This—I have always—[*interjection*]

The Speaker: Order.

I would caution members about screaming back and forth, and I'd also caution members that are giving a speech designed specifically to inflame people.

The honourable member for Red River North will remain seated and will remain quiet.

Mr. Guenter: And these are—this is—[*interjection*]

The Speaker: Order, please.

The honourable member for Red River North have something else he wants to say? When it's his turn to speak, he will get that opportunity. In the meantime, he will not talk back to the Speaker.

The honourable member for Borderland (Mr. Guenter)—

An Honourable Member: On a point of order.

Point of Order

The Speaker: The honourable member for Red River North.

Mr. Jeff Wharton (Red River North): On a point of order. Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

I was heckled on the way out by the member from Point Douglas. I was referring to her comment to me, not to the Speaker.

Thank you.

The Speaker: I thank the member for Red River North for that. Certainly, from this perspective, it appeared you were heckling the Speaker. So I apologize for that.

That's what happens when everybody gets out of hand.

* * *

Mr. Guenter: I appreciate your intervention. These—this is an incredibly important debate. These are incredibly important days that we're living through. And there's a lot at stake and there's a lot on the line. And we have a job to do here as legislators. We were sent here by the voters in our constituencies. And these debates matter.

And as I was saying, the buy Canadian policy—buy Canadian initiative—is something we all support. It's incredibly important these days that we—not only government but all Manitobans—and many are already taking the initiative to check labels and make sure that we're supporting our local businesses and that we're staying united in these difficult times.

Because, as I said, jobs are on the line, incomes are on the line, and unfortunately, this NDP government—this NDP government—is leaving Manitobans high and dry. There is no—they like to talk. And as I said, this is a government by TikTok. And they like to put things in the window with no teeth.

And I've said that before in this House in debate previously, and members—my colleagues have as well. Whether it's on crime or health care or affordability, or now, talking about tariffs and the buy Canadian initiative in government procurement, that there's absolutely nothing. The title sounds great, but that's all we have. That's all this legislation is; it's a title. That's all we have.

The minister cannot give us a timeline. The minister cannot talk about anything beyond the fact that the regulation will be developed. Some people—I don't even know whose department is going to be in charge of it. I have no idea what their names are, but they're going to write the regulation.

And us as legislators, who were elected and sent here and have a job to do, will have no opportunity to take a look at that regulation. There will be no opportunity for regulatory oversight—legislative oversight of those regulations.

But even when we asked him simple questions about, what's the timeline on this, there's nothing. And so that leads Manitobans and that leads this caucus, the Progressive Conservative caucus, to believe that there's no substance. The government—this government is not serious. This government must do more. They talk a great deal, as I said, but they do absolutely nothing.

Those interprovincial trade barriers—Manitoba has the fewest interprovincial trade barriers among provinces across Canada. Why is that? That's thanks to the previous Progressive Conservative government.

And we were—it was the previous Progressive Conservative government that signed on to the New West Partnership with our partners: Alberta, Saskatchewan and British Columbia. The NDP refused to do that.

And so it's important, though, that this NDP government be held to account, and that's what I intended to do in my remarks, was to call Manitobans to remember the record of this NDP government. Because we're all being blitzed by their social media and by their ads and everything else in all the glitzy ads that they're putting out in press releases and whatnot. It all looks great, but there's nothing behind the veneer. And

that's the concern because these are serious days, and we need a plan. We absolutely need a plan.

The NDP have failed to negotiate a free trade deal for Manitoba. The NDP have failed to secure the border and crackdown on fentanyl drug trafficking. In fact, they're working hard at setting up—promoting drugs by setting up drug injection sites. The NDP have failed to protect workers and businesses from these new tariffs. There is no plan. We are now last place, Manitoba is last place in the Canadian Federation of Independent Business red tape rankings. That's not good.

* (15:50)

We're now last place in natural resource investments over the next ten years. And what was really concerning last December was hearing that Vale, the—Manitoba's mining giant up north in Thompson—was looking at exiting Manitoba. That would be devastating to jobs up north.

So this government does not have the backs of Manitoba workers. They've had four months to safeguard jobs and our economy, but they have failed to articulate a clear plan or vision. They have refused to share any details or analysis of the costs of tariffs on consumers, workers and businesses, and as I said, the minister has no idea what direction he would like this bill to take. No idea what direction the regulation should take.

Manitobans these days need certainty above all, and they need a plan. But they haven't received that from this NDP government. What have they received? Well, we've seen gas taxes rise by 26 per cent in January of this year alone. Property taxes, way up. And you know what that does? It makes it that—these NDP tax hikes make it that much more difficult for Manitoba businesses to stay afloat.

On the one hand, you've got the NDP government with this legislation making a show of their, you know, a pretense of supporting Manitoba businesses and buying Canadian, but on the other hand, they're raising taxes on these very same businesses, property taxes. And we're seeing some of them in the order of 15 per cent this year alone. Last year we saw some property taxes as high as 18 per cent. NDP school property taxes.

This has a real impact on our businesses, on workers, on families and consumers in Manitoba, and as a result, we've seen unemployment go up from 4 per cent when they took office to 6.2 per cent today. Business bankruptcies spiked by 23 per cent, consumer insol-

vencies up by 4.4 per cent in 2024 and our deficit went from \$800 million to \$1.3 billion. That's the NDP deficit. They were left—and Manitobans should never forget—the PCs were—left the NDP government with a \$270-million surplus, which they then turned into a \$2-billion deficit.

It's an artificial deficit crafted when times were good, and now that times are bad, we're out of fiscal room. There is no more money left to spend, we're going further into debt and it's going to devastate Manitoba businesses, Manitoba workers and Manitoba families.

We have the highest inflation and food inflation in Canada; 50,000 Manitobans rely on food banks each month. That's devastating. And as I said—I've said earlier, is a record of failure on the part of this NDP government.

So there's no substance to this bill. There's no plan on the part of the Premier (Mr. Kinew) or on the part of this government. The minister can't tell us what direction he'd like this bill to go in. And so Manitobans are being left high and dry at a time when they need support.

So let me outline some of the things we should be doing. We should be building infrastructure across this province; it would employ Manitoba workers and construction companies. We need a better infrastructure, especially when it comes to roads and bridges. The government could be lowering taxes, lessening the regulatory burden. Of course, they were the ones that repealed the regulatory accountability act that meant that, for every new regulation that was written, two had to be taken out. So it actually resulted in a lessening of the regulatory burden on Manitoba businesses.

Well, the NDP government repealed that, one of the first things they did. And so they've left Manitoba businesses at a distinct disadvantage and made it incredibly difficult for them to compete at a time when it's very important that they have the ability to do so.

Interprovincial trade barriers, they've done nothing. Again, they talk—they'll talk about it, but there's no action.

The NeeStaNan project, which would help get resources from Saskatchewan, from western Canada, to Hudson Bay to tidewater through Port Nelson, is a project that would greatly benefit Manitoba. This government is nowhere on that.

So, Honourable Speaker, I think there's a number of problems with this legislation. I mean, it is in

principle a good initiative, buy Canadian. I think it's important that all Manitobans and all Canadians be supporting our local businesses, those mom and pop shops across the province, those families that wake up early in the morning and go to work to run their business. It's important that we all support them, and it's important that this government has their back. And unfortunately, that's not the case.

And let me say finally to these people across the way who have toppled our statues, who have cancelled Canada Day and who are constantly, constantly shaming—making Canadians feel ashamed to be Canadian or expecting that some are supposed to apologize for our heritage, apologize for our country, we're supposed to hang our heads in shame, and their dismal record on the economy has left Manitobans with diminishing economic opportunities. It's a pretty bleak state that they're leading us into.

But the reality is that we do have a lot to be proud of as Canadians. And we can look to our past to take inspiration from those who came before us. Those who came before us—this country didn't just happen by accident. Those who came before us made deliberate choices, and through their hard work and great personal sacrifice built this beautiful, proud and free country that we enjoy today. And we have a responsibility today to uphold and honour that proud heritage and to uphold and honour those values and freedoms that our ancestors fought to defend and also to pass those lessons on to future generations.

This is the land of the great explorers: Jacques Cartier and Samuel Champlain are the heroes of the War of 1812, Sir Isaac Brock and Laura Secord and Tecumseh. This is the land of Sir John A. Macdonald and Sir Wilfrid Laurier. And it was Sir Wilfrid Laurier who said that Canada shall be the star towards which all men who love progress and freedom shall come. Let's fulfill—let's as legislators in this body today work on fulfilling that dream of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, that Canada shall be the star towards which all men who love progress and freedom shall come. That's still possible today, even in these challenging times.

Canada is the land also of Tommy Prince and Billy Bishop, one of the top-scoring pilots in the world during the First World War. It's the land of Frederick Banting and Charles Best, whose discovery of insulin in 1922 marked a great advancement in the field of medicine. It's the land of Alexander Graham Bell, the inventor of the telephone.

This country has produced many great Canadians, none more so, perhaps, than the over 600,000 who put

on a uniform to fight for this country in World War I, and the nearly 1.1 million who answered the call and did so again in World War II.

But this is also the land of moms and dads working hard, trying to do what's right, raising their children and building a brighter future. This is the land of nurses, teachers, farmers, business men and women, tradesmen, truck drivers, ordinary Canadians waking up every day and going out there to build this country. Their lives are the true greatness of this country.

Canada is not defined by our government, by the media or by someone in a university lecture hall. Canada is defined by her people, by you. And I think of the—in the words of the former premier minister, Stephen Harper, travelling around this great country, one gets a sense of its still greater potential. Nothing, not recession, not natural disaster, nor war have ever stopped the rise of this great nation.

* (16:00)

There is a spirit in this land, the true spirit, the true character of the Canadian people. A courageous warrior, a compassionate neighbour and a confident partner. That's the spirit of the Canada I know, and it's for all members of this Chamber to protect and promote the peace, prosperity and freedoms that Canadians and Manitobans enjoy.

May God bless Canada and God keep our land glorious and free.

MLA Jeff Bereza (Portage la Prairie): I didn't mean to jump up so fast and not give the government an opportunity to speak on this bill, the Bill 42, The Buy Canadian Act. And before I get into it, I want to say a few things that—my name is Jeff Bereza, and I'm a proud Canadian.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

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

Just to caution members about continuing to talk and carry on when the Speaker's standing and trying to speak. I don't want to have to caution anyone again, at least not today. And the member will know it's a rule that we don't use people's names, even if it's yourself, your constituency name, or your ministerial title.

MLA Bereza: My apologies for that, Honourable Speaker. I am a proud Canadian. I am a proud Manitoban. And I will never be part of a 51st state.

So let's go over this bill. So, the analysis of this bill is the purpose of this bill is to implement buy

Canada policy, which gives direction to purchasing authority to give priority and preferential treatment to Canadian suppliers wherever possible.

In the bill briefing the minister said that this bill just authorizes the ministering department to create buy Canadian policy. The bill does not, itself, establish the buy Canadian policy. That will come through policy and regulation once the act is proclaimed.

So, again—and that referred to many of my questions—is, are we putting the cart before the horse? Have we consulted with a number of stakeholders in Canada regarding this? Have we consulted with—when we're talking about the buy Canadian policy, have we talked to those people that will be impacted heavily by this buy Canadian policy?

Our agriculture business in Manitoba is very important not only to the rural part of Manitoba but also to the urban part of Manitoba, too.

So, again, as I said, I am always a proud Canadian, but, again, are we putting forth a bill just for the sake of a bill? The deputy minister, when asked about how you define a Canadian supplier, he said there are definitions under the Canada-US Free Trade Agreement. But that is—primarily revolves around the address of the company headquarters only.

So, again, as much as I want to see a buy Canadian policy, should this not have some more strength and some more teeth behind it? There are many, many questions to be asked regarding this buy Canadian policy proposal, and whether it's workable in a globally integrated economy. And as we work as a nation to diversify our trade with other nations and markets in light of the impending United States tariffs, as well as the retaliatory tariffs on products like our canola business that is going to be impacted, but we don't want to seem to talk about it right now. We need to have some policies in place before we move forward with this.

We need to diversify our markets to the Commonwealth, to Asia, to the United Kingdom and around the world to protect our nation and economy from this protectionism.

As I had said before in the buy Canadian that I do support wholeheartedly, is when we look at canola even in—as a Canadian product, we have the US that have slapped heavy tariffs on it. We have retaliatory tariffs that the Chinese have slapped on that.

Again, we need to look for other markets, but when we're talking about a product like canola, those two countries—we can't replace that business with the rest

of the world because of the amount that those countries are buying.

So I'm all for the buy Canadian, but what are we doing to make sure that we're establishing some things here in the Canadian market itself? Are we opening up crushing facilities for more canola? Have we talked to the grain handlers? Have we looked at what we can do with canola oil?

We know that canola oil is one of the best cooking oils in the world, but we cannot replace it by doing—by getting—by trying to establish other markets. Again, as I said, with the US and the Chinese situation, we cannot do that.

So where does that put us when we want to say that we buy Canadian, again? It's important that we're buying—you know, when—as myself as the Ag critic, when I think about the impact of what canola can have, and I agree. You know what? Let's make sure that we're buying and using all the canola we can in Canada.

But, again, we're seeing a market crisis happening here. The price of canola is plummeting like a stone. We've seen it drop by 30 or 40 per cent. How do we cover, in a buy Canadian market, for those farmers that are impacted so heavily by that?

We need to reduce and eliminate interprovincial trade barriers. Again, when we look at it, it is much easier, even in Saskatchewan, to build a barn when their building codes are not the same as ours when it comes to an agricultural building.

Again, I'm for—all for buy Canada, but we must be supported by policies on that. We need to make our economy resilient by reducing taxes on productivity and investing in transportation and connectivity within Canada.

You know, we talk about buy Manitoba, buy Canadian. We can do that as well, too, by working together with some of our partners out there to look at an east-west connection when it comes to a pipeline. We can do that again as well, too, by again, providing opportunities for our farmers to sell within Canada.

But we do not have the capacity to do that. So what are we going to do with all this grain? Are we going to subsidize it because is that part of the buy Canadian policy? Will we be putting subsidies in for the farmers?

We need to fight the Chinese and the US tariffs with everything that we can, including I—my belief is that we need to stand together as Canadians. There was some—maybe some decisions that were made that

put the Chinese in a position where they felt that they had to put a retaliatory tariff on the canola by cutting off the Chinese from being able to bring EV vehicles into Canada.

We have to look, when we say we're buying Canadian, what impacts things like battery plants in eastern Canada will have on that. How do we continue to do that? How do we continue to buy Canadian when we are shooting ourselves in the foot?

* (16:10)

We need a team Canada and a team Manitoba approach to fight these tariffs. And we need a government that will stand up, will talk to the people that are looking at things like canola. What are we going to do with the canola out there? I don't know; we don't have enough capacity for it.

We—I have farmers calling me from Dauphin, Manitoba, crying because they can't get a hold of their MLA for that area and saying, what is this government doing to protect the farmer? *[interjection]* I—they're shocked. They didn't know who to call.

So, again, some of the questions that weren't answered there was: Does the buy Canadian policy violate any of our trade agreements with the EU? With Scandinavian countries? World Trade Organization for trade? And the Asia-Pacific *[phonetic]* partnership?

Like I said, we saw this with the battery plants that are going up in eastern Canada, and we decided to slap tariffs on the Chinese—that we wouldn't import EV vehicles from the Chinese. Now, we've caused a problem. Again, we need to answer some of these questions before moving forward.

Does it violate our trade obligation with Mexico under the Free Trade Agreement? Is Mexico exempt? You know, again, another great question when it comes to agriculture. We can't seem to get any answers even in this House regarding agricultural questions about how we're going to handle this. How are we going to look after our own here in Canada, here in Manitoba? And we can't get a straight answer from our Agriculture Minister here of what's going on or where that's happening.

Canada will never be the 51st state.

If businesses—again, the question was asked and there wasn't an answer given to this. If a business is headquartered in the US but has retailer wholesale outlets in Canada, is that a Canadian supplier? Again, shouldn't that—what is a buy Canadian policy, or what

is a buy Canadian bill without some policy in place first?

The Premier (Mr. Kinew) mentioned that Manitoba Hydro may do procurement through countries like South Korea rather than the United States. How will that be taken into account under this policy? I don't understand, and I don't think Manitobans or Canadians understand that. Is that truly a buy Canadian policy? I'm having a little trouble with the understanding of that myself.

You know, again, when it comes to cross-country—or, cross-province jurisdictions—and again, the Ag Minister's here in the room with us, too. You know, we look at—

The Speaker: Order, please.

I previously cautioned the member on another day about saying whether members are present or—absence. I shouldn't have to keep cautioning the member about the same thing. So it's a well-known rule that we cannot say whether a member is present or absent.

So I would caution the member to please pay attention to what he's saying.

MLA Bereza: My apologies to you, Honourable Speaker.

The farmers are being treated like second-class citizens. When we look at what Saskatchewan and Alberta are doing in order to create a buy Canadian policy, and a for-instance of that is looking into markets in Southeast Asia for pulses, attending events in the US where the US secretary of agriculture is at, attending meetings in Dubai and India to look at places of where we should be moving pulse products or protein products.

Why are we not doing that here in Manitoba when we're trying to create a buy Canadian policy but we're not looking for any partners out there to create that?

In fact, I look at the Alberta situation right now, and I—it was raised as a question earlier on today, is, you know, we should be looking at ways to do things with our canola. Well, Alberta beat us to the punch again; they've already announced another crushing plant in Alberta. I guess we must have missed that day when we could see another crushing plant.

You know, again, when we look at—and my background is in agriculture. You know, have we consulted on this buy Canadian project with companies like Richardson International? Have we talked to Paterson Grain, who has made huge investments all across Canada, as well as Richardson Pioneer? Have we talked to

Parrish & Heimbecker, one of the oldest grain companies in Canada? They're located right here in Winnipeg. We could—we should be meeting with those people on the buy Canadian, on that right now. Have we?

I have no idea, but, you know, if we want to buy Canadian, and if we want to look at things, ways that we can do that, it's important to do that. We must look at ways to protect our own, we must look at ways to protect Manitobans and we must look at ways to buy and protect Canadian companies.

When we look at—and a question regarding this buy Canadian policy, so I look at a company like Richardson International, Richardson Pioneer. They contract a pile of oats in Manitoba. Those oats go through the plant in Portage la Prairie. From there, they go down to companies like General Mills or other companies in the US. Richardson International is a Canadian company. Does that qualify as a Canadian product?

When we look at companies now that are looking at the fish business, of manufacturing—or, sorry, of growing fish in Manitoba—

An Honourable Member: Aquaculture.

MLA Bereza: —aquaculture—sending them down to the US market and then coming back this way. Is that a Canadian company? Is that buying Canadian or not? I'm not sure.

Even when it—a question regarding the buy Canadian as well, too: there's manufacturing plants in Ottawa—Oshawa, Ontario. There's plants in Mexico. Does that become a buy Canadian product, or is it buy Canadian because the paint comes from here or the steel might have come from here? How do we look at this as buy Canadian? What are the rules behind this?

I think it's great. I think we should wrap ourselves in the flag and say buy Canadian, but we must have some policy around this. Without any details, I'm not sure where we start, or are we going to be behind the eight ball again, like we are in the agriculture business right now.

We look at the agriculture business again, right now, and like I said, the deputy minister for—because the Ag minister in Saskatchewan is too busy out there, the deputy minister of Agriculture is off in one area trying to create and sell buy Canadian. The deputy minister is doing one thing, the Ag minister is doing another thing. The Trade minister in Saskatchewan is off in another location trying to sell their products.

So again, how do we continue to support buy Canadian when we are not doing anything as—this government is doing nothing itself on that. It becomes an issue of—you know, again, the buy Canadian, wrap ourselves in the flag. We see the great big flag out front of the building, but what are we doing?

* (16:20)

I don't understand this. We have a blue committee of some sort that none of us have heard who's all on the committee or what's going on with the committee.

But I don't understand what this committee's doing. I understand that they're listening, but listening to who? Are they listening to our farmers? Are they listening to people involved in aquaculture? Are they listening to anybody in the automobile industry? Are they listening to companies like Elmer's in southern Manitoba?

What new markets has the Trade Minister been chasing for our canola? Has he found a single one? It would be great to know the answer on that.

Again, with the blue committee—no, the blue ribbon committee, right—know anything about that of where that's going, where we are and how we're going to maintain that? It's a shame because I think everybody in this audience here wants to wrap themselves in the flag and say, buy Canadian. But when I say that, we have nothing around it. All it is, is we're talking about it. Without a policy, without a plan, it's destined to fail. And I don't want to fail. I don't want to be part of a province that fails; I want to be part of a winning province.

And that's what we're trying to do. So again I ask, what are we doing to develop new markets here? Where are we looking for new markets? Are we going to the Minnesota State Fair and riding the Ferris wheel? Are we going to conferences in the US and only talking to Democrats because the other—the Republicans may have a difference of opinion?

No, we got to work together. We got to show them how important it is to buy Canadian. We got to show them that we have a high-quality product. We have to show them that some of the best agriculture work that's done throughout the world is done right here, done right here in Manitoba, done right here in Canada.

How do we keep companies like BASF that is the largest supplier of canola seed in the world? How do we keep those people employed? We have to take some responsibility as a province and as a country for doing the right thing by making sure we're taking care of

those agricultural companies. We don't want to get into a situation like what's happening down in the US right now with John Deere laying off hundreds and hundreds of people, because, again, the ag economy is being affected so much by that. Yes. Yes.

And, again, when we talk about diversity, you know, when we talk about that to the—you know, when we're looking at the Asian markets, you know, we want to buy Canadian. I'd like to see a buy Canada logo on everything that we have there. But we have to have some policies around it that make sense here of what we need to do.

We need to continue on the Chinese retaliatory tariffs to make sure that we're doing something there. But again, I ask this: When we talk about buy Canadian, we have to make sure that we're protecting Canadians as well, too. We have to make sure that we are not just writing bills or handing out bills there to make us feel good, because it may make us feel good for the afternoon, or for an hour, or a few days, but we must do something in order to make this bill be more than just a piece of paper to go on a shelf.

So, again, I talk about this when—you know, have we consulted with the federal trade department? You know, when I look at Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, the opportunities to work together when it does come to canola—and again, I can see why those other provinces as well, too, are doing so much to try and move that product, is, again, they're growing much more canola in Saskatchewan and Alberta.

But again, that doesn't mean that we have to be asleep at the wheel like this government seems to be when it comes to anything agriculture related. So this is not time to fall asleep. This is time for a government to stand behind, to stand behind Manitobans, to stand behind Canadians and make sure that this buy Canada bill, Bill 42, has some teeth behind it, has some policy behind it.

And I just want to thank everybody for the opportunity today to get up in this great House in order to talk about this great country and this great province that we live in.

Thank you very much, Honourable Speaker.

MLA Bob Lagassé (Dawson Trail): Good afternoon.

Today, I stand to put words on the record for Bill 42, The Buy Canadian Act, which is an amendment to the government purchasers act. Thank you to the member opposite for bringing forward this bill.

Although it does appear that the minister is not interested in consultation and seems to feel only one constituency in Manitoba during an election campaign is enough to speak on behalf of all Manitobans, I would encourage him to reach out to all the constituencies in Manitoba. I'm now concerned, after listening to the question period, about the lack of consultation based on the minister's lack of ability to actually answer the basic questions on this bill.

As you have heard from my colleagues, and I will say it again: purchasing locally made goods benefits the economy, community, environment and overall product quality, making it an important practice for sustainable and thoughtful consumption. I'd like to encourage people to be aware and conscious of their purchase decisions. These conscious efforts help consider the products that are brought—or bought, not only on their immediate needs, but also on the broader economy and the environment.

Whenever possible, prioritize Canada-made goods over products that are manufactured elsewhere in the world. This commitment stems from the desire to support local businesses, contribute to the growth of the Canadian economy and reduce the footprint associated with long-distance shipping. Choosing Canadian products helps create jobs, promote sustainability and strengthens our communities.

As my colleague from Portage mentioned, John Deere had been closing down plants and we've seen the devastating effect of that when communities also get closed down or shrink as a result of that. It is the small but significant ways that I mentioned above that we can make a positive impact by supporting the hard-working people in industries in our own country.

Buying locally fosters a sense of community and connection, and allows people to interact directly with the creators and sellers, creating more personal relationships and strengthening local fabric within the communities. When you buy locally made products, more money stays within your community, within our province and then within our country. This helps support local businesses, creates jobs and stimulates economic growth.

Small businesses often rely on local customers and your purchases can make a big difference in their success. Supporting local businesses can reduce reliance on global supply chains that might be vulnerable to disruptions and helps create a more resilient economy. Local producers typically have smaller carbon footprints since they don't need to be shipped long distances.

This can help reduce environmental pollution and energy consumption.

Many local businesses also tend to prioritize sustainable materials and production methods. Under Bill 42, The Buy Canadian Act, government purchasers act amended, it says under subsection 7(4), and I quote: Under the buy Canadian policy, preferential treatment may be given to a Canadian supplier when purchasing goods under the authority of this act.

* (16:30)

Given that statement mentions preferential treatment may be given to Canadian suppliers, and I wonder—and I would like to emphasize the use of the word may—I'm left wondering what that specific criteria is and what is used to determine when this preference is applied. And, again, earlier when the minister was answering questions, the policy just wasn't there, so it's left in the air.

What factors come into play when deciding whether a Canadian supplier is prioritized over others? Are there certain situations or conditions under which a Canadian supplier might be overlooked despite preference being outlined?

Furthermore, we know that some businesses are headquartered in the United States but have retail and/or wholesale operations here in Canada. In this case, would these businesses qualify as a Canadian supplier, or would they be excluded from such considerations due to their origins?

Understanding the full scope of the criteria and any potential exemptions is more important to gain clarity on how these processes will work and ensure fair and consistent applications of these preferences.

We all know that the US tariffs on Canada goods will have numerous negative effects in our country and for our businesses. It's already evident in the world climate. It is important that we stand on our—we stand our ground in a professional, productive way to show that we are here against these tariffs and we will push back.

The negative impacts include economic slowdowns, reduced trade, higher prices for consumers and a potential for disruptions to Canadian industries. However, they may also push Canada to diversify its trade relationships and explore new markets.

The overall impact depends on the scale of tariffs and how other countries choose to respond. It is important as a province and as a country that we aim to

reduce our dependence on trade with the United States and do what we can to bolster our nation's economy.

The member from Maples during first reading says, and I quote: This bill signals our government's commitment to prioritize goods and services that are made in Canada. This bill directs the government to establish a buy Canadian policy. This policy would outline the steps government will take to stand up for Manitobans and local economy.

An important question that we need a clear, honest and direct answer to is what happens, again, from— with countries other than the United States when they submit bids for a contract in Manitoba? In these situations, will these companies from other nations be considered eligible suppliers?

While it's clear that preferential treatment may be given to Canadian suppliers, it is crucial to understand the full scope of this policy, particularly when it comes to international competition. How will the process work if a company from, say, Europe, Asia or any other region bids on contracts in Manitoba? Are there specific rules or criteria in place to determine whether foreign companies, excluding those based in the US, can participate in the bidding process? And if so, under what circumstances would they be given a green light to supply goods or services within our provinces?

Understanding the approach to the international suppliers will help ensure fairness in the bidding process, while also protecting local industries. It is important to clarify these points so that all parties involved, whether they are local, national or international suppliers, have a transparent understanding of how the system works.

Something that we must remember and take into consideration is that international trade is vital for economic growth. It is vital for our access to goods, our access to innovation, co-operation and global stability. International trade helps countries thrive in an interconnected world, including ours.

We advocate for a strong push in marketing Manitoba products to Asia, the EU and the Commonwealth, aiming to reduce our dependency on trade with the United States and bolster our nation's economy. By investing in domestic connections, including our ports, railways and transportation infrastructure, we can enhance Canada's internal market, making it more robust and resilient, while also embarking on our business to reach global markets more effectively.

I want to put formally, on the record, that I'm in full agreement with the idea of supporting Manitobans by encouraging them to buy Canadian and to buy local in every possible way. This approach is not only essential for strengthening our local economy, but helps foster a sense of community and pride in the products produced right here in Manitoba.

By choosing these Canadian-made products and locally sourced goods, we are helping to create jobs, support small businesses and reduce the environmental impact of long-distance shipping. I believe firmly that investing in local industries and products benefits everyone, and the individuals who will make and sell these products to the communities that—and the communities that will thrive as a result.

The only problem with this, from what I am hearing from the answers that we got from the minister, is that there is no plan. So I may say that I agree with all these things, but without a firm plan, we can't actually implement any of these things.

Supporting Manitobans means investing in the future of our province and ensuring that we build a resilient, self-sustaining economy. It is a practice I fully support and really wish there was a more clear plan from this NDP minister. And I am committed in my own life to promoting and advocating for these values whenever possible.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

The Speaker: There are no more member—the honourable member for Riding Mountain.

Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain): It gives me pleasure today to rise on Bill 42, The Buy Canadian Act, an act to, I guess, amend The Government Purchases Act here in Manitoba.

And I first want to start off by saying I, myself, am a proud Manitoban, a proud Canadian, and I support, and I know all my colleagues on this side of the House support buying local, buying Manitoba, buying Canadian, whenever we can. I don't think there's any doubt about that.

Again, just like my colleagues have said, you know, we sort of support the premise of this bill, but the bill is not very robust at all. And I know the honourable Minister of Public Service Delivery (MLA Sandhu) was given the task of introducing this bill and put on the hot seat today with questions that the minister couldn't answer, basically. And they're very simple questions about how it related to trade in the world, how it related to trade with our other partners, how it worked into the Free Trade Agreement. Again, no

answers, and we're—on this side of the House, we're supposed to sit back and wait for regulations, policy or something to be developed.

So basically what this government is asking for is for us to rubberstamp Bill 42 and give the government all the power to put in the regulations and the policy they want, without any assurances that Manitobans, or the opposition on this side of the House, will have any input into it. And that's concerning, I think. I think that concerns most of us over here. We're certainly not opposed to the concept, like I say.

I mean, even in the bill briefing, it's my understanding that there was very little answers in there as well. You know, same thing, no answers at the bill briefing, so that prompted our questions to the minister today. We thought the minister might have got further information that he could enlighten us today.

I mean, there's certainly—this isn't as simple situation as saying: let's just buy Manitoba and we'll put a bill in place and we can buy from Manitoba, we can buy Canadian. What repercussions might that have in the whole trading world? I mean, we have companies here in Manitoba that may be associated with the United States, that supply Manitoba and things like that. Government stops purchasing from them, well, they perhaps move out of Manitoba. Lots of questions.

And, again, I don't envy the minister, I know he means well by this bill, and he has been—he's introduced this bill as he rightly should. This is his job. But, again, we certainly do have concerns.

* (16:40)

And it would seem to me this is likely—this seems to be the fourth pillar in this government's plan to address the Donald Trump tariffs, which everyone on this side of the House opposes as well. We certainly don't support any tariffs put in by Donald Trump, and I will speak for each and every one on this side of the House.

Now we've seen the previous three pillars introduced, and that's all we've seen. So far, it's just been a lot of talk; no action on how we're going to deal with Donald Trump and his tariffs.

So we're going to defer payroll taxes. As my colleagues have made mention in question period or in other debates, deferring is not eliminating. The debt is still going to be there for the company at the end of the deferral payment, so they—basically, they don't want to spend that money; they'll need it in reserve to pay their taxes.

The PST remittance deferral, same thing. They've collected this money. It belongs to the government. You're going to let them keep it for a while, but that's really not going to solve a lot in the long run.

And then the third big one that really hit Donald Trump hard, I think, was taking American liquor off our shelves. I think Donald really couldn't sleep at night when he heard that one. That was a really tough one for him.

So then this fourth one is, we're going to buy local. We're going to hurt the United States by buying local. And, again, I support buying local. I support buying in Manitoba, but I'm not sure that this is the right tact to battle tariffs. But again, have to give this government credit. They're doing a few things, but I don't think it's enough.

My colleague from Portage la Prairie, the great Agriculture critic from Portage la Prairie, here, brought up the concerns his farmers are talking about with canola. And in my great constituency of Riding Mountain, which I'm sure the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Kostyshyn) knows that they grow a lot of canola in Riding Mountain—and as much as in Dauphin or maybe more, we're not sure, but our producers are very concerned as well. But yet we get no answers on how they're going to sell their canola crops this year. They've invested in inputs. They're committed to planting canola this year, but yet they may lose their shirts. Day after day, our critic is asking for answers and we're getting none.

So those are real things that are bothering Manitobans. I'm sure this buy Manitoba policy will get the odd headline in the newspaper, a mention on the radio, but what's it really going to do to fight Donald Trump and his tariffs? I don't believe it's going to do a lot.

So Manitoba really needs to diversify our markets, you know? There's no question about that. And our government certainly—our government—our previous government certainly believed in building prosperity and wealth here in Manitoba and Canada by strengthening an expanded interprovincial free trade agreement, the New West Partnership. Can anyone say that? Because in the previous—when we were in government, they wouldn't admit the New West Partnership even existed, Honourable Speaker. They wouldn't mention it existed, and I'm happy to see they're now recognizing that it's important to be a part of a New West Partnership, as we did.

We need to lower trade barriers; any barriers to doing trade here in Manitoba—[interjection]

And now the Agriculture Minister is talking today—I wished he would give more answers in question period when we ask the questions. And I will cede the floor to him if he would like to tell us about canola today and how he's going to take care of the producers. If he can assure me of that—

So, again, we have to diversify our markets all around the world. We have to increase our trade and dealing with other provinces, signing contracts for things in other provinces and hopefully they will sign them with us.

But more importantly, we need a competitive tax regime here in Manitoba. That's what we need. That's what businesses are looking for here in Manitoba. And in order to buy local, buy in Manitoba, we need strong businesses in Manitoba that can invest and have the products that we need as consumers and as government. So I think that's very important.

Aggressive marketing of Manitoba's production to Asia, the European Union and the Commonwealth to reduce our reliance on trade with United States and strengthen our nation, we have to do that. We've heard no mention of that already. We've heard no mention.

We need to continue investing in our connections within Canada; our ports, the Port of Churchill. Our government took the large step of investing in the rail line to Churchill, ensuring that producers could get product to port, which is very important in dealing with other countries. And I'm pleased to see this government continuing to invest in Churchill—very, very important.

So, again, on this side of the House, we certainly support standing up to the United States and to Donald Trump in this trade war. We support a team Canada, a team Manitoba approach. What we would like is clearer answers. We need answers on what this government is actually doing.

And agriculture, again, contributes immensely to our gross domestic—to our GDP here in Manitoba—

The Speaker: Order, please.

I would ask members on both sides of the House to quit screaming back and forth. I have to be able to hear what the member's saying, and I can't do that when everybody else is carrying on.

Mr. Nesbitt: Well, thank you, Honourable Speaker, for the guidance, and, yes, I was losing my train of thought a little bit with all the heckling coming from the other side. They seem to want to talk now, but yet I want to tell everybody at home that nobody from the

government side got up to speak to this bill besides the minister. So how important is the bill to that side if they don't want to speak to it to tell people why Manitoba should buy locally?

This side of the House, we're very passionate about supporting local. Many of us—many of us—from this side of the House are from rural Manitoba. We know how much—how important it is to buy local, how much the dollar spins around in the community, and that would be the same in Manitoba. The more the government can buy in Manitoba—and maybe we didn't even need a policy for this; we should just buy locally when we can.

You know, we should encourage businesses to be competitive in Manitoba by having a good tax regime so they pay less taxes; they can hire more employees, they'd be more competitive. We can buy those products in Manitoba.

So, again, this—on this side of the House, we're looking for clarity on Bill 42, and we would certainly appreciate if the minister could provide clarity, or one of his colleagues here could provide clarity, on this bill. I know the minister has spoken on the bill, but we'd welcome someone from the other side to get up and clarify some of these things we're—sorry—we're talking about today.

So, again, we need to work as a province and work as a country to ensure that we're strong, that we can stand on our own two feet as Canadians here. We can battle the United States, we can battle Donald Trump when we—when he—if and when he does put in tariffs on October—on April 2—sorry—it's—it'll be a terrible April Fool's joke, one day late if he does, and hopefully we'll see his foolishness in doing that.

But, again, all of this, even if he does back off, I think it shows that governments need to prepare—be prepared for the future. We need to ensure we have the proper tools, we have the proper economic things in place to keep businesses competitive in Manitoba and in Canada so that we can have the industry and the services we need right here in Canada and be less reliant on the world. We'll never be completely independent of the world. It's a global economy and we certainly need to do what we need to always be trading with our partners around the world.

Honourable Speaker, again I can't stress how important the agricultural situation is here in Manitoba, and, you know, I get many, many calls from producers. The Agriculture Minister and myself were at a banquet on Saturday night at the Elkhorn Resort, had a great time, had the opportunity to sit at the table and

enjoy his hospitality, and it was a great event where we saluted young farmers here in Manitoba, the future of agriculture in Manitoba.

And minister gave an eloquent speech there, very well received by the audience. And when everything was over and dessert was served, producers were coming up to me, and it was pretty much an agricultural audience, as you might expect at a young farmers event, and they were concerned—they were concerned. They weren't blaming. They weren't naming the Agriculture Minister and saying he's not doing enough. They're concerned. And I have to take the minister on his word that he's going to talk to his counterparts in Ottawa and come to a resolution on this.

* (16:50)

But again, I think it's incumbent upon this government to let Manitobans know what they're planning to do. I mean, it's a feeble response to the tariffs so far in my opinion—very, very little. And that's all we're asking for on this side.

You know, we need a unified approach to the tariffs. We're all Canadians; we're all Manitobans. We will never be the 51st state. All of us on this side of the House are in unanimity on that. We are Canadian; we'll always be Canadian.

So, again, I salute the minister for—he has a tough job to do. I mean, agriculture is so important, and I think he needs to maybe convince his colleagues here in the city. I mean, he's one of a minority of government MLAs, the only two ministers in rural Manitoba. He has a tough row to hoe, and I would hope the Cabinet and his caucus consider what he says and take into account that, you know, farming is huge in Manitoba; there's a lot of investments in Manitoba; they support local, and the health of the farming industry will certainly determine the health of the province. I think we all know that; we know that from the past. And they say when farmers have money, everybody has money, and that's true, and I think the Agriculture Minister will agree with that as well.

So, Honourable Speaker, there's been many words put on this, and I think we're all on the same theme here. We just keep talking about it in different ways.

An Honourable Member: Well, lots more words from our side. Not so much from theirs. Too bad.

Mr. Nesbitt: Well, yes, on our side of the House, as my friend from Spruce Woods says, you know, it's only been our side of the House talking on this bill,

and we don't know what anyone else wants on that side of the House.

So—but again, I want to reiterate that we're in support of this bill. We think the minister's had a tough go of it here, putting forward a bill with nothing really substantial in it, and no support from his colleagues, so—that's tough. And I feel for the minister, who is a rookie, and I really like the minister, and I know he will do a good job, and he's very serious. But I think the leadership has put him in a tough spot with this bill.

And, again, any of our comments today are not intended to demean the minister or anything like that. It's just a tough bill for him, and I just wished he had some more support from his caucus colleagues in talking about this bill today.

And, you know, our—[*interjection*]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Nesbitt: It's projection. [*interjection*]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Nesbitt: So again, Honourable Speaker, I'm just about at the conclusion of my remarks here. There's likely a few more things I want to say.

But I really do want to encourage this government to—and I believe they're concerned about the tariffs; I really do. But I would really like to see more action, rather than just talk. I think Manitobans would like to see that. And I guess on this side of the House, we're holding hope that maybe the budget tomorrow might reveal a few things of their plans of—I mean, maybe add another few pillars to their four little pillars now and maybe come back with a robust plan to deal with the Donald Trump tariffs.

I think the inaction sort of speaks volumes about what's happening on that side of the House, and maybe—let's just give them the benefit of the doubt—maybe they're waiting for the budget tomorrow.

Tomorrow's going to be the defining moment, and we'll see. I'm sure they've all read it by now on that side of the House. They all know what's in it. They've had input into it; they've got their talking points ready, and hopefully tariffs fill up four or five pages. And I'm sure maybe even the buy Canada, buy Manitoba, one Manitoba thing might be a theme in there. You just never know.

So it's always an interesting day when it's budget day, and I guess I'm sure the Manitobans are ready to see what this government can do tomorrow, and on

this side of the House we're certainly willing to stand up and talk on behalf of Manitobans and ensure that all Manitobans are represented and that the government takes care of all Manitobans and businesses when it comes to dealing with the tariffs here in Manitoba.

Honourable Speaker, the time is starting to wilt here. I've got about four or five minutes left; I don't know.

An Honourable Member: Question.

Mr. Nesbitt: The member for St. Boniface (MLA Loiselle) seems to have a question. Maybe he wants to get up and talk, I'm just not sure, but I don't think he does. I think he'd like to vote on this bill today.

And I think on this side of the House, we're certainly—[interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Nesbitt: —may not take up any more time than needed. Again—appropriate amount of time.

We like to give as much time to a bill as it deserves and I think we had a fulsome chat on this bill today. Again, we just wish the opposition would have put—or the government, sorry—would have put a few words on the record today.

And I salute the minister for putting this bill forward and thank him for putting this bill forward and for the sentiments expressed in it. I guess we'll still—we'll be looking forward to holding the government to account when it comes to the actual policy and framework for this bill.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Mr. Grant Jackson (Spruce Woods): I'm going to just put a very few words on the record here today because, obviously, our Progressive Conservative caucus supports buying local. Most of us are from rural Manitoba and we do that every day because the big Walmarts and the big corporate chains that all of our colleagues from the NDP side support regularly don't even exist in most of our communities.

So, of course, we know how to support local. We do it every day in every aspect of our lives. We've done it and we'll continue to do it every day moving forward.

But this bill has no substance. And so while we will support the bill based on its title, and the premise of it because we believe in supporting Manitoba and buying local, this is just another step from a wholly absent-of-substance government that is all performative.

And nothing is more performative than what they've done on the front of the building. They hung up a giant Canada flag, they took a big photo op, it was up for four days and then what did they do, Honourable Speaker? They took it back down again because they'd had their photo op and that is as far as the substance of this government goes. [interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Jackson: And then they got some bad press that it had come down, and so now what have they done? They hung it back up again because they can't make up their minds, Honourable Speaker. And that is because this government is so lacking in substance about how they actually plan to support Canada, they cannot keep their minds straight.

So we look forward to some actual details as to how they're going to buy local coming forward. We look forward that to committee. I'm sure we'll have amendments because there is substance on this side of the House.

We will be bringing forward amendments to actually support the buying of local and we hope that the government members will get onboard.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

The Speaker: Are there any other members wishing to debate?

Seeing none, is the House ready for the question?

An Honourable Member: Question.

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

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

House Business

The Speaker: The honourable Minister of Justice, on House business.

Hon. Matt Wiebe (Acting Government House Leader): I'd like to announce, in addition to the bills previously referred, that Bill 42, The Buy Canadian Act (Government Purchases Act Amended), will also be considered at the March 25th, 2025, meeting of the Standing Committee on Justice.

Thank you.

The Speaker: It has been announced that, in addition to the bills previously referred, that Bill 42, The Buy Canadian Act (Government Purchases Act Amended), will also be considered at the March 25, 2025, meeting of the Standing Committee on Justice.

**Bill 32—The Residential Tenancies
Amendment Act
(Measures to Address Unlawful Activities)**

The Speaker: We will now resume debate on Bill 32, The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act (Measures to Address Unlawful Activities), and the debate stands in the honourable member of Justice, who has unlimited time remaining.

Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Honourable Speaker, where was I? Oh, that's right, the members opposite have no credibility when it comes to public safety.

Now, we have taken a different approach. We want to act, we want to take the steps necessary to support communities, to work with law enforcement, to support the work that's already being done in community and that's the kind of work that we've—we are undertaking.

* (17:00)

The Speaker: Order, please.

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable minister will have unlimited time remaining.

The hour being 5 p.m., this House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

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The Legislative Assembly of Manitoba Debates and Proceedings
are also available on the Internet at the following address:

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