



Second Session – Forty-Third Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report
(Hansard)**

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The Honourable Tom Lindsey
Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-Third Legislature

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, October 15, 2025

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

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

Please be seated.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

The Speaker: Introduction of bills? Committee reports?

TABLING OF REPORTS

The Speaker: I am tabling a revised version of the Report of Amounts Paid or Payable to Members of the Assembly for the Year Ended March 31, 2025. Copies of the report will be sent to members directly by email.

Thank you.

Hon. Adrien Sala (Acting Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care): Honourable Speaker, I am pleased to table the annual report of the Department of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care for the fiscal year '24-25.

The Speaker: The honourable Minister of Finance.

Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister of Finance): I am pleased to table the following reports for the '24-25 fiscal year: the annual report for Manitoba Finance; the annual report for the Public Service Commission; the Manitoba Enabling Appropriations, Tax Credits and

Public Debt Annual Report; Employee Pensions and Other Costs Annual Report; the annual report for the Public Utilities Board; Manitoba Financial Services Agency Annual Report; Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board annual report; the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act report; and the actuarial valuation report for the Civil Service Superannuation Fund.

The Speaker: No further reports?

Hon. Tracy Schmidt (Acting Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I am pleased to table the following reports: the 2024 annual report for Manitoba Public Insurance; the 2024 Annual Report for the Law Enforcement Review Agency; the 2024-25 annual report for Legal Aid Manitoba; the '24-25 annual report for the Manitoba Law Foundation; the '24-25 annual report for the Manitoba Law Reform Commission; the '24-25 annual report for the Vehicle Impoundment Registry; and finally, the '25—sorry, the 2025 annual report for Manitoba Justice.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Minister of Families): I'm pleased to table the following report: annual report of Manitoba Families for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2025.

Hon. Bernadette Smith (Minister of Housing, Addictions and Homelessness): I'm pleased to table the annual report for '24-25 for Manitoba Housing, Addictions and Homelessness.

Hon. Tracy Schmidt (Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning): I am pleased to table the following reports: the '24-25 annual report of the Department of Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning; and the 2024 annual report for the Teachers' Retirement Allowances Fund.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The honourable Minister of Economic Development, Investment, Trade and Natural Resources.

Hon. Jamie Moses (Minister of Business, Mining, Trade and Job Creation): I'm pleased to table the following annual reports, for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2025: the annual report for Business, Mining, Trade and Job Creation; the annual report for

Apprenticeship and Certification Board; and the annual report for Manitoba Development Corporation.

Hon. Lisa Naylor (Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure): I'm pleased to table the annual reports for the Department of Manitoba Transportation and Infrastructure for the fiscal year of 2024-25.

Thank you.

Hon. Renée Cable (Acting Minister of Labour and Immigration): I'm pleased to table the Manitoba Labour and Immigration annual report for the year ended March 31, 2025.

The Speaker: The honourable Minister of Advanced Education and Training.

Hon. Renée Cable (Minister of Advanced Education and Training): I'm pleased to table the annual report for the Department of Advanced Education and Training for the fiscal year of 2024-25. I am also pleased to table the annual reports for the year ending March 31, 2025, for Brandon University, Red River Community College Polytechnic, University College of the North, Université de Saint-Boniface, University of Manitoba and University of Winnipeg.

Hon. Mike Moyes (Minister of Environment and Climate Change): I am pleased to table the annual report for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2025, for the Department of Environment and Climate Change.

Hon. Glen Simard (Acting Minister of Agriculture): Honourable Speaker, it is my pleasure to table the following reports: the annual report for the Manitoba—oh—yes, Manitoba Agriculture for fiscal year March 31, 2025, and the Annual Report for the Manitoba Agriculture Services Corporation for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2025.

The Speaker: The honourable Minister of Municipal and Northern Relations.

Hon. Glen Simard (Minister of Municipal and Northern Relations): I'd like to table the following reports: the first for the Manitoba—or Municipal and Northern Relations, second for Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries and the third for the Manitoba Water Services Board.

Hon. Mintu Sandhu (Minister of Public Service Delivery): I'm pleased to table the following annual reports for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2025: the Department of Public Service Delivery; the Vehicle and Equipment Management Agency; the Materials Distribution Agency; the Entrepreneurship Manitoba; the Public Guardian trustee special operating agency;

the Manitoba Residential Tenancies Commission; and the Automobile Injury Compensation Appeals Commission.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Hon. Nellie Kennedy (Minister of Sport, Culture, Heritage and Tourism): I am pleased to table the following annual reports for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2025: the annual report for the Department of Sport, Culture, Heritage and Tourism; and the annual report for Travel Manitoba.

Thank you.

Hon. Mike Moroz (Minister of Innovation and New Technology): I'm pleased to table the first-ever report for the Manitoba Innovation and New Technology for the fiscal period ending March 31, 2025.

* (13:40)

Hon. Ian Bushie (Minister of Natural Resources and Indigenous Futures): I'm pleased to table the 2024-2025 annual report from Natural Resources and Indigenous Futures.

The Speaker: No more tabling of reports?

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: Before we move on, I have some guests I'd like to introduce. Back in the seating—oh, can't talk. Sitting in the loge to my left, we have James Teitsma, former member for Radisson.

Welcome.

