



Second Session – Forty-Third Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report
(Hansard)**

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-Third Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALTOMARE, Nello, Hon.	Transcona	NDP
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	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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, November 22, 2024

The House met at 10 a.m.

Clerk (Mr. Rick Yarish): It is my duty to inform the House that the Speaker is unavoidably absent. Therefore, in accordance with the statutes, I would ask the Deputy Speaker to please take the Chair.

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

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

Please be seated.

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Government House Leader): Could you please canvass the House for leave to allow the member for Tyndall Park (MLA Lamoureux) to second the motions for all stages of Bill 2, The Provincial Court Amendment Act.

The Deputy Speaker: Is there leave to allow the member for Tyndall Park to second the motions for all stages of Bill 2, The Provincial Court Amendment Act? *[Agreed]*

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 2—The Provincial Court Amendment Act

Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I move, seconded by the member for Tyndall Park (MLA Lamoureux), that Bill 2,

The Provincial Court Amendment Act, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Wiebe: I'm pleased to reintroduce Bill 2, The Provincial Court Amendment Act, also known as Keira's Law, to the Legislature.

This bill amends The Provincial Court Act to expand subjects of continuing education for provincial court judges candidates to include intimate partner violence, coercive control in intimate partner and family relationships and the experience of Indigenous peoples and the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

In addition, the amendments will require judicial justices of the peace candidates to undertake to participate in continuing education or similar specified topics in order to be eligible for appointment. It will also ensure that the funding provided for these continuing education seminars does not lapse.

I want to thank my colleague for Tyndall Park for her important work in this legislation, and I'm pleased to present this bill to the House for its consideration.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: Agreed and so ordered—is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? The motion? *[Agreed]*

Committee reports?

Tabling of reports?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Holodomor Memorial Day

Hon. Ron Kostyshyn (Minister of Agriculture): I rise today regarding the 91st anniversary of the Ukrainian famine of 1932, known as Holodomor, which Manitobans commemorate annually on the fourth Saturday of November.

From 1932 to 1933, Ukraine experienced a human famine that led to deaths of millions of men, women and children, famine that has been part of the deliberate plan to suppress the people of Ukraine. Wheat and other grains were confiscated for farmers and labourers. Although some of the food was sold or

exported, much more was simply left to rot. For those who resisted, the imprisonment and deportation or execution remained forcibly to starve to death. The very word holodomor translates extremist by hunger and reflects the cruelty at that period.

Mr. Speaker, the ensuring death and destruction affected Ukrainian families for generations, including many who sought refuge here in Manitoba. Despite full the—pardon me—despite the painful experiences that many survivors in Canada shared with their experience to ensure that they will not be—this will not be repeated. Out of those painful experiences, Canadians, Ukrainian heritages, have built a very strong relationship in Manitoba.

'Vabrant'—vibrant communities throughout Manitoba and across Canada: Canada is the home to one of the world's largest Ukrainian populations outside of Ukraine, and Canadians of Ukrainian heritage have made valuable contributions to life in Manitoba and across our country. Estimates suggest one in seven Manitobans is of the Ukrainian heritage. These are strong links that led to Manitoba government to be the first in Canada to pass legislation commemorating the period and acknowledging this act as a genocide.

This is also important that we remember what happened and as today it is important to remember the Ukrainians that once faced challenges to its freedom and external forces. In response, Ukrainians have demonstrated their resolve of independence. Manitobans are stepping up and they are responding to the calls of support and they are welcome new neighbours from Ukraine, and Manitobans are opening up their hearts and homes to overwhelming numbers.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, on this occasion we remember the past, the present challenges faced by people in Ukraine, and I ask those present to remember this event to keep the people of Ukraine in our thoughts and prayers.

Slava Ukraini [*Glory to Ukraine*].

Thank you so much.

Mr. Richard Perchotte (Selkirk): Today we mark a solemn yet profoundly important occasion, the 92nd anniversary of the Holodomor, the Ukraine famine and genocide of 1932 to 1933, known as death by hunger. The Holodomor was a man-made tragedy, a deliberate weaponization of starvation by Joseph Stalin's Soviet regime. It aimed not only to crush the Ukrainian people but to erase their culture, autonomy and very existence.

* (10:10)

Millions perished. Children, mothers, fathers, entire families, many of them rural famers who once tilled Ukraine's fertile lands. At the height of this genocide, 28,000 people died every day. These are not just numbers, they are lives, dreams and the future stolen from the world.

In our own community here in Manitoba, the echoes of the Holodomor are deeply felt. One in seven Manitobans is of Ukrainian descent, and among them are the descendants who—of those who survived the unspeakable horrors of that time. Their stories of resilience, stories of enduring unimaginable hardship, continue to inspire us all.

Many of us are familiar with the statue Bitter Memories of Childhood, which stands just west of our Legislative Building. It depicts a young girl clutching a handful of wheat: both a symbol of vulnerability and of unyielding determination to survive. This is the story of the Ukrainians worldwide, a story of survival, resilience and ultimately, hope.

Yet the story of the Holodomor does not belong only to the past. The same oppressive ideologies that led to this genocide persist today. Ukraine once again faces aggression with its sovereignty, culture and people under threat. This reminds us that history's lessons must never be ignored, and we must stand united in defending the rights and freedoms of all peoples.

But this is also a moment to honour the resilience of the Ukrainians. From the ashes of tragedy, they have built thriving communities, contributing immensely to Manitoba and the world. Their determination is a testament to the indomitable human spirit.

As we remember the millions of lives lost, we must also act. Let us educate the next generation about Holodomor, ensuring its lessons are never forgotten. Let us advocate for justice, standing in solidarity with Ukraine, and let us build bridges of understanding, rooted in the belief that every culture, every voice and every life has value.

In commemorating this dark chapter of history, we renew our commitment to hope, resilience and unity. The Ukrainian people teach us that even in the face of the gravest injustice, the human spirit can triumph. Together let us carry forward the light of remembrance and the flame of hope.

Mr. Kostyshyn: I would ask for a minute of silence remembering Holodomor day event, if I could have permission for that today.

The Deputy Speaker: Is there leave for a moment of silence? [*Agreed*]

A moment of silence was observed.

Introduction of Guests

The Deputy Speaker: Before we continue on with Ministerial Statements, I'd like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery, where we have with us today JoAnne Lewandosky, Val Noseworthy and members of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress in Manitoba, who are guests of the honourable member for Dauphin (Mr. Kostyshyn).

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

Municipal Government Awareness Week

Hon. Glen Simard (Minister of Municipal and Northern Relations): I'm honoured to rise before the House today to recognize November 25 to November 29, 2024 as Municipal Government Awareness Week.

Since 2021, the Manitoba Government has officially celebrated Municipal Government Awareness Week, highlighted—it's significant each year.

Municipal Government Awareness Week provides an opportunity for citizens to learn more about the services that directly impact their daily lives. Municipal governments play a vital role in the daily lives of citizens by delivering essential services such as waste collection, road maintenance and police and fire services.

By facilitating council meetings and community consultations, municipal governments also provide a platform for citizens to engage in the decision-making process, ensuring that local voices are heard and represented.

I want to express my sincere gratitude to municipal leaders for their dedicated services to their communities. I also want to thank the Association of Manitoba Municipalities for their unwavering support for municipalities.

The Association of Manitoba Municipalities' annual fall convention, taking place this year between November 25 and 29, is a chance for mayors, councillors, reeves and administrators to come together to share ideas, to grow and to build capacity to better serve their citizens.

Our government strongly supports these efforts, and we wish the Association of Manitoba Municipalities and all the convention attendees a rewarding and successful convention.

Je veux signaler le travail accompli par l'Association des municipalités bilingues du Manitoba, la voix des municipalités bilingues pour presque 30 années. Avec l'établissement de leur modèle 3M, leurs communautés vont recevoir les supports qu'ils requièrent pour améliorer les services pour leurs résidents et établir le standard pour la livraison des services en français au Canada.

Translation

I would like to highlight the work accomplished by the Association of Manitoba Bilingual Municipalities, the voice of bilingual municipalities for almost 30 years. With the establishment of their 3M model, their communities will receive the support they need to improve services for their residents and set the standard for the delivery of French-language services in Canada.

English

We are committed to being a listening government and collaborating with municipalities as serious partners in governance. Over the past year, the Manitoba government has collaborated with municipalities' various initiatives to enhance services and address the unique needs of each municipality. By raising greater awareness about the vital role of municipalities, we can encourage citizens to take an active role in decision making and strengthen our communities.

Let us take this opportunity to acknowledge the vital role municipal governments play in shaping the lives of Manitoba.

Thank you. Miigwech. Merci.

Mr. Trevor King (Lakeside): I am deeply honoured to rise today to recognize Municipal Government Awareness Week, observed this year starting on November 25. This marks the fourth consecutive year the Province of Manitoba has celebrated this important week, and its growing recognition underscores the vital role municipal governments play in our province.

Municipal governments are the closest and most direct level of government to the people. They make decisions that impact Manitobans at every aspect of daily life, regardless of ability, identity or background.

From waste management and road maintenance to fire and police services, land use planning and emergency response, municipalities ensure the smooth functioning of our communities. These essential services foster economic, social and cultural growth, laying the foundation for thriving communities across our province.

Municipalities are not just service providers, they are serious partners in governance. I would like to commend the Association of Manitoba Municipalities and the Association of Manitoba Bilingual Municipalities for their steadfast advocacy on behalf of our municipalities. Additionally, I'd like to acknowledge the AMM and AMBM for all the great work they do to bring forward municipal issues to government.

As municipal leaders gather in Winnipeg for the AMM annual fall convention, they will exchange ideas, build capacity and strengthen their resolutions to serve their citizens effectively. I have had the opportunity to hear from municipalities, both their concerns and their solutions, and can't wait to hear the lively debate and discussion as they bring forward ideas to make Manitoba better.

Honourable Deputy Speaker, I've had the experience of being a municipal councillor for 12 years, eight as a councillor and four as a reeve, and also eight years on the board of directors for the Association of Manitoba Municipalities, so I can appreciate the great work that they do to make our province a better place.

Thank you.

* (10:20)

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Throne Speech

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Leader of the Official Opposition): Today, I rise to talk about that recycled Throne Speech that we heard the other day from this Kinew government and how it affects the Lac du Bonnet constituency and other places all around this great province of ours, honourable Deputy Speaker.

So, of course, we saw that the recycled Throne Speech delivered the other day is actually a lot of PC policies brought forward again, with really nothing new from the member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Kinew). We talk about the child-care spaces in this great province of ours, Deputy Speaker, and we talk about partnering. We talk about partnering with municipalities, with school divisions, with the federal government and, of course, child-care centre providers as well.

So just to educate the group here, in July of 2023 and in November of 2022, we partnered with municipalities and we partnered with school divisions to bring forward child-care plans moving into the future. And we already had seen that we are over 12,000 child-care spaces dedicated, more 50 per cent of the way to the 23,000 that were on—that were coming.

So I'll say that the acting Education Minister wants to get up and speak, but school divisions—Division scolaire francophone—franco-manitobaine, two projects; Evergreen, Flin Flon, Fort la Bosse, Interlake, Lord Selkirk, Louis Riel; Mountain View has three projects; Pembina Trails, two projects; Pine Creek, two projects; River East Transcona, four projects; Rolling River school division, two projects; Seven Oaks, two projects; Southwest Horizon, two projects; Sunrise school division, two projects; Whiteshell, one.

So Lac du Bonnet, Anola and Pinawa are all not getting their daycare spaces because of this government.

We promised 3,600; they're promising 3,500. Where are they, honourable Deputy Speaker?

Increased Incidents of Intolerance and Bigotry

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Minister responsible for Women and Gender Equity): On November 6, a man carried a sign on the campus of Guelph university reading: abortion is murder. This wasn't just an exercise in free speech, it represented health care and is meant to intimidate women.

On November 9, masked men gathered in Hamilton, Ontario, carrying a sign calling for mass deportations.

A Conservative candidate in New Brunswick's election compared the genocidal policies of residential schools to harmful narratives that schools, teachers and governments are forcing children to change their gender identities—simply not true.

A Conservative candidate in BC's election referred to Indigenous peoples as savages, perpetuating anti-Indigenous racism. And their leader refused to demand their resignation, endorsing this hateful ideology.

We're seeing the introduction of hate-filled legislation targeting transgender individuals, including children.

Closer to home, the member for Brandon West (Mr. Balcaen) repeatedly misrepresents a government

committee by calling it, and I quote, the crack cocaine committee, undermining its work, our minister and spreading misinformation.

The member for Borderland (Mr. Guenter) routinely makes grotesque statements like build that pipeline to jails and send them back, further stoking division.

But against this backdrop of growing intolerance, bigotry and hate is our NDP team. I am so proud to stand as part of Manitoba's NDP team. We are a beacon of hope and progress across Turtle Island. Our amazing team is charting—

The Deputy Speaker: Order. Order.

So ministers in their members' statements aren't able to speak to government policy.

It was—[interjection] Order. Order.

So I—[interjection] Order.

So I will read the rule, and it was meant as a warning. Just for reference for everyone, the restrictions on scope: A minister of the Crown may not use the time allotted for members' statements to comment on government policy or ministerial or departmental action.

So now to the minister to conclude.

MLA Fontaine: Our amazing team is charting a different path. We're establishing an all-committee Cabinet—or committee—

An Honourable Member: Government policy.

MLA Fontaine: Okay.

Our NDP team is making transformative change—proof that in the face of—

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

Is there leave for the member to finish?

An Honourable Member: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: Leave has been denied.

Constable Paul Human

Mr. Richard Perchotte (Selkirk): Today, I have the extreme pleasure in introducing to this Chamber and our wonderful province to Constable Paul Human.

Constable Human has spent nearly 24 years serving Canada as a highly respected RCMP officer. To the benefit of Manitoba, he has spent most of those years here in our province, calling Lac du Bonnet,

Thompson, Stonewall and Selkirk home; an impressive career responding to the call of duty performing many roles, from general duties, forensic investigator, crisis negotiator and now as community relations officer. Every public event I attend, I see Paul there engaging, informing and protecting the public.

In addition, Mr. Human is also a naval reservist with 12 years of service, obtaining the rank of lieutenant. If that wasn't enough, Paul is also the commanding officer of No. 77 Daerwood, providing leadership, direction and guidance to 12-to-19 year-old youth in the Royal Canadian Sea Cadets Corps. As a former Sea Cadet, myself, I can attest to the impact the program can have on you.

Still not done giving of himself, Paul Human is in his third year, out training to become a deacon with the Roman Catholic Church in Selkirk. Wow. What an exceptional human.

Paul is joined here today with his wife, Tammy Human; children, Robert, Chantal and Hope Human; his mother, Jane Human; sister, Dana Human-Skaftfeld; and brother-in-law, Owen Skaftfeld.

Please rise and join me as I honour another Selkirk hero.

Introduction of Guests

The Deputy Speaker: Before we continue with members' statements, I'll just direct all honourable members to the loge to my right where Mr. Jerry Storie, former MLA for Flin Flon, is.

Paul Ong

MLA Mike Moyes (Riel): I'm happy to rise today to recognize the outstanding work of Riel constituent, Paul Ong.

Recently, I had the privilege of attending the 10th Concert for a Cause, an event organized by Paul to bring the community together in a musical celebration. Concert for a Cause is an annual fundraiser event supporting the Yap-Ong Endowment Fund for Sistema Winnipeg and another chosen charity. This concert showcases the talent of the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, Paul and students from Sistema, a free program of the WSO, that empowers young people in higher needs communities through music.

In the Sistema program, students receive access to high quality musical instruction, nurturing their creativity and inspiring them to reach their full potential. The work of Sistema Winnipeg is made possible by dedicated community members like Paul.

Since its inception in 2015, Concert for a Cause has raised over \$150,000. This year, the event also supported ANCOP, a registered charity dedicated to restoring dignity and uplifting the lives of poor children and families across the world. In a remarkable feat, this year's Concert for a Cause raised over \$88,000.

As a result of his tenacity and hard work, Paul recently received an award as an outstanding volunteer fundraiser at the Manitoba Philanthropy Awards. He is the first Chinese-Filipino person to receive this award, and in 2019, became the first Chinese-Filipino artist to be accompanied by the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra. Through his leadership, Paul has not only supported student success, but also paved the way for future Chinese-Filipino community members.

In addition to his work as an artist and philanthropist, Paul serves as a vice-principal in the Winnipeg School Division and on the board of directors of the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, further demonstrating his commitment to music and empowering youth.

* (10:30)

It was inspiring to watch the students perform at Concert for a Cause as their dedication to music was evident, a testament to Paul's vision and tireless efforts.

It's a privilege to honour a dedicated member of the Riel constituency who has made such an impact on our community.

Please join me in commending Paul for his commitment to using the arts to create positive change.

Habitat for Humanity

Mrs. Carrie Hiebert (Morden-Winkler): I rise today to highlight the work of Habitat for Humanity and the selfless volunteers from my constituency that are dedicated to providing safe and affordable housing to those in need. Habitat for Humanity is a remarkable organization dedicated to helping low-income families working to—and purchase a home and make affordable—make homeownership attainable.

Founded in 1987, with the very first home being built in Winkler, Habitat Manitoba is a non-profit housing organization that mobilizes communities to help low-income families build strength, stability and self-reliance through affordable homeownership. With the help of volunteers, donors and community partners, Habitat for Humanity has helped over 500 families and more than 1,400 children in Manitoba.

Currently, there are five rural homes being built, projects being built, and 75 in Winnipeg, as well. That's 80 new homes. I had the opportunity to participate in a local home build project from start to finish in Winkler. Upon completion of the project on—on—on October 26, I joined the community participating in a heartwarming key ceremony. This day marked not just the handing over of keys, but the unlocking of dreams, hope and new beginnings for Binwa and Idolo and their three children. This well-deserving family of five are newcomers to Canada and have worked tirelessly to build their new life here, contributing to the Winkler community and the local Habitat projects.

Homeownership is more than just having a roof over your head. It is a foundation on which families are built and they're building their lives, create memories and foster a sense of belonging.

Please join me in thanking the Morden-Winkler Habitat for Humanity chapter and the board and community for walking alongside this family to achieve their dreams of homeownership.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Grocery Price Inflation Government Record to Reduce

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Leader of the Official Opposition): I say greetings to everyone in the gallery today and thanks for joining us.

Honourable Speaker, the Premier likes to make bold statements to push his tough-guy image. He told Manitobans that grocery store prices would be lowered due to his gas tax holiday or else. I quote: We do expect that grocery chains will pass on the savings or there will be consequences. Right from the Premier's mouth.

Food costs continue to rise while portions get smaller. Since getting his headlines, the Premier has been silent on either prices or consequences.

Can the Premier table a single piece of correspondence to any business operating in Manitoba, a single CEO, a single owner in which he shared concern that savings have not been passed along to consumers along with the consequences for them denying him?

Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier): The members opposite can talk about image. We're going to talk about the issues and the things that are going to make life more affordable for you.

In the Throne Speech that we brought forward this week, we shared part of our plan to make grocery

prices more affordable. We're going to ban restrictive covenants. These are contracts that big grocers use to squash competition, and we think that that's wrong. We're in favour of more competition to drive down prices.

The only question I got for the members opposite: When did they start to oppose free market principles? So far this year, they've opposed relief on the gas tax. Now they oppose relief on hydro rates and, apparently, they also oppose competition that will make grocery prices more affordable.

So one thing that we're trying to show on this side of the House is that governments succeed when they serve you, the people of Manitoba. We've heard loud and clear that we need to keep working to make life more affordable. That's exactly what we'll do.

Mr. Ewasko: It's just evident again that this Premier would rather stand there and not only bully his own mates in his caucus but also grocers, honourable Deputy Speaker. The Premier loves the headlines that his threats generate but he hates the actual follow-up.

So Manitobans are left paying more and getting less from grocers under this NDP, much like his mentor, Greg Selinger. Saskatchewan has a fuel tax of 15 cents. Manitoba has a one-year holiday, so surely, consumers will see a stark difference at the till. No. In Saskatchewan, a 15-roll of royal bathroom tissue, \$7.49; Manitoba, \$7.49. Green grapes in Saskatchewan, \$2.38; Manitoba, \$2.38. French's ketchup, great Canadian option, \$3.57 in Saskatchewan; \$3.57 in Manitoba.

Can the Premier table a single receipt that shows an identical product in Saskatchewan and in Manitoba that isn't a—

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

Mr. Kinew: I'm going to rely on you to queue me up because I can't bear to watch the Leader of the Opposition anymore.

Again, I would ask him, what about the price of gas? How do it—that compare to Saskatchewan? Well, guess what, honourable Speaker, 14 cents a litre cheaper right here in Manitoba. And that saves you money each and every day. If you drive the average vehicle, 10 bucks that you're saving every time you go to the pump. If you drive a pickup truck, 15 bucks that you're saving every single time you gas up.

We've lowered affordability—we've brought in new affordability measures in our Throne Speech, and what did the opposition have to say about it? This is

the shortest amendment to a throne speech, ever. There's not even a subclause, there's not even a full page here.

I'll table for the member opposite the last amendment we brought into a throne speech: pages and pages and pages of critique of the Heather Stefanson administration. That's why Manitobans elected us, because we're working hard for—

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

Mr. Ewasko: So, honourable acting—or, Deputy Speaker, I table the flyer for the Premier to compare.

So this is not a comparison of apples and oranges. We're comparing apples to apples. So the cost of Canada No. 2 grade apples in Regina today costs \$8 a pound, honourable Speaker. Today, in Winnipeg, the exact same, \$8. The Premier's just blustering, and he's told Manitobans that grocery prices would absolutely be reduced under his plan. The only thing that's been reduced is the amount of groceries that one can afford.

Grocers called his bluff the last 12 months and Manitobans are left wondering why the NDP's promised savings don't come to fruition. The Premier's promise on how he was going to lower food prices was just plain foolish.

The Premier should stand in his place and apologize for threatening grocers and other Manitobans throughout the last year, honourable Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Kinew: Well, we know the members opposite won't stand up for health care. We know that they won't stand up for a more affordable cost of living. We know that they won't stand up for education.

We just saw the only thing that they will stand up for: big grocery chains. That's not like us. We're on your side. We're with you, the people of Manitoba.

And so I'll refer to this document, this esteemed privileged document that the member opposite tabled here in the House, and just remind you, with the money that you're saving with the gas tax holiday every single time you go to the pump, according to this document tabled, you could buy four more pineapples. You could buy two pounds more of apples, you could even buy 15 more pounds of tomatoes. *[interjection] [inaudible]*

And, again, you don't have to take our word for it. This is the evidence, according to the evidence tabled by the member opposite. We're saving you money and there's plenty more good news to come.

Hospitals Across Manitoba Staff Safety Concerns

Mrs. Kathleen Cook (Roblin): This week it was revealed the shocking conditions health-care workers in Swan River are being forced to work in.

* (10:40)

MNU president Darlene Jackson told the media nurses are, quote, afraid to work in these conditions, citing daily violence, broken security cameras and a broken overhead announcement system. She added that it's just becoming more unsafe; we need to deal with these issues now.

Staff have been assaulted, people are wandering freely into private staff areas, and there is no consistent security at night. The municipality of Swan Valley passed a resolution earlier this week calling for better security at their hospital. They sent this request to the government and are desperately awaiting relief and, more importantly, solutions.

What specific solutions is the Premier offering to nurses in Swan River today?

Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier): Well, health care is a top priority, and everybody deserves to be able to access health care when they need it and to do so safely.

We also know that staffing up the health-care system after years of cuts is key to fixing the damage of Heather Stefanson and the PCs.

And so that's why we're ensuring that there's more institutional safety officers province-wide to keep nurses safe when they go to work.

Now, when it comes to the situation in Swan River, we've been hard at work. Step 1, as always, is to listen to the front lines. And so we're deploying the resources to make those repairs to the cameras and to the PA system. But importantly, we're also ensuring that the resources for those workers themselves, the pay, the recognition, the work-life balance, is going to be there.

So again, I turn to the member opposite and say, we've been hearing a lot from Swan River, business owners saying that there are real struggles, saying that somebody in the government has to do something.

The only thing I'd point out to them is, do you know when those quotes were given? January 2023, under Heather Stefanson. They ignored Swan. We're—

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

The honourable member for Roblin, on a supplementary question.

Mrs. Cook: Swan River is not the only hospital in crisis due to this NDP's failures.

I'll table a letter from a long-time nurse at HSC. I've redacted their name to protect their identity, because in their letter, they say they're afraid of being reprimanded for speaking up.

They have no silent alarm to press in an emergency. They are over 15 minutes away from any kind of security response. They've heard verbal threats given to patients' family members. In their unit this year alone, they found crowbars, screwdrivers and heavy chains brought into the hospital.

They end their letter with a quote: The current lack of action on this issue is not only unacceptable, it is unethical.

Why has this NDP Premier allowed such chaos to spread across Manitoba hospitals?

Mr. Kinew: Well, the chaos that the member is complaining about is a symptom of the total ignoring of the inner city and of addictions crisis in Manitoba for two terms under the PCs.

Now, when it comes to the health-care workers, those heroes on the front lines of the Health Sciences Centre, we are listening. Absolutely, we know that you have a right to go to work safely and to return home safely at the end of your shift.

The same goes true for patients. Not only do we need to see wait times come down after years of cuts under the PCs, we also need you to feel safe while you're in a facility.

So what have we done? We've brought in more than a hundred institutional safety officers. Many, many of these officers are at the Health Sciences Centre. Honourable Speaker, do you know how many institutional safety officers were deployed by the PCs? None. Absolutely none.

So years of inaction, years of cuts, years of turning a blind eye to the addictions crisis has left us with a tremendous situation to handle—

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

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

Mrs. Cook: I'd like to table a post by Bill Gade, the reeve of Swan Valley West, from last night. He said the stories he was hearing from inside their hospital

were unbelievable and horrific. He adds that, quote, we understand that Prairie Mountain Health management has made it very clear that those leaking information to the press can expect professional retribution.

So much for being a listening government. If it means bad press for this Premier, those health-care workers better keep their mouths shut.

Health-care staff deserve to be actually heard on these issues. They deserve a safe workplace.

Why is the NDP trying to silence health-care workers from speaking out about NDP failures in Manitoba hospitals?

Mr. Kinew: Well, we've been hearing a lot from the Swan Valley region. Recently, there's been a lot of complaints about a needle exchange program that was started under the former PC government. So we're bringing in resources to respond.

We're hearing a lot of complaints about drug trafficking which, for years, went under—was never addressed by the PCs. Just yesterday we announced a new general investigative unit to bring the hammer down on those who would bring toxic drugs into our communities.

And, of course, when it comes to listening to those health-care workers on the front lines, I will repeat one of the first public messages that the Minister of Health and I shared after last year's election: the days of retribution for health workers speaking out are over. That was the practice under Heather Stefanson; we welcome critical and contrarian voices and, in fact, I am so keen to listen to those on the front lines, later today I will be going to the Bethesda hospital in Steinbach to have another good listening session with those heroes on the front lines.

We listen; they never did. They cut; we're fixing health care.

Provincial Finances Balanced Budget Inquiry

Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland): Honourable Deputy Speaker, Manitoba's total liabilities have grown to over \$76 billion. Net debt is projected to grow to over \$35 billion after only one year of this NDP government. Our total GDP is only \$70 billion and the Finance Minister has decided to borrow even more so that our debt-to-GDP is projected to hit a record level of over 39 per cent. Even the Selinger government did hit those debt ratios.

Can the Minister of Finance tell us: why is he refusing to follow S&P's advice to try to balance by 2025, and how is he going to pay for his \$3 billion in election promises?

Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister of Finance): When it comes to fiscal credibility I've got two words for the members opposite, and it's car rentals.

They couldn't take care of their own house, and we know when the Public Accounts came out, the reality of how they governed our province: they left us with a \$2-billion deficit. That's a product of their lack of good budgeting skills, their lack of good fiscal management skills.

Finally—finally—Manitobans have a government that understands the importance of balancing, investing in health care, making life more affordable, with delivering on good financial transparency and accountability. We're committed to delivering on a balanced budget, and we're going to do exactly that, honourable Speaker.

Mrs. Stone: 'Honourable' Deputy Speaker, \$373-million surplus: that's the reality that the NDP inherited, and they turned that into a \$2-billion deficit. With this Premier (Mr. Kinew) and ministers—Finance's lack of vision for the province and the economy in the Throne Speech, it is clear that the economic horse is going to die a slow, painful death.

Their only financial plan is to keep borrowing and spending and growing debt for years to come. They maxed out the Manitoba Hydro credit card; now they're maxing out the Province's credit card.

When will the NDP learn that you couldn't—can't put off financial responsibilities forever, and when will you have your plan to return to balance by 2025?

MLA Sala: We know how important fiscal responsibility is to Manitobans. We heard that when we were on the doorstep, knocking on doors, over and over again, and that's why it's so wonderful for Manitobans to know that they finally have a government that gets it.

What did they have before? They had a government that left us with a \$2-billion hole that Manitobans now have to dig their way out of because they could not manage the books. Not only that, we had MNP, an independent accounting firm, which is, of course, not on team NDP; they're an independent accounting firm that very clearly stated the reasons why we landed in that hole, and it was because of irresponsible decision making by the members opposite.

We're going to do the important work of balancing the books. That's our commitment to Manitobans while we improve health care and make life more affordable.

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

Mrs. Stone: If this is the NDP's first crack at fiscal governance, then Manitobans should be deeply concerned. The NDP is growing Manitoba's net debt by over \$4 billion, a 14 per cent increase this year alone. With \$2.2 billion in debt-servicing costs, the NDP is mortgaging Manitoba's future.

I've asked this Finance Minister numerous times to commit to balancing, yet despite federal transfers up almost a billion dollars, the NDP has no plans to return to balance. 'Recoled'—record borrowing, record debt: that's the record of this NDP government; \$35 billion of debt with this Province, \$2.2 billion in debt-servicing costs, a billion-dollar deficit this year, and \$76 billion in liabilities.

* (10:50)

For the sake of Manitoba's future generations, will this minister commit to balance by the 2026 Public Accounts?

MLA Sala: I want to take the members opposite back to July 28, before the election, when they came forward to Manitobans with a Q2 update where they failed to reflect the actual state of affairs, financially. They misled Manitobans intentionally. We've reported on that.

And, again, MNP has spoken to that in their report. That's their record. They hid information from Manitobans. Why? Because they were wanting to make a desperate bid to stay in government. Fortunately—fortunately—that did not happen, and again, Manitobans now have a government focused on the books.

And I was very proud that only a couple weeks ago, DBRS, a credit rating agency, maintained a high level of credit rating which shows they support our fiscal plan. We're going to keep doing that important work, honourable Deputy Speaker.

Changes to Education Requirements for Teachers Concern for Student Outcomes

Mr. Grant Jackson (Spruce Woods): Yesterday, the Premier (Mr. Kinew) screamed over that he's concerned about Brandon Sun readership rates in the PC caucus.

Here's a quote for the Premier from a Brandon Sun editorial, quote: The MLA for Spruce Woods

argues that lowering standards won't solve the challenges facing the education system. Instead, the government should address real issues like class sizes, classroom supports and incentives to recruit more teachers. We agree, the Kinew government should reconsider its approach on this issue.

I'll table this editorial for the Premier to read in his spare time, or would he like me to buy him a subscription?

Will he reverse his disastrous education policy today?

Hon. Tracy Schmidt (Acting Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning): I am pleased to rise and share with Manitobans more news about the great work that we are doing to improve the education system here in Manitoba.

The certification changes that the member opposite is screaming about were based on research on math education, not on opinion. There was broad consensus across the sector despite what the member opposite likes to scream across the Chamber.

The changes that we've made are going to bring more teachers into the sector on top of the 630 educators that we have already added to the system in this first year of the new Kinew government here in Manitoba. Thank goodness.

There is more work to come, more support that our government is going to provide to families and kids here in Manitoba.

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

Mr. Jackson: Well, the only people that are screaming, Deputy Speaker, are parents and educators who are absolutely disgusted by this NDP government's decision to lower education standards for those pursuing a career in education.

Here's another quote for the Premier: Dr. Stokke and the MLA for Spruce Woods raise valid concerns about the potentially harmful impact that the revised requirements will have on the quality of education provided to Manitoba students.

Why is this Premier pushing through his radical, socialist ideology on the backs of vulnerable Manitoba students?

MLA Schmidt: On this side of the House, we trust our post-secondary 'edocu'—post-secondary institutions—pardon me—to graduate well-rounded, excellent teachers here in our province.

On this side of the House, we also trust the profession to engage in continuing education and professional development for the many people who contribute to our education system: the teachers, the EAs, all of the educators across our system that we are so proud of.

We also understand that math outcomes and other curricular outcomes are important to Manitoba families and to students. And that's why we are strengthening our math and science curriculum. That's why our government is investing in smaller class sizes. That's why we banned cellphones—

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

The honourable member from Spruce Woods, with a final supplementary question.

Mr. Jackson: Here's another quote, honourable Deputy Speaker: This is not a trivial issue. The long-term failure—future of our children is at stake. It is both surprising and disappointing that the government would move to dilute the quality of education provided to these children.

That's a great question from the Brandon Sun editorial board.

Will this Premier (Mr. Kinew) get up and answer why he is diluting the education provided to children in Manitoba?

MLA Schmidt: Honourable Deputy Speaker, we're moving forward; we're not going back.

Heather Stefanson failed families and students for seven and a half long years. They failed with bill 64, probably one of the most widely opposed pieces of education legislation ever introduced in this province. They failed.

Math outcomes went down under the previous government under their watch, but not to worry, honourable Speaker. It's a new day in Manitoba. We are moving forward, we're not going back, we're here to serve Manitoba families and students. We're going to improve math outcomes, we're going to improve all sorts of educational outcomes because we are listening to Manitobans, we are working on their behalf under the incredible leadership of our Premier Wab Kinew.

The Deputy Speaker: Just a gentle reminder to refer to other members by their constituency or portfolio.

North End Sewage Treatment Project Funding Commitment Inquiry

Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain): Honourable Deputy Speaker, this government loves getting the headlines they want, but hates giving Manitobans the answers they deserve. We saw that in today's Free Press, and I quote, Kinew commits to sewage plant upgrade.

However, he stopped short of—[interjection]

The Deputy Speaker: Order. Order.

I'll repeat my gentle reminder that members should refer to other members by their portfolio or constituency, even when quoting something.

Mr. Nesbitt: Thank you for your guidance.

This NDP government is all headlines and zero substance.

A simple question for the Environment Minister: If the Premier (Mr. Kinew) doesn't want to commit new funds to finishing the North End sewage plant, will she commit and announce new funding today?

Hon. Tracy Schmidt (Minister of Environment and Climate Change): Again, we're moving forward. We're not going back. We're here to work for Manitobans, unlike the previous failed Heather Stefanson government.

We're going to get the North End waste pollution control plant built. We are working with partners, we are working with the City of Winnipeg, we are working with our federal partners to find investment solutions. We're going to get it done and we're going to protect the health of Lake Winnipeg while we do it.

The Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for Riding Mountain, with a supplementary question.

Mr. Nesbitt: Honourable Deputy Speaker, the Free Press knows the Premier's so-called commitment is flimsy. They didn't get an answer so they went to the new Municipal Relations Minister. And I quote, Simard echoed the Kinew—

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

I think the member realized—[interjection] Order.

I think the member realized the mistake he made, so I won't repeat the reminder.

Mr. Nesbitt: The minister echoed the Kinew government's pledge in the House Wednesday but made no mention of additional funds. Again, headlines over substance.

A simple question, again, for the Environment Minister: If the Premier (Mr. Kinew) doesn't want to commit additional funds, and the Municipal Relations Minister doesn't want to commit new funds, will she take accountability and commit new funds to finish the work our government started on the North End sewage plant?

MLA Schmidt: I can assure you that there is nothing that is more important to me, as the minister responsible, than the health of Lake Winnipeg, and I can assure you that investing in water and waste water infrastructure is of the highest priority of our government.

But since the member opposite brings up the work of the previous government on this project, why don't we listen to a little bit about what the former mayor of the City of Winnipeg, Brian Bowman, said back in 2022 in a—in the Winnipeg Sun: Winnipeg's investing in Canada infrastructure program request sat on the former premier Brian Pallister's desk for too long, which has resulted in higher costs for the project. The former mayor also said, this delay is not going to help those that want to keep us the—want us to keep the costs as low as possible.

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

Waste Water Treatment Projects—Rural Manitoba Federal-Provincial Funding Commitment

Mrs. Carrie Hiebert (Morden-Winkler): Honourable Speaker, in the Throne Speech, the NDP government did not make mention of any waste water treatment infrastructure projects in rural Manitoba. Currently, economic growth has been negatively affected in my constituency due to the lack of waste water infrastructure. The future of Morden's growing population and economy lies in this waste water facility.

* (11:00)

Will the minister step forward and advocate for southern Manitoba and demand that the provincial and federal government provide necessary funding to start the—this urgent project as needed today?

Hon. Glen Simard (Minister of Municipal and Northern Relations): It's my honour to stand today as my first response to the question as in my new role. And I would just point out that my last role over, what, five weeks, no questions. So thank you for that, MLA from Morden-Winkler.

Looking forward to the AMM coming up next week, we—I've already spoken with the mayors of Winkler and Morden, and obviously, they have signaled this to our government. They also mentioned the fact

that years of zeros all add up, right. And we talk a lot about math in this Chamber. Year 1, zero; year 2, zero; year 3, zero, all under that government.

And it all adds up to zero. Nothing. Zero plus zero seven times equals—

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

Mr. Derek Johnson (Interlake-Gimli): Honourable Speaker, we saw this government cut grants that helped many organizations 'acrob'—across the province. What was not unexpected from the NDP—

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

Sorry, it's the government question.

Grocery Store Retailers Elimination of Restrictive Covenants

MLA Billie Cross (Seine River): Under the PCs, grocery prices exploded. According to StatsCan, under Heather Stefanson and members opposite, between May 2017 and October 2023, milk prices went up by 20 per cent, tomatoes by 40 per cent and baby formula by 53 per cent.

Thankfully, it's a new day in Manitoba and new measures were recently announced in the Throne Speech to help Manitobans with grocery prices.

Can the Minister for Public Service Delivery please explain what his department is doing to help address the inflation Manitobans felt under the members opposite?

Hon. Mintu Sandhu (Minister of Public Service Delivery): It is an honour to stand up and answer this very important question.

The PCs made groceries more expensive, but we will make life more affordable. We started by cutting the gas tax. Now, we are going to end restrictive governance and make it easier for local grocers to compete with big companies. That means more money for local businesses and more money in your pockets.

While the member across from are fighting with each other, we are working hard for Manitobans.

Thank you, honourable Speaker.

Independent Heritage Projects Government Funding Inquiry

Mr. Derek Johnson (Interlake-Gimli): Honourable Speaker, we saw this government cut grants that

helped many organizations operate across the province. This was not unexpected from the NDP.

What we have not heard about is support for dedicated community leaders like Brian Austfjord, who is working to restore the last Lake Winnipeg freighter, the Vestur-Islandingur, formerly known as the Mukatawa.

Will the new minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage clarify: Is their government willing to help such independent heritage programs, or are they going to continue the NDP pattern of picking winners and losers as they cross their desk?

Hon. Nellie Kennedy (Minister of Sport, Culture, Heritage and Tourism): It's an honour for me to rise for the first time in question period as the Minister of Sport, Culture, Heritage and Tourism. Thank you.

It's been my honour to represent the people of Assiniboia over this past year and to connect with organizations and diverse communities who are working to make our province a better place. I'm excited to be the first Lebanese-Canadian and Muslim woman in Cabinet, but I know that I won't be the last.

As minister, this portfolio provides me with the opportunity to meet Manitobans from all walks of life and celebrate our cultural diversity while working towards our collective future.

Mr. Johnson: I congratulate the minister on their new role but now that the pleasantries are out of the way, will the new Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage verify: is their government willing to help such independent heritage programs or are they going to continue the NDP pattern of picking winners and losers as they cross their desk?

MLA Kennedy: Well, Deputy Speaker, I would like to talk about our first year in government here. Manitoba has seen a record-breaking number of films shot right here at home, boosting our local economy, putting Manitoba on the world map.

We've made record investments across 71 provincial sport organizations to end racism in sports so that every child knows that they have the right to play. And we've increased annual funding to give more organizations grants that promote our diverse cultures in communities and bring our province together.

Together we're working for a brighter future for all.

Provincial Highway 227 Status of Paving Project

Mr. Trevor King (Lakeside): Honourable deputy Speaker, the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure has been asked time and time again to confirm the status of projects listed in MTI's 2023 five-year plan.

Time and time again she's deflected and failed to give a direct answer. We have asked about highways 227, 201, 311, 313, 433, 520, 67, 8 and many more.

She was asked recently about 227 and, again did not give a direct answer. We know why—we now know why, as she planned to cut the paving of Highway 227. When challenged on this decision she sold—told the municipal councillors that she can put some gravel on it for them, and I table that document—or that article.

So will the minister reconsider her decision, remember the communities north of Winnipeg and offer these communities more than just a little bit of gravel and finally—

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

Hon. Lisa Naylor (Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure): Honourable Deputy Speaker, 45 seconds is barely enough time to give a full report on all of the infrastructure projects that we've been accomplishing this year.

But I'm so excited about the \$12 million we invested for safety upgrades at PTH 1 and 5, the Brandon 18th Street refurbishment; PR 224, \$18 million to reconstruct 45 kilometres of the main access to Peguis First Nation; investments in Wasagamack airport; doubling municipal airport grants; installing highway rest—six rest stops; investments in the Port of Churchill and our new road safety team.

It's been an incredible year and we've been able to fill a lot of the gaps that we were left with when we took office.

New Community Complex in Lorette Construction Announcement

MLA Robert Loiselle (St. Boniface): This summer, our government proudly announced that a brand new community complex will be built in the beautiful community of Lorette.

Can the Minister of Sport, Culture, Heritage and Tourism share more about this exciting project that will bring families and communities together in southern Manitoba?

Hon. Nellie Kennedy (Minister of Sport, Culture, Heritage and Tourism): Honourable Deputy Speaker, it's an honour to serve the people of Manitoba in my new role as Minister of Sport, Culture, Heritage and Tourism.

This summer, our government joined the community of Taché to announce the construction of a new community complex in Lorette.

The Taché Community Centre will bring an arena where kids can learn to skate and play hockey, and families can spend time together on the weekend.

It will also include a library, multi-purpose space for seniors and meeting rooms for community events.

We look forward to joining the people of Taché in the summer of 2026 to open this incredible space where Manitobans will come together to play, learn and connect for generations to come.

Discarded Needles in Swan River Cleanup and Supplies

Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River): Honourable Deputy Speaker, one local resident shared, in regard to the crisis in Swan River, quote: this might be a good thing for Swan Valley region. Now we have three core industries: agriculture, forestry and syringes.

The NDP like their—proclaimed that, quote, hope lives here.

* (11:10)

For the residents of the communities in the Swan Valley, their hope is to avoid hepatitis from stepping on one of the minister's half a million needles littering the streets, playgrounds and ball diamonds.

Will this minister give residents more than hope—perhaps help in the way of steel-toed shoes for schoolchildren for Christmas.

Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I can tell you, Deputy Speaker, what wasn't a good thing, and that was the Stefanson government's inaction for seven and a half years for the people of Swan River.

We know that crime was skyrocketing under their watch. It rose 50 per cent in Swan River under this member's watch. And why did that happen?

Well, we know it's because of the cuts across government but especially the cuts specifically to law enforcement and those who were trying to make a difference in the community of Swan River and throughout the whole Swan Valley.

That's why we were up there yesterday talking about our GIS unit that's going to expand the number of officers on the street. It's going to start going after those drug traffickers bringing those toxic drugs into our community and start making our communities safer.

Provincial Highway 227 Status of Paving Project

MLA Jeff Berezka (Portage la Prairie): I'd just like to talk about one road.

Honourable Speaker, this is a quote from Portage RM councillor Garth Asham on PR 227, and I will table: What I know is this previous government said they were going ahead and pave it. When this government got in—the present NDP government—they put on—they put a hold on things. There are places on 227 Highway that are unsafe and impassable. Yet this government has said it's not going ahead to pave this major transportation route.

Will this minister please tell the constituents of Portage la Prairie why they are not following through with this 72-kilometre upgrade that is a major trade—

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

Hon. Lisa Naylor (Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure): Part of being a minister means responsible budgeting. It means reviewing projects and making sure we're making the best investments for the province.

I did meet with the municipalities—both municipalities—involved with this project. We spent a significant amount of time reviewing all the possible options for the appropriate level of road reconstruction based on traffic data and other economic development measures, and they very well know that we are moving forward with a \$5-million gravel road restoration project that will also look at improvements around some of the problematic areas.

So I'm more than pleased to continue to work closely with municipalities on these decisions.

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

An Honourable Member: Point of order.

Point of Order

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

Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier): Yes. Just on a quick point of order.

Earlier in question period, I said that you would save enough money to buy 15 tomatoes when, in fact, the teeny tiny text in the document table actually reveals that you would be able to buy 15 more persimmons with the money that you save on the gas tax.

So, again, thanks for allowing us to quantify in real terms the money we're saving for you.

The Deputy Speaker: On the same point of order, the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Leader of the Official Opposition): Of course, the Premier (Mr. Kinew) stands up, and he knows that there's no point of order here, Deputy Speaker. But that being said, he's just given another evidence that he continues to make this a joke where he continues to bully grocers in Manitoba.

So this is definitely not a point of order, Deputy Speaker, and thank you for your time.

The Deputy Speaker: So this was not a point of order, and it gives me an opportunity to remind all members that points of order shouldn't be used to further debate.

* * *

The Deputy Speaker: And with that, petitions.

PETITIONS

Teaching Certification

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

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 Certificate and Qualifications Regulation under The Education Administration Act have significantly lowered the standards for subject-area expertise required for teacher certification.

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

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

(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/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 the 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 Leena Tetrault, Craig Wood and Nicole Caballero and many, many more Manitobans.

Thank you, honourable Deputy Speaker.

Phoenix School

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) 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.

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

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

(4) 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.

* (11:20)

(5) 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.

(6) 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.

(7) 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 Diane Chudobiak, Krista Hawryluk, Catherine Livingstone and many, many other Manitobans.

MRI Machine for Portage Regional Health Facility

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

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 service plan, construction for the new Portage regional health facility is well under

way. The facility and surrounding community would greatly benefit from added diagnostic machinery and equipment, but specifically the addition of an MRI machine.

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

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

(4) An MRI machine located in the Portage regional health facility will reduce transportation costs for patients as well as reduce the burden on stretcher services 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 Dakota Tipi, Dakota Plains, Sandy Bay and Long Plains First Nations. Indigenous peoples in Canada disproportionately face barriers in access to services and medical care. An MRI machine located in the Portage regional health facility will bring care closer to their home communities and provide greater access to diagnostic testing.

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This is signed by Laura Green, Emily Vanstone, Ryan Hyde and many, many more Manitobans.

Thank you.

Breast Screening

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

(2) Based off the 2023 treatment standards, it is estimated 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 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) Other provinces and territories in Canada have already lowered the breast cancer screening age or announced their intentions 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 to the health-care system because cancers that are caught early are typically less complicated to treat.

* (11:30)

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition is signed by Christine [phonetic] Hunter, Kent Farrant, Eileen Clarke and many, many more Manitobans.

Thank you, honourable Speaker.

Introduction of Guests

The Deputy Speaker: Before we continue with petitions, I'll just direct all honourable members to the public gallery, where we have guests from the public tour.

Welcome here.

Provincial Road 275

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

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

Provincial Road 275, known as Ditch Road, intersects with PR 588, serving rural areas west of the town of Swan River, and is a heavily used travel corridor linking Saskatchewan and Manitoba. The highway curves on entry into the town of Swan River and terminates at PTH 10A, the town's north bypass.

The Swan River Valley is a highly productive agricultural area, and PR 275 is used by farmers to move heavy machinery and equipment, as well as transport seed, grain and fertilizer to many farmers located within reach of the highway.

(3) It is also frequented by families, people shopping at business along the route and school buses to transport rural students into the town of Swan River for school.

(4) Due to only having patchwork and minor repairs, the highway has deteriorated and is covered with large potholes, posing a significant threat to vehicles and passengers.

(5) The roadway and shoulders of PR 275 are extremely narrow, leaving large ditches that have not been properly cared for, which have caused poor drainage. The town of Swan River and the municipality of Swan Valley West have inquired with MTI for a drainage solution over the past several years. The ditch is not graded properly and is full of bulrush, willows and cattails.

(6) The solution brought forward is to decrease maximum speed limits on the road and to undertake a full rehabilitation of the highway and to re-route the stream through which is now existing farmland, under CN rail lines, and the PTH 10A bypass, as well as

through several hundred meters of an existing slough into the Swan River.

(7) Numerous meetings held with Swan Valley West and town of Swan River with the provincial government have not moved forward. It was agreed in 2022 that MTI was to complete a hydraulic investigation of the capacity of the PR 275/2nd Avenue ditch. The municipalities have not seen the results of this investigation.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to address the much-needed rehabilitation of Provincial Road 275 to ensure public safety.

(2) To urge the provincial government to provide the results of the MTI investigation to the town and the municipality, and provide immediate funding for the repairs to PR 275; and

(3) To urge the provincial government to address drainage issues on PR 275 and create permanent solutions so that flooding can be avoided.

This has been signed by Lewis Turton, Nancy Turton, Amanda Dixon and many, many other Manitobans.

Provincial Trunk Highway 34

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

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, Holland, serving as a main corridor for semi-trailers, farm equipment, daily drivers and local school bus routes.

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

(4) The deterioration of PTH 34 has raised major concerns due to its narrow shoulders and numerous deep potholes that pose serious safety risks consid-

ering farmers often need to use the highway to transport heavy equipment.

(5) Construction of a new bridge, in accordance 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 has been signed by Lichelle Martens, Nathan Martens, Shawn Friesen and many, many, many more Manitobans.

Breast Screening

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

* (11:40)

(2) Based off of 2023 treatment standards, it is estimated 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 one of the most common forms 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 every year, and 84 diagnoses and 15 deaths every day.

(4) Early detection of breast cancer will lead to the 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 and—those who don't receive screening.

Every other province and territory in Canada has already lowered the breast cancer screening age or

announced their intention to do so. Other provinces in Canada have already commenced with 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 screening age.

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

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

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

This petition has been signed by Delinda Guy, Kris Kerwey [*phonetic*], Shauna Bobyk and many, many other Manitobans.

Thank you.

Mr. Trevor King (Lakeside): Honourable Speaker, 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:

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

(2) Based off 2023 treatment standards, it is estimated 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 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 cancer screening age, or announced their intentions 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 to the health-care system because cancers that are caught earlier are typically less complicated to treat.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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.

Mr. Diljeet Brar, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

This petition is been signed by Adrienne Wooley, Jennifer Borgfjord and Bernie Aalbers and many, many, many other fine Manitobans.

Thank you.

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

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

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

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

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 every year, and 84 diagnoses and 15 deaths every day.

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 do not—don't receive screening.

Every other province and territory in Canada has already lowered the breast cancer screening age, or announced their intentions 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.

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.

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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 has been signed by many, many Manitobans.

* (11:50)

Removal of Federal Carbon Tax

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition, honourable acting Deputy Speaker, is signed by Vicki Harris, Shannon Smyth, Erin Atkin and many, many, many, many more Manitobans.

Breast Screening

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

To the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, the background to 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 screening to 40.

(2) Based off the 2023 treatment standards, it is estimated 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 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 cancer screening age, or announced their intention to do so. Other provinces in Canada have already commenced work of expanding screening programs and hiring additional technologists in their public health-care system.

Manitoba is currently behind the rest of Canada and has no formal plan to increase screening capacity or lower breast cancer screening age.

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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 has been signed by Margaret Smith, Kelly Domner [*phonetic*], Gerald [*phonetic*] Kehler and many, many other fine Manitobans.

Provincial Road 275

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Provincial Road 275, PR 275, known as Ditch Road, intersects with PR 588, serving rural areas west of the town of Swan River, and is a heavily used travel corridor linking Saskatchewan and Manitoba. The highway curves on entry into the town of Swan River and terminates at PTH 10A, the town's north bypass.

(2) The Swan River Valley is a highly productive agricultural area, and PR 275 is used by farmers to move heavy machinery and equipment, as well as transport seed, grain and fertilizer to many farmers located within easy—or, within reach of the highway.

(3) It is also frequented by families, people shopping at businesses along the route and school buses to transport rural students into the town of Swan River for school.

(4) Due to only having patchwork and minor repairs, the highway has deteriorated and is covered with large potholes, posing a significant threat to vehicles and passengers.

(5) The roadway and shoulders on PR 275 are extremely narrow, leaving large ditches that have not been properly cared for, which has caused poor drainage. The town of Swan River and the municipality of Swan Valley West have inquired with MTI for a drainage solution over the past several years. This ditch is not graded properly and is full of bulrush, willows and cattails.

(6) The solution brought forward is to decrease maximum speed limits on the road and to undertake a full rehabilitation of the highway and to re-route the stream through what is now existing farmland, under CN rail line, and the PTH 10A bypass, as well as through several hundred meters of an existing slough into the Swan River.

Numerous meetings have been—numerous meetings held with Swan Valley West and town of Swan River with the provincial government have not moved forward.

* (12:00)

It was agreed in 2022 that MTI was to complete a hydraulic investigation of the capacity of the PR 275/2nd Avenue ditch. The municipalities have not seen the results of this investigation.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to address the much-needed rehabilitation of Provincial Road 275 to ensure public safety.

(2) To urge the provincial government to provide the results of the MTI investigation to the town and municipality, and provide immediate funding for the repairs to PR 275.

(3) To urge the provincial government to address drainage issues on PR 275 and create permanent solutions so that flooding can be avoided.

This, Speaker—or, honourable acting Deputy Speaker, this petition has been signed by Derek Yakelashek, Nic Stroud, Leslie Ray and many, many, many other Manitobans.

Thank you.

MATTER OF PRIVILEGE

Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland): On a matter of privilege, honourable Deputy Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Diljeet Brar): Member for Midland, on a matter of privilege.

Mrs. Stone: Earlier today in question period, the Minister of Finance (MLA Sala) accused me of misleading intentionally in his remarks in question period. This is a term that we all know to be unparliamentary. The minister knows better.

Obviously, I have not checked Hansard as this just happened an hour ago. However, this remark was permitted and will stand on Hansard, a baseless accusation without merit.

What is not acceptable and in fact deeply impacts my ability to participate in this House is the fact that there are a set of rules for the members on the government benches and one for members such as myself.

There are two tests for a matter of privilege. First, it must be timely; I have sought some research on this matter and am back less than an hour later. This test is met. Secondly, it must be a *prima facie* breach. To that I say, how can I fully participate in this House when I am held to a different and fully arbitrary standard?

We are an Assembly governed by precedent and specific rules. Members on the government benches might not like it, but they have to follow the same playbook.

Therefore, I move, seconded by the member for Spruce Woods (Mr. Jackson), that the Minister of Finance retract his comments, apologize to this House and the matter be referred to an all-party committee. *[interjection]*

Therefore, I move, seconded by the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Piwniuk), that the Minister of Finance retract his comments, apologize to this House and the matter be referred to an all-party committee for review.

The Acting Speaker (Diljeet Brar): Before recognizing any other members to speak, I would remind the House that remarks at this time by honourable members are limited to strictly relevant comments about whether the alleged matter of privilege has been raised at the earliest opportunity and whether a *prima facie* case has been established.

Hon. Malaya Marcelino (Minister of Labour and Immigration): On this side of the House, we don't feel that this is a matter of privilege, because it is very

difficult, actually—almost impossible—for that standard to be met.

The member was able to participate in question period just fine, she's able to carry out her duties just fine as an MLA, and if anything, it might be that the Finance Minister misspoke and said words that he shouldn't have said, but this is not preventing the member from doing her duties as an elected representative of Midland.

Thank you, honourable Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Diljeet Brar): A matter of privilege is a serious concern. I'm going to take this matter under advisement to consult authorities and the Speaker will return to the House with a ruling.

PETITIONS

(Continued)

Breast Screening

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

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

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

(2) Based on—off 2023 treatment standards, it is estimated that screening women annually for breast cancer starting at the age of 40 will save the Canadian health-care system over \$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 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 do not receive screens.

(5) Every other province and territory in Canada has already lowered the breast cancer screening age or announced that their intention is to do so. Other provinces in Canada have already commenced the

work of expanding screening programs and hiring additional technologists in the public health-care system.

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This is signed by members from—Shawn Rawlings, Matt Harkness and Dianne Allanson and many other Manitoba residences.

Provincial Trunk Highway 34

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

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

Mr. Tyler Blashko, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

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

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

* (12:10)

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

(4) The deterioration of PTH 34 has raised major concerns due to its narrow shoulders and numerous deep potholes that pose serious safety risks concerning farmers—considering, sorry, 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 Sam Payette, Addison Platt, Megan Patkau and many more fine Manitobans.

MATTER OF PRIVILEGE

Mr. Derek Johnson (Interlake-Gimli): On a matter of privilege.

The Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for Interlake-Gimli.

Mr. Johnson: Earlier today, in private members' statements, the member for St. Johns (MLA Fontaine) put words on the record that were part of her ministerial responsibilities, and it's only fair that we play by the rules in the House.

And I would like for that, a matter of privilege, to state that those words that she put on the record are redacted from Hansard and that should be—that should solve the matter for all of the stuff that she put on the record.

The Deputy Speaker: So the member has to conclude the point of privilege with a motion, and the motion needs to be in writing.

Mr. Johnson: So I move, seconded by the member for Midland (Mrs. Stone), that this be put to an all-members committee and reported back to the House.

The Deputy Speaker: Before recognizing any other members to speak, I would remind the House that remarks at this time by honourable members are limited to strictly relevant comments about whether the alleged matter of privilege has been raised at the earliest opportunity and whether a prima facie case has been established.

Hon. Malaya Marcelino (Minister of Labour and Immigration): The member for Interlake-Gimli has not proved that this is a prima facie case of—that would constitute a matter of privilege.

Again, a matter of privilege is a very serious matter. It involves members not being able to fulfill

their duties as elected representatives, and he has not proven that the member for St. Johns' (MLA Fontaine) comments, whether or not he agrees with them, would prevent him from acting and doing his full responsibility as an MLA here in this Chamber.

Thank you, acting honourable Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: A matter of privilege is a serious concern. The Speaker will take this matter under advisement to consult with authorities and will return to the House with a ruling.

* * *

The Deputy Speaker: Any further petitions?

Seeing none, government business?

ORDERS OF THE DAY
GOVERNMENT BUSINESS
THRONE SPEECH
(Third Day of Debate)

The Deputy Speaker: We will now resume debate on the motion moved by the honourable member for Tuxedo (MLA Compton) for an address in reply to the Speech from the Throne and the amendment thereto, standing in the name of the honourable member for Midland, who has two minutes remaining.

Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland): There is not nearly enough time, and I really wish the clock reset for me to discuss what is missing from this Throne Speech, because this Throne Speech lacks any substance.

For a Premier (Mr. Kinew) that has been so-called a premier-in-waiting for eight years, all we saw from this Throne Speech was recycled promises from last year and empty words.

Last year's Throne Speech, as we saw, did not include any additional taxes on Manitobans. Yet, what did we see in the budget? We saw the NDP increase taxes on income taxes for middle-class Manitobans, doctors, nurses, engineers, farmers and small businesses. We saw them increase taxes on middle-class Manitobans through property taxes, \$148 million—new taxes that they are placing on the backs of Manitobans. They have driven the debt up to \$35 billion with \$2.2 billion in debt servicing costs and running a billion-dollar deficit this year.

What we're seeing is that the NDP is committing to fewer services while taxing Manitobans more. But now, what Manitobans have witnessed: They've witnessed what this NDP will do, and they will not be

fooled this year with the NDP's empty words and recycled promises from this week's Throne Speech.

And Manitobans will not have the wool pulled over their eyes as the NDP rams through their secret agenda while avoiding public scrutiny and accountability. Manitobans deserve better from this NDP and what we have seen over the past year.

Thank you, Deputy honourable Speaker.

MLA Robert Loiselle (St. Boniface): C'est un grand honneur de finalement avoir la chance de s'adresser aux Manitobains, aux Manitobaines et aux gens de Saint-Boniface au sujet de notre excellent discours du trône.

Je sais que l'opposition veut pas entendre ce qu'on a à dire, c'est pourquoi dernièrement il y a eu plusieurs délais avec toutes sortes de pétitions. Mais j'aimerais commencer en parlant du discours du trône et en mentionnant l'importante composante du discours qui se rattache à la réconciliation.

Monsieur l'honorable Député Président, le Manitoba a été fondé en 1870 grâce à un peuple autochtone, dont les Métis francophones du Manitoba – les Métis de la rivière Rouge.

* (12:20)

Et dans le discours du trône, la lieutenant-gouverneure parle de l'importance de la réconciliation pour les Manitobains, les Manitobaines et les peuples autochtones – soit les Métis de la rivière Rouge, les Premières Nations et les Inuits.

On le sait, les débuts de notre province n'ont pas été faciles, et ne sont pas encore faciles pour plusieurs de nos peuples autochtones. Et c'est pourquoi notre gouvernement a agi en passant la loi sur Louis Riel dès notre entrée au gouvernement.

Pourquoi? Parce qu'il faut reconnaître que les Métis de la rivière Rouge ont travaillé d'arrache-pied pour assurer que le Manitoba rentre en Confédération, et que Louis Riel est effectivement le père du Manitoba – et aussi, un père de la Confédération canadienne.

Alors, on se le rappelle, il y a quelques jours, le 16 novembre, on a amené honneur à Louis Riel et on s'est rappelé la vision de Louis Riel : que le Manitoba peut devenir – devrait devenir – une province où les droits des Autochtones sont respectés, une province bilingue, multiculturelle où tous les Manitobains et les Manitobaines soient capables de vivre en paix.

Notre gouvernement s'engage envers cette vision, et s'engage envers non seulement la réconciliation, mais la 'réconcil-action' en prenant des gestes qui appuient non seulement les Métis de la rivière Rouge, les Inuits et les Premières Nations pour s'assurer que tous nos peuples autochtones soient capables d'être inclus dans la vision de Louis Riel et aussi dans l'économie manitobaine, les questions d'éducation, les questions de santé, les questions de droits territoriaux, le développement économique.

Toutes ces questions, nous les reconnaissons, et on veut s'assurer que nos peuples autochtones sont inclus dans la vision d'un Manitoba uni où nous avons la liberté de tous vivre en paix, d'être impliqués dans nos économies, dans nos écoles, dans nos communautés, pour s'assurer que tous nos enfants – qui comptent, naturellement, parce qu'on sait que tous les enfants comptent – peuvent aller à l'école, bénéficier d'un programme de nutrition et avancer en réconciliation, et s'assurer que tous les enfants se rendent jusqu'à la 12^e année, jusqu'à l'âge de 18 ans, pour un jour être capable de contribuer à notre économie.

Mais maintenant, parlons d'éducation. Comme vous savez, j'ai été éducateur pendant très longtemps. J'ai enseigné en français, en anglais, à plusieurs niveaux. Et j'aimerais m'adresser directement aux Francophones manitobains et manitobaines pour leur assurer que notre gouvernement croit fermement en un système d'éducation qui est bien outillé.

D'ailleurs, je suis heureux d'annoncer que tout dernièrement, on a fait l'embauche de 630 nouveaux enseignants anglophones et francophones pour s'assurer qu'ici au Manitoba, nous avons les éducateurs et les éducatrices qu'il nous faut pour s'assurer que nous avons des petites salles de classe, pour s'assurer que nos enfants ont les meilleurs éducateurs et éducatrices au Canada à leur portée pour assurer leur éducation. *[interjection]* Merci.

Mais plus spécifiquement, je veux parler du Bureau de l'éducation française. Il y a un certain temps, en 1975, le Bureau de l'éducation française a été mis sur pied avec, naturellement, un sous-ministre adjoint. Un sous-ministre adjoint qui a été coupé par le gouvernement Pallister.

Pourquoi? C'est simple. Pour affaiblir et saboter l'éducation en française – en français au Manitoba. Mais dans le discours du trône, on l'a entendu, notre gouvernement a remis en place le sous-ministre adjoint responsable pour le Bureau de l'éducation française – en la personne de René Déquier.

Et d'ailleurs, j'ai hâte de bientôt aller visiter le BEF, d'aller visiter et d'aller saluer le nouveau sous-ministre adjoint. Parce que l'importance de bureau-du Bureau de l'éducation française est primordiale pour l'avancement de l'enseignement du français au Manitoba.

On le sait : 40 pour cent des élèves au Manitoba suivent une éducation en français, soit dans les écoles d'immersion ou à la Division scolaire franco-manitobaine. Alors c'est critique d'avoir en place un Bureau d'éducation française pour appuyer ces enseignants et ces écoles-là. Et puis, comme on le sait, le Bureau de l'éducation française est aussi appuyé par la DREF, le directeur des ressources en éducation française, qui est à l'Université de Saint-Boniface.

Comme enseignant, je suis souvent allé à la DREF pour aller chercher des ressources éducatives. Et pourquoi est-ce que, dans le discours du trône, on mentionne éducation en français? Parce qu'on sait que le français est aussi une langue qu'on utilise à travers le monde pour faire les affaires. La francophonie manitobaine est un engin économique, et on veut faire certain qu'on respecte la nature du français au Manitoba – et de l'anglais, comme étant une province bilingue.

Est-ce qu'on continue à appuyer le français au Manitoba? Absolument. Notre gouvernement a aussi appuyé la Division scolaire franco-manitobaine avec une hausse historique de financement de tout près de 11 pour cent pour s'assurer que la Division scolaire franco-manitobaine a les ressources financières et les outils pour assurer que le nombre grandissant d'élèves à la DSFM sont bien appuyés.

D'ailleurs, j'aimerais ajouter – et j'en suis très fier – que notre gouvernement a aussi appuyé la DSFM avec quatre nouveaux projets de garderie dans les écoles de la DSFM, soit : à l'École Roméo-Dallaire avec une expansion de 35 places; à l'École Saint-Lazare, une expansion de 35 places; à l'École Lagimodière avec une expansion de 74 places; et à l'École Précieux-Sang, avec une expansion de 74 places – qui est phénoménal.

Pourquoi? Parce que de ce côté de la Chambre où on retrouve beaucoup d'éducateurs et éducatrices, on retrouve des gens qui savent que l'éducation au Manitoba est la fondation pour une bonne économie manitobaine, juste comme un bon système de santé, aussi, crée à aider une excellente fondation pour faire avancer l'économie manitobaine.

Maintenant, parlons de santé. Étant député de Saint-Boniface, j'aimerais partager avec la

Chambre – comme on a fait mention pendant le discours du trône – qu'à Saint-Boniface, on retrouve le premier hôpital de l'Ouest canadien, fondé par les Sœurs Grises en 1844. Saint-Boniface a une longue historique d'empathie, où on sait prendre soin non seulement de nos voisins et de nos voisines, mais on sait comment prendre soin de l'un et l'autre.

Et cet esprit d'empathie a ensuite mené à d'autres projets de santé au Manitoba. Mais j'aimerais spécifiquement parler de l'Hôpital de Saint-Boniface, qui a un excellent soin cardiaque, d'ailleurs qui a été absolument critique essentiellement dans les vies de plusieurs Manitobains et Manitobaines, comme mon père, ma mère, mon frère – ont tous passé par les soins de santé cardiaques à l'Hôpital de Saint-Boniface. Et maintenant, l'Hôpital de Saint-Boniface va bientôt ouvrir une nouvelle urgence.

Alors, notre gouvernement – on le sait – appuie les soins de santé. Et on vient juste de réouvrir, d'ailleurs, de nouveaux lits pour s'assurer que, quand les gens vont à l'Hôpital de Saint-Boniface, nous avons les ressources, les infirmiers, les médecins, pour s'assurer que les gens reçoivent ce qu'ils cherchent en services, de façon rapide et adéquate.

Mais, Monsieur l'honorable Président, notre gouvernement a encore de meilleures nouvelles, avec l'embauche de tout près de 900 nouveaux travailleurs en soins de santé, soit de nouveaux médecins, des infirmiers, des aides-infirmiers. Parce que les Manitobains et les Manitobaines savent que les soins de santé robustes appuient leur vie de famille, leur vie –

Translation

It is a great honour to finally have the opportunity to speak to Manitobans and the people of St. Boniface about our excellent Speech from the Throne.

I know the opposition does not want to hear what we have to say, which is why there have been so many delays lately with all kinds of petitions. But I would like to start by talking about the Speech from the Throne and by mentioning reconciliation, which is an important component of the speech.

Honourable Deputy Speaker, Manitoba was founded in 1870 by an Indigenous people, including the French-speaking Métis of Manitoba: the Red River Métis.

** (12:20)*

In the Speech from the Throne, the Lieutenant Governor talks about the importance of reconciliation

for Manitobans and Indigenous peoples—that is, the Red River Métis, the First Nations and the Inuit.

As we know, the beginnings of our province were not easy, and things are still not easy for many of our Indigenous peoples. And that is why our government took action by passing The Louis Riel Act as soon as we took office.

Why did we do this? Because we have to recognize that the Red River Métis worked tirelessly to ensure that Manitoba became part of Confederation, and that Louis Riel is indeed the father of Manitoba, as well as a father of the Canadian Confederation.

A few days ago, on November 16, we honoured Louis Riel and remembered his vision: that Manitoba can become—should become—a province where Indigenous rights are respected, a bilingual and multicultural province where all Manitobans can live in peace.

Our government is committed to this vision, and committed not just to reconciliation, but to 'reconciliation'. By taking action to support not just the Red River Métis, but also the Inuit and First Nations, to ensure that all our Indigenous peoples can be included in Louis Riel's vision and also in Manitoba's matters of economy, education, health, land rights and economic development.

We recognize all these issues, and we want to make sure that our Indigenous peoples are included in the vision of a united Manitoba where we all have the freedom to live in peace, to be involved in our economies, in our schools, in our communities, and to make sure that all our children—who matter, of course, because we know that all children matter—can go to school, benefit from a nutrition program, progress in the reconciliation process and make it to grade 12, or to the age of 18, so that one day they are able to contribute to our economy.

But now let us talk about education. As you know, I was an educator for a very long time. I taught in French and English, at several levels. And I would like to speak directly to Francophone Manitobans to assure them that our government firmly believes in a well-equipped education system.

In fact, I am pleased to announce that we recently hired 630 new English-speaking and French-speaking teachers to guarantee that here in Manitoba, we have the educators we need to ensure small-size classrooms, and that our children have the best educators in Canada to support their education. [interjection] Thank you.

More specifically, I also want to talk about the Bureau de l'éducation française. Some time ago, in 1975, the Bureau de l'éducation française was set up with, naturally, an assistant deputy minister. An ADM position that was cut by the Pallister government.

Why was that? Quite simply: to weaken and sabotage French-language education in Manitoba. However, as we heard in the Speech from the Throne, our government reinstated the position of assistant deputy minister responsible for the Bureau de l'éducation française—in the person of René Déquier.

In fact, I look forward to visiting the BEF soon, and to greet our new assistant deputy minister, because the Bureau de l'éducation française is vital to the advancement of French-language education in Manitoba.

As we know, 40 per cent of students in Manitoba are educated in French, either in immersion schools or in schools within the Division scolaire franco-manitobaine (DSFM). Thus, it is critical to have a Bureau d'éducation française in place to support these teachers and these schools. As you know, the Bureau de l'éducation française is also supported by the DREF, the directorate of French education resources, which is at the Université de Saint-Boniface.

As a teacher, I often went to the DREF to look for educational resources. And why does the Speech from the Throne mention French-language education? Because we know that French is also a language used around the world to do business. Manitoba's French-speaking community is an economic engine, and we want to make sure that we respect the importance of French in Manitoba—and of English, because Manitoba is a bilingual province.

Do we continue to support French in Manitoba? Absolutely. Our government has also supported the DSFM with a historic increase in funding of nearly 11 per cent to ensure that the DSFM has the financial resources and tools to guarantee that the growing number of students within the DSFM are well supported.

I am very proud to add that our government has also supported the DSFM with four new daycare projects in DSFM schools: at École Roméo-Dallaire, with an expansion of 35 spaces; at École Saint-Lazare, with an expansion of 35 spaces; at École Lagimodière,

with an expansion of 74 spaces; and at École Précieux-Sang, with an expansion of 74 spaces. A phenomenal achievement.

And why is that? Because on this side of the House, where there are a lot of educators, we find people who know that education in Manitoba is the foundation for a good provincial economy, in the same way that a good health-care system also creates an excellent foundation for advancing Manitoba's economy.

Now, let's talk about health. I represent St. Boniface and, as was mentioned during the Speech from the Throne, St. Boniface is home to the first hospital in western Canada, a hospital founded by the Grey Nuns in 1844. St. Boniface has a long history of empathy: we not only know how to take care of our neighbours, we also know how to take care of each other.

This spirit of empathy has led to other health-care projects in Manitoba. But I would like to talk specifically about the St. Boniface Hospital, which has an excellent cardiac-care unit that has been absolutely critical in the lives of many Manitobans. My own father, my mother and my brother have all been cared for by the cardiac-care unit at St. Boniface Hospital. Additionally, St. Boniface Hospital will soon be opening a new emergency department.

We know that our government supports health care. In fact, we just reopened new beds to ensure that when people go to St. Boniface Hospital, the required resources—nurses and doctors—are there so they can rapidly receive the necessary appropriate services.

Honourable Speaker, our government has even better news, with the hiring of nearly 900 new health-care workers, including new doctors, nurses and nurse aides. Because Manitobans know that a strong health-care system also supports their family life, their life—

** (12:30)*

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

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

The hour being 12:30 p.m., the House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. Monday.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

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