I'd like to draw attention of all honourable members to the public gallery where we have seated with us today from the RM of Headingley, CAO Sandra Miller; Councillor Glen Reimer; development officer, Robert Drummond.

And in the Speaker's loge to my left is Mavis Taillieu, former MLA for Morris, and they are guests of the honourable member for Roblin (Mrs. Cook).

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

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Latin American Heritage Month

Hon. Nellie Kennedy (Minister of Sport, Culture, Heritage and Tourism): Today I rise to recognize and celebrate Latin American Heritage Month.

Latin American Heritage Month, first proclaimed federally in 2018, is an opportunity to celebrate the culture and heritage of over 20 countries that stretch

from Mexico to the tip of South America. Each territory has rich traditions and diverse people that reflect its complex history.

This is more than a symbolic moment; it reflects our province's ongoing commitment to diversity, inclusion and mutual respect.

Honourable Speaker, as artists, business owners, educators, health-care workers and scientists, Latin American Manitobans make significant contributions to the success of our province.

As these communities continue to expand, volunteer-led, non-profit organizations play a vital role in supporting their increasingly diverse members by promoting, sharing and preserving the cultures, traditions and languages of their members.

We believe that diversity is not just something to be acknowledged. It must be actively celebrated, supported and reflected in the policies we create and the communities we build.

The resolve to preserve Latin American culture in our province is strong and proud. As the Minister of Sport, Culture, Heritage and Tourism, it is my great pleasure and privilege to support these efforts.

Multiculturalism has become a cornerstone of Manitoba's identity. By championing our diversity, Manitoba will remain open to multiple perspectives, ideas and initiatives, which in turn allows our province to grow. Manitobans continue to hold space for unique experiences, while identifying and celebrating our shared values.

It reminds us of the ongoing work needed to elevate Latin American voices, dismantle systemic barriers and ensure that every Manitoban feels seen, valued and heard.

And so today let's honour the past, celebrate the present and look forward to a more inclusive future.

I'd like to draw everyone's attention to the folks joining us here in the gallery today. We have Soraya Chamorro, Fernanda and Sion Vallejo, Roberto Garcia, Aline Tescucano and the consul general and vice-consul general of El Salvador in Manitoba, Fernando Aguilar and Carlos Velasco.

And so, in closing, Honourable Speaker, I'd like to wish everyone a very happy Latin American Heritage Month. Let's continue to honour the stories, traditions and contributions that bring our communities together.

Thank you.

Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz): I would like to also welcome the guests here as we celebrate Latin American Heritage Month.

Welcome to the Manitoba Legislature.

This October, I am proud to celebrate Latin American Heritage Month, which itself encompasses a wide 'ofrray' of cultures, traditions and peoples.

We in this House have the honour of representing over 13,000 Latin-American Canadians who call Manitoba their home, or hogar [*home*] in Spanish or lar [*home*] in Portuguese.

And as this number grows, so does Manitoba's cultural diversity, our workforce, our business landscape and our communities.

Recently, our Progressive Conservative team celebrated our Spruce Woods by-election victory at the Woodfire Deli, owned by Alex and Maria, a young family who brought their business experience from Mexico to start a new life in Souris just a few years ago.

We see examples like Alex and Maria all across Westman, where more and more families from Central and South America have planted their roots for the past decade.

And it's because of advocates like Latinas Manitoba and the Hispanic Association of Manitoba and many, many others that young families, newcomers and long-time residents alike are better able to access opportunities, navigate social services, preserve their cultures, engage with community and so on.

I thank all Latin Manitobans for their many contributions to our province; for sharing your culture, heritage, entrepreneurship and courage with us, and for your proven commitment to making Manitoba a better place for all.

I look forward to joining you and our colleagues in the Rotunda this afternoon to continue this celebration.

Thank you.

MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): Honourable Speaker, I ask for leave to respond to the minister's statement.

The Speaker: Does the honourable member for Tyndall Park have leave? [*Agreed*]

MLA Lamoureux: I'd like to begin by thanking the minister for bringing forward this very important ministerial statement.

Back in 2018, Parliament of Canada proclaimed October as Latin American Heritage Month to officially recognize the tremendous contributions the community continues to make and I am thrilled that today, October 15, 2025, Manitoba proclaimed the same.

Canadians of Latin American origin make up a large and growing population here in Manitoba. Organizations like Latinas Manitoba, who I have had the honour of working with, and the broader Latin American community have demonstrated just how much they enrich our province through all of their contributions, whether it be through local businesses, work in health care or education, just to list a few sectors where they play very large roles.

Now, Honourable Speaker, we do need to highlight that there are still barriers being faced by many immigrants to this day, including challenges in accessing resources, integration, professional opportunities and cultural representation.

I am grateful for the organizations and individuals who are working tirelessly to support, unite and empower the Latin American community across Manitoba, but we need to do even more.

For example, we could further empower organizations to enhance collaboration and increase community visibility.

Similar to just earlier this week, on October 12, when there was the first-ever Hispanic heritage celebration at Canada Life Centre during the Manitoba Moose game. This is a great way to increase community visibility.

In closing, Honourable Speaker, I'd like to thank the minister again for proclaiming the month of October as Latin American heritage month and I'd like to thank everyone who has joined us in the gallery, including the consulate general for El Salvador as well as a couple of my mom friends who I have connected with over the years for our babies' playdates.

Thank you for joining us here this afternoon and I look forward to this evening's event.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: Prior to members' statements, there's some guests in the gallery I'd like to introduce.

We have seated in the public gallery, from Immanuel Christian School, 25 grade 4 students under the direction of Maryne Vandermeulen, and this group is located in the constituency of honourable member for Radisson (MLA Dela Cruz).

We welcome you here today.

And we have seated in the public gallery, from Dufferin Christian School, 25 grade 4 students under the direction of Sandra Vanderkwoude [*phonetic*], and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Midland (Mrs. Stone).

And we welcome you here today.

* (13:50)

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Acknowledging First Responders during Wildfires

MLA Eric Redhead (Thompson): Today I rise to recognize the incredible efforts of our first responders in Thompson and across northern Manitoba. This past wildfire season tested our communities' resilience, and the courage and commitment of our firefighters kept families and homes safe. Their tireless work on the front lines, often in dangerous and unpredictable conditions, deserve our deepest gratitude.

I want to acknowledge the Thompson Fire & Emergency Services team for their outstanding service throughout the summer. From responding to emergencies to support wildfire suppression in Snow Lake, Leaf Rapids, their dedication was unwavering. Nine new members joined our team this year, Honourable Speaker, strengthening our capacity to protect lives and property. These brave individuals embody the spirit of service that defines our province.

This season showed the strength of global solidarity. Firefighters from Mexico, New Zealand, Quebec and other regions joined forces with local emergency response teams, standing shoulder to shoulder in the fight against wildfires.

Their presence was a powerful reminder that in times of crisis, borders fade and communities unite. Together we proved that when we support one another, we can overcome even the most daunting challenges.

Equally, I want to commend the Thompson RCMP for their proactive approach to community safety. Over the first eight months of this year, calls for services have dropped by 13 per cent, with significant reductions in thefts, assaults, impaired driving charges. Their efforts, alongside community safety officers—officers, have made our streets safer and neighborhoods stronger.

While drug-related investigations increased, these actions reflect a commitment—

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

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

The Speaker: Does the member have leave to finish his statement? *[Agreed]*

MLA Redhead: Tackling crime head-on, keeping illegal substances out of our communities.

Honourable Speaker, today we celebrate the firefighters, police officers and safety personnel who worked tirelessly to protect northern Manitoba. Their leadership and bravery remind us all that public safety is a shared responsibility and that together we can overcome any challenge.

Ekosi.

International Day of Rural Women

Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz): Today is International Day of Rural Women, and we take a moment to recognize and celebrate the incredible contributions of women and girls across the globe who have made a significant impact in rural areas. This day is not just an acknowledgment; it is a tribute to the strength, resilience and dedication of rural women everywhere.

Today I want to honour the rural women and girls here in our great province of Manitoba. Behind the scenes they often go unnoticed, but today, I want to recognize the important role they have in rural Manitoba and specifically agriculture.

Having growing up on a farm, I have a unique understanding of rural farm life. I've witnessed first-hand the commitment and investment required to maintain this lifestyle. The decisions that women make in these households are not just about daily operations, but they shape the very fabric of our agriculture communities.

Women are essential to the success of rural households and communities. We see countless women from various generations stepping up into leadership roles within agriculture. Some are farmers, others are agribusiness professionals and many are students pursuing agriculture programs. These women are not just participants; they are the backbone of many farming families, driving progress and innovation in our rural landscapes.

As we approach the end of the harvest season, we can reflect on the countless ways women contribute to this critical time: preparing meals in the fields, extra set of hands for running errands, managing financing, scheduling harvest help, co-ordinating meal times. Their efforts are integral to the success of harvest.

So today, let us celebrate the remarkable work of women who have chosen rural Manitoba, where they are making a difference.

Happy International Day of Rural Women here in Manitoba and across the globe. You make a difference in all our communities.

Thank you.

Tyndall Park Town Hall

MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): Over the summer I held a town hall, and there were three predominant topics. The first was public transit, which I raised last week and would like to thank the minister for his comments. My hope is that the government will put some pressure on the City to re-evaluate some of the changes that were made to help our constituents who have expressed some serious concerns.

The second issue from the town hall is the issue of ground squirrels, which I would like to address here today. Ground squirrels have become a very large issue here in Manitoba, and Tyndall Park is one of the communities who have been affected particularly hard.

My constituents have signed a petition that I would like to table now, outlining some of the facts. Areas including Fairgrove Bay, Shaughnessy Park and Tyndall Park all have damaged athletic fields, green spaces, fences, trees, garbage bins and flowerbeds. These ground squirrels have created safety concerns by digging near fire hydrants, and many residents have had to call exterminators due to infestations around their homes.

Honourable Speaker, there has been a huge increase in roadkill, creating unsanitary remains on roadways and in parks where other animals, and unfortunately even children, are interacting with the carcasses.

It is also notable that other constituencies are affected by this. A constituent of River Heights shared with me, and I quote: The park is overrun with ground squirrels, the terrain has been so degraded it is now a safety hazard and warning signs even advise visitors to use at your own risk.

Honourable Speaker, I am strongly encouraging the Province to reconsider their denial of the City of Winnipeg's pesticide permit and work collaboratively with the City to find an immediate, effective and safe ground squirrel control system.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Order, please.

Was the honourable member for Tyndall Park quoting from a private document or a public one?

MLA Lamoureux: I am quoting from an email that I was given permission to share in this House.

The Speaker: You will have to table it, then.

MLA Lamoureux: I will table the document.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Headingley Fitness Centre

Mrs. Kathleen Cook (Roblin): I rise today to recognize the recent opening of the Headingley Fitness Centre, a remarkable 12,000-square-foot expansion of the Headingley Community Centre, now home to a new gymnasium, fitness centre and fitness studio.

Last month, members of the community gathered for the grand opening. I had the opportunity to walk through the facility and it's absolutely beautiful, with state-of-the-art equipment, spacious change rooms and showers and a peaceful studio space filled with natural light.

This achievement reflects what's possible when a community comes together with a shared vision and a plan. Headingley has long been known for its strong community spirit, and this project is a shining example of that.

Projects like this don't happen overnight. They take years of planning, fundraising and the dedication of many hands and hearts. Headingley is a community that gets things done and gets them done right.

A special thank you goes to the Taillieu family, whose generosity as the legacy sponsor helped bring this vision to life. In recognition of their contribution, the Wilf Taillieu Gymnasium now proudly bears their name, a lasting tribute to their commitment to the community.

I also want to acknowledge and thank the dozens of individuals and local businesses that donated to this project. Their names are now recognized on the very impressive donor wall in the entrance to the facility.

The Headingley Community Centre is more than just a building; it's a hub for connection, celebration and now healthier living. With this expansion, Headingley has even greater capacity to support families, seniors and future generations.

Thank you to the RM staff, the mayor and council, the volunteers, organizations, donors, and most importantly, the residents of Headingley for making this incredible project a reality. Some of those

folks have joined us in the gallery and on the loge today, and I want to thank them for their continued commitment to Headingley and for joining us here at the Legislature today, and I ask that their names be added to Hansard.

Rob Drummond, Sandra Miller, Glen Reimer, Mavis Taillieu.

Sopilka Ukrainian Dance School

Mr. Mark Wasyliv (Fort Garry): I am honoured to rise today to recognize Sopilka Ukrainian Dance School, which this year celebrates its 55th anniversary as a cornerstone of cultural life in south Winnipeg and beyond.

* (14:00)

Founded in 1971 by Vicky Adams as part of the Ukrainian language program at Holy Family Ukrainian Catholic Parish, the school began as the South Winnipeg School of Dance before taking on the name Sopilka after the traditional Ukrainian woodwind instrument.

From these beginnings, Sopilka has grown into a thriving institution, with more than 140 dancers dedicated to sharing the beauty of Ukraine heritage through dance.

Since becoming a registered non-profit in 2018, Sopilka has provided high-quality instruction for dancers of all ages while fostering community pride and cultural preservation. For the past 15 years, under the artistic direction of Kristina Frykas, the school has inspired both dancers and audiences with its artistry and vision.

Over the decades, Sopilka has represented Manitoba and Canada with distinction. Its dancers have performed across our province, at Canada's National Ukrainian Festival in Dauphin, at Expo 86 in Vancouver, at Vegreville's Ukrainian Pysanka Festival and on the stage of Winnipeg's cherished Folklorama Kyiv Pavilion. They have performed for royalty, welcomed visiting officials, shared their talent internationally in Ukraine, Brazil and Croatia.

Sopilka is more than a dance school; it's a beacon of cultural preservation and a testament to the endurance of tradition across generations. For 55 years, it has brought people together, strengthened cultural knowledge and celebrated the vibrancy of Ukrainian identity in Manitoba.

I invite all members to join me in congratulating Sopilka Ukrainian Dance School on their 55th anniversary and in wishing them continued success as they

inspire new generations of dancers and community leaders.

* * *

The Speaker: I would like to take a moment now to introduce some new faces in the Chamber.

I am pleased to introduce to the House the 10 students who have been selected to serve as pages for this session. I would ask members to hold their applause until I have completed the introductions.

Starting from my right: from the University of Winnipeg Collegiate, Gurreet Kaur Kaylee [*phonetic*]—Khela, sorry. From Argyle Alternative High School, Cherie [*phonetic*] Perrault-Keeper. From Transcona Collegiate, Chielo Jose. From Grant Park High School, Sukhmeet Kaur Ghatrorhe. From St. John's-Ravenscourt School, Anna Kersey. From Maples Collegiate, Sehajveer Kaur Sidhu. From collegiate Churchill high school, Karsen Craven. From Ecole Saint-Joachim, Josie Auch.

Unfortunately, Milena Zaizets [*phonetic*] from Maples Collegiate could not be here today.

I'm also pleased to announce that the Assembly's senior page this year is Kathryn Sacher. Kathryn assisted in training the new pages and will mentor and work with them as they learn their duties. Kathryn also attended the Assembly's education and outreach program, Learning at the Leg! lunch and learn, where she promoted the page program to the educators in attendance.

Kathryn also recently featured in an interview on CBC Radio to promote the 2025 page reunion. The Assembly is very pleased to have Kathryn [*phonetic*] back with us for a second year.

I would ask all members to join me in welcoming the 2025-2026 Manitoba pages.

Welcome.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Homeless Encampments Public Safety Concerns

Mr. Obby Khan (Leader of the Official Opposition): I want to welcome former MLA Mavis Taillieu and former MLA James Teitsma, the former great baritone singer of O Canada in this Chamber.

I also want to take a second to congratulate Tony Wakeham, the incoming Progressive Conservative Party—in Newfoundland and Labrador. Congratulations.

Now, closer to home in Manitoba, Manitobans are fed up with this failing NDP government. Yesterday a group of children walking by a park had a water bottle thrown at them and then were chased by an individual living in an encampment at a park.

The Premier promised to end homelessness in two terms, but under the NDP government, homelessness population is higher now than it's ever been. Over 2,500 people are experiencing homelessness, the highest since 2015.

What is the Premier doing to put safety of Manitobans first?

Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier): Honourable Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to welcome all the new pages and to encourage them to have a great year of learning, and to be inspired about the potential for our democracy here in Manitoba.

Now, when it comes to the incident that we're discussing, I have to say that as a parent, as a leader and as an everyday Manitoban, I'm completely disgusted. What happened has no place anywhere on earth. No child should ever be in danger when they go playing at the park.

That's why we're taking steps like the intoxicated persons detention act overhaul that we've announced; building new spaces when it comes to being able to hold people who are under the influence of methamphetamine.

Question I'd like the member opposite to entertain is, in 2019 the intoxicated drug task force received a recommendation—and I'll table this for the House—to extend the timeline of the intoxicated persons detention act. This was six years ago. Why didn't the PCs do anything about it?

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

Mr. Khan: Honourable Speaker, The question was about encampments, not this Premier's pet project of pushing forward a drug consumption site in Manitoba. Parents want safety. He says he's disgusted, but he won't answer the question about encampments.

The individual had a lengthy criminal record including robberies and weapon crimes. They are by definition a repeat violent offender. He remains before the courts for a number of offenses last month, including two counts of assaulting a police officer and possessing a weapon.

The Premier falsely promised to end homelessness in Manitoba; he falsely promised bail reform; falsely promised that he'd keep violent offenders in jail. Oh no, wait, he never promised he'd keep repeat violent offenders in jail, because under this NDP government, repeat violent offenders are getting let out faster than they can be arrested.

So the question again to the Premier: What is he doing to keep Manitobans safe?

Mr. Kinew: Honourable Speaker, keeping you and every other Manitoban safe is my No. 1 responsibility, and it's the No. 1 responsibility for everyone on our team.

And that's why we're taking action to ensure that law enforcement and mental health professionals will be able to keep people who are high on meth in a cell for 72 hours.

I'll remind the members opposite that that is why I'm talking about this here. They—their political staff—can't keep their leader safe from asking questions that he doesn't know the factual basis of. Again, the site at 190—this is a press release, that I'll table, from more than a year ago, in 2024, talking about a sobering centre at 190 Disraeli.

This is also the bill that this member and his entire caucus just supported at second reading. We are taking steps to keep you, to keep kids, to keep everybody in our community safe.

They don't even know the topic that they're raising in question period. Good thing they're not in charge of your government.

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

Mr. Khan: For the third time, I'll ask the Premier: I'm talking about keeping Manitobans safe next to encampments, not his drug injection site, Honourable Speaker. Families deserve to feel safe, but this Premier is doing nothing for public safety.

We've seen the City of Winnipeg take a step closer to enforcing tighter rules on homeless encampments. The motion calls for a campment to only be 50 metres from a playground, pool, school and daycares. On this side of the House, we don't believe 50 metres is enough.

So will the Premier come out and support the City of Winnipeg's motion, but call for an increase in distance and commit to supporting the City of Winnipeg with

increase in funding for policing and enforcement to support this motion?

Mr. Kinew: I suppose the next question will be him standing up to say, good job, because we already added 36 police to the city of Winnipeg following two terms in which the PCs cut the number of law enforcement officers in the city by 55.

* (14:10)

Now, when it comes to the member himself, he continues his apology tour. Just a few days ago, he was apologizing for some unfortunate gestures which trivialized the issue of mental health. It recalls me to a time in committee within the same calendar year in which he apologized for using the term drug injection site. Now he is gassed up here in question period, using it all over again.

I will repeat: 190 is not for supervised consumption; it is to detain people who are high on meth.

This is a bill that the PCs supported. The member that is being raised—the member of the public—is currently in jail right now, as we speak. The PCs have no single leg to stand on. They can't even get the facts right. Good thing they're not in government.

We're working hard to keep you safe.

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

Increase in Grocery Prices Government Reduction Record

Mr. Obby Khan (Leader of the Official Opposition): To recap, I asked the Premier if he thinks 50 metres away from a school, a playground or a daycare is far away enough to keep kids safe, and he refused to answer the question. I think you have it right there, Manitobans.

This isn't the only promise the Premier failed to live up to. The Premier loves to just say things. He failed on his bail reform; he failed on health care; he failed on economy, and now he's failed on bringing down grocery prices.

The Premier threatened grocery chains, and he said, quote, I'm calling their bluff, end quote, if they don't lower their grocery prices. I table that article for the Premier to read today. Almost two years later, and grocery prices are higher than they've ever been in the history of this province.

Why did the Premier threaten grocery chains and then promise to lower grocery prices when he had no plan to do it?

Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier): Yes. Grocery prices are high and the member knows it; that's why all his Green Carrot locations are closed. He's terrible at running a business. Couldn't run a lemonade stand. Literally, all his lemonade stands are closed.

But when it comes to real people out there who aren't spending money donated by PC donors or by the government of Manitoba—you, the average hard-working Manitoban—we know that we need to help with the cost of living. That's why the first thing that we did was we cut the gas tax to put more money into your pocket. That's why the second thing that we did was to cut income taxes. That's why this past year, we cut the payroll tax.

And you know what the PCs did every single step of the way, Honourable Speaker? They opposed it. They thanked Donald Trump; they opposed tax cuts.

What does the PC Party of Manitoba even stand for? Absolutely nothing.

It's a good thing that we're in charge. We're saving you money; we're fixing health care; we're making the streets safer.

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

Mr. Khan: Once again, the Premier reverts back to who he is and that's making jokes, making jokes about small businesses, and personal attacks. It's just the bully he is. Manitobans are finally seeing it.

Under the NDP, Stats Canada reports that infant formula is up almost 20 per cent; apples are up 36 per cent, oranges 19 per cent, not to mention the cost of meat, chicken. Basic living essentials are all higher than they've ever been, under this NDP government.

The Premier has made it harder than ever for families to live and survive here in the province of Manitoba.

Why has the Premier—and why is he continuing to fail on every single promise that he made?

Mr. Kinew: Honourable Speaker, do you remember when the PCs were in office? Do you remember what inflation was then? Eight per cent.

We got into office; we were elected; we stopped it, right away. How did we do it? We cut the gas tax. That put money back into your pocket, and it also

brought inflation down from the highs of the Stefanson, Pallister, members opposite era of 8 per cent, brought it back down into the Bank of Canada's target range, where it has maintained every single month that we have been in office.

We're beating them on public safety; we're beating them on the economy; we're beating them on tax cuts. And it's because we're committed to producing results for you, the people of Manitoba.

But I want to return to the first set of questions that the member opposite seemingly couldn't understand the importance of taking people who are high on meth off of the streets and keeping our kids safe.

I want to share with members of the public that we have the expert opinion of four leading physicians from Shared Health here that are supporting the legislation that they also supported, validating—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

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

Mr. Khan: The Premier won't even try to answer the question I'm asking because he knows, under him, grocery prices are the highest they've ever been. He wants to live in the past. Manitobans are worried about today, how they're going to put food on their tables today, not what was done in the past—today.

Will the Premier stand up and actually answer the question that I proposed for him about lowering grocery prices? Under this Premier, he's increased your educational property taxes by \$350 million. He's increased your income taxes by \$400 million in just two years. And grocery prices are higher than they've ever been.

Will the Premier admit today that he has no plan, and when he threatened grocery stores, he had no intention of following through on that, and grocery prices are higher now than they were when he took office?

Mr. Kinew: Well, I'm sure if he had more time today, he'd be saying good job on this one as well, too. In addition to adding more law enforcement, what did we do? We changed contract law in Manitoba to break up the monopolies, to break up that buffer zone that the big grocery chains used to put around their perimeters to prevent competition.

More competition in Manitoba equals lower prices for you. We know that on this side of the House. They'll teach you that in business school. But the

members opposite, they don't like the market. They don't like competition. No surprise coming from the guy who got fewer votes than the other one in their leadership contest.

But again, talking about grocery prices, we passed legislation to make prices cheaper. You look at inflation every single month that we've been in office: lower than the PCs. We're also taking action. I'll table these letters for the people of the public to see to get meth off our streets. Four physicians, the leading doctors on addictions medicine in Manitoba, supporting our 72-hour detention period so people can get—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Reliability of 911 Emergency Services System Request for Independent Investigation

Mr. Derek Johnson (Interlake-Gimli): Honourable Speaker, it's now been more than six months since the tragic death of Dean Switzer. His family and neighbours called 911 more than 20 times and couldn't connect. The system failed, and his family remains devastated.

After all this, can the minister now stand in the House and say that Manitobans' 911 system is truly reliable?

Hon. Mike Moroz (Minister of Innovation and New Technology): Honourable Speaker, I want to thank the member opposite for the question and for the reminder of the tragedy that has occurred to the Switzer family. Again, our condolences are extended to them and all those impacted by his loss.

I will, again, remind the member: cellphone coverage is, of course, a federal responsibility. We continue to work with our federal counterparts to improve the system, and we're making good progress on that.

The Speaker: The honourable member for Interlake-Gimli, on a supplementary question.

Mr. Johnson: Honourable Speaker, I feel shame for him that I had to remind him about the Switzer family. The entire Switzer family is still waiting for answers. They have asked for accountability, not blame, and for assurances that no other family has to go through what they did.

After six months of reflection, can the minister—has the minister changed his mind and will he now commit to a full independent inquiry into the technical

aspects of Manitoba's 911 system, including phones, cell providers, dispatch and first responders?

MLA Moroz: Again, I want to thank the member for the question. We continue to work, as I say, with our counterparts at the federal level. We have an excellent working relationship with Secretary of State Belanger. We're committed to finding a path forward to ensure that cell coverage is extended in a comprehensive way to all Manitobans.

We're going to continue to do that work, and I trust we will find together a solution.

Provincial Finances Balanced Budget Timeline

Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland): Honourable Speaker, this Finance Minister has spent \$1.3 billion more than he budgeted for last year. Now the NDP, after two years, have left Manitobans with \$4 billion in back-to-back deficits, despite 8 and a half billion dollars in out-of-control spending. The economy, crime and health care are getting worse.

* (14:20)

How does this failing Finance Minister believe he is ever going to return to balance with his debt-and-spend approach?

Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister of Finance): Honourable Speaker, after years of irresponsible fiscal management, this government is finally managing the books responsibly here in Manitoba.

This team—this team—across from us left Manitobans with a \$2-billion hole that we had to climb out of. Now, again, I know they don't like to hear this, but they don't have to take our word for it. The independent accounting firm, MNP, confirmed that, due to their reckless and irresponsible decision making and their failure to properly plan, Manitobans were left with a \$2-billion hole.

What did we do in the following year? We reduced that deficit by 42 per cent, almost \$850-million reduction. We're managing the books responsibly because we know, when we manage the books responsibly, we can invest more in health care and affordability and—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Mrs. Stone: Only an NDP Finance Minister would be able to take a \$373-million surplus and turn it into \$4 billion of back-to-back deficits. The NDP have no credibility on balancing the budget.

Let's look at this past year alone: despite hundreds of millions of dollars in additional taxation on education property taxes and income taxes, despite \$280 million from a tobacco settlement this past August, \$4.6 billion of equalization payments; and he still cannot balance the budget and have calculated a—additional billion-dollar deficit this year.

When will this government show some fiscal discipline, stop the runaway spending and present a credible plan to balancing the budget this year?

MLA Sala: Honourable Speaker, we're really proud that Moody's and S&P have also confirmed that our recent budget shows that we're doing the important work of setting Manitoba on a good fiscal track. They confirmed our credit rating and they brought—they said that we have a stable credit outlook into the future.

That shows that we have independent confirmation that our fiscal plan is strong and it's very different than the mess that the PCs left us.

I also want to say, beyond just good fiscal management, we are building the stronger economy for tomorrow. Our last budget brought in a \$3.7-billion capital plan that has us building 11 schools, 3 personal-care homes; finally, NEWPCC.

We're doing the work of ensuring we build a stronger Manitoba for tomorrow. We're keeping the province more affordable, we're fixing health care, all while we set Manitoba on a good fiscal path.

Temporary Detention of Intoxicated Individuals Protective Care Centres—Operating Costs

MLA Jeff Bereza (Portage la Prairie): The protective detention care of intoxicated persons act is being rammed through with many questions—many, many questions that are not being answered.

Honourable Speaker, can this minister tell Manitobans: How many doctors, psychiatric nurses, addiction counsellors and security will each one of these protective-care sites require? If not, then why not?

Hon. Bernadette Smith (Minister of Housing, Addictions and Homelessness): What I can tell that member is that I—we do have four doctors, four specialists: one that works in the ER, another one that is addictions specialist. Many that are in support of this protective detention care centre—one that's going to be opening up at 190 Disraeli that was announced in July of last year that we've been working on opening up.

And again, this is about safety and security, ensuring that people get the care that members opposite ignored. And, again, we are supporting and meeting people where they're at. This is what Manitobans had—have asked for. We were elected here to listen to Manitobans and we are doing the work for you, the Manitoban, that we are elected here to do.

So I'm going to table this letter—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

The honourable member for Portage la Prairie, on a supplementary question.

Protective Care Centre Location—Public Consultations

MLA Bereza: Honourable Speaker, this NDP government doesn't care that local residents need to have a say in major decisions in their own community. I table a Free Press article addressing just that.

If the Manitoba government wants to move ahead with its plan to open a 72-hour detox centre, it owes the public, especially residents living near the proposed site, a lot of more information.

Honourable Speaker, will the minister provide the information today for the people living around 190 Disraeli? What is this minister trying to hide?

Ms. Smith: What we are trying to do is keep our streets safe and protect and help those who need resources to get the supports that they need.

And members opposite supported this bill so I'm unsure why they are on the opposite side today. You know, Manitobans have been asking for this, the enlisted task force asked for this in 2019. They asked the previous government to support this, and I'm going to table this so—I don't know what's going on here, why they're not supporting this today but—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Ms. Smith: —this is what Manitobans have asked for and again this is about keeping people safe, getting people the resources they need, expanding this so people on methamphetamines outside of alcohol can get the supports that they need—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Closed Tendered Contracts Number of Unawarded Bids

Mr. Richard Perchotte (Selkirk): We have a robust public tendering system to ensure that public funds are used responsibly and to safeguard against

interference. Unfortunately, Manitobans are raising concerns that the system is not being followed.

Can the Minister of Public Service Delivery explain why over half of closed contracts listed on MERX have not been awarded in the system, or is there something to hide?

Hon. Mintu Sandhu (Minister of Public Service Delivery): I want to thank the member for that question. I don't know what—where member was and also the Opposition Leader. Maybe they are not really listening to the general public, only they care about their own offices where they are maybe hiding in their offices and really not paying attention to what's going on out there. And we are working hard and we are listening to Manitobans and we are delivering the priorities that Manitobans have sent to deliver on us.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

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

Mr. Perchotte: Honourable Speaker, this is about accountability and 'transparency' in our system that we have. Manitobans need to know the systems are in place and safeguards are not being circumvented. We've seen it with an increase in direct awards under this NDP government. Why now are public tenders being closed and left unfulfilled, or is there more to this?

MLA Sandhu: I don't know where the member was. We have committed \$3.7 billion capital budget this year and we are still filling that budget and we are delivering on where Manitobans sent us to deliver, those priorities.

And again, as the member, the Opposition Leader is looking forward to update his furniture for his office, we will take that meeting as well as we will also update his furniture in his office so he can stay there for a long, long time.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order. Order.

No Net Loss of Wetlands Policy Protection of Existing Ecosystems

MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): Manitoba is known for our 100,000 lakes, our beautiful scenery and mostly clean water. Unfortunately, our wetlands, marshes and other spaces, which work to keep water clean and therefore benefit species of all kinds are currently at risk. While I am grateful that this government has installed a no-net-loss policy on wetlands, a lot more still needs to be done.

There are wetlands near forests, parks and farmlands being relocated because of human encroachment and development. Can the minister explain clearly how their no-net-loss plan will mitigate any further risks to existing ecosystems?

* (14:30)

Hon. Mike Moyes (Minister of Environment and Climate Change): Thank you to the member for bringing up our waterways. As a province with over 100,000 lakes, countless rivers and watersheds, we value our water. Manitobans value our water.

We recognize how important it is in terms of recreation, in terms of our economy, but also just for the natural world. Our government is working, not only in the Environment and Climate Change, but also in the department of Transportation, Infrastructure, Municipal and Northern Relations to protect our water, unlike the PC—the former PC government.

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

Protecting Farmland and Wetlands Request for Drought Mitigation Plan

MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): Honourable Speaker, Manitoba summer droughts are becoming more frequent due to climate change, in turn affecting our wetlands and our farmlands. Some farmers have turned to irrigation while others have turned towards conservation. And they, like many Manitobans, know that protecting our vast areas of wetlands—43 per cent of our land—allows for healthy soil, stable floods and filtered water.

What is this government doing specifically to help farmers mitigate the effects of drought and protect their farmland and surrounding wetlands?

Hon. Mike Moyes (Minister of Environment and Climate Change): Let me go through what our government is going to do. We're taking significant steps to improve and protect our watersheds. This includes putting in the first nutrient targets. This includes pressing the issue of mega dairy farms in North Dakota with the International Joint Commission. This includes strengthening our environmental enforcement with Bill 22. We've made investments for a new pick. We've been holding the City accountable for their pollution. We're working with municipalities to ensure that they can build the water infrastructure. The list goes on and on and on.

We're going to continue to fight for our water.

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

**North Dakota Dairy Farm Expansion
Water Protection Act Review Process**

MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): Honourable Speaker, many lakes and rivers including Lake Winnipeg and the Red River are under threat. Concerns have been raised regarding two large-scale mega dairy farms with tens of thousands of cows that are planned to be installed next to the Red River in North Dakota.

Unfortunately, this will further intensify the algal bloom toxin running through our lakes due to fertilizers, causing health issues to the water, wildlife and people.

Honourable Speaker, The Water Protection Act reads that the minister regulates such risks near specific water sources. So why did it take the international organizations to begin the review process, and where is the minister in all of this?

Hon. Mike Moyes (Minister of Environment and Climate Change): Well, thank you to the member for bringing that up. We took action immediately as soon as we found out about these mega dairy farms in North Dakota.

We've been working hand in hand with the federal government, with our counterparts in North Dakota. We want to mitigate the effects of these mega dairy. We recognize the threat that it puts into our watershed, and unfortunately, I would mention to the member opposite that we can't control what happens in North Dakota. But we are going to fight, fight, fight for our water to ensure that our watersheds are safe.

**Former Premier Stefanson
Fine for Caretaker Convention Breach**

MLA Robert Loiselle (St. Boniface): Last week, former PC premier Heather Stefanson was found guilty of breaking the law and violating our constitution. Manitobans still have many questions for Heather Stefanson: why did she break the law, who was she working for, what private financial interest did she have in the Sio Silica project?

Today, the media is reporting that she has the money to pay her fine. Now she's run out of excuses.

So we have to ask: Where is Heather? Has she paid her fine? Can the minister tell the House how we might get some answers?

French spoken

Hon. Tracy Schmidt (Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning): Merci beaucoup pour cette question—ça — pour cette question.

Translation

Thank you very much for that question—for this question.

English

Earlier this year, for the first time in history, a former premier, former PC premier Heather Stefanson was fined \$18,000 for breaking the law and violating the constitutions. But Manitobans recently learned that, while Heather was lounging in boardrooms in the Bahamas, she was also collecting over \$96,000 in severance from Manitoba taxpayers. Not only that, but we know she then decided to give some of that money to the PC leader for his leadership campaign.

Manitobans demand true accountability from their elected leaders; not corruption, not backroom dealing, Honourable Speaker.

Will the PC leader call Heather Stefanson today, show some leadership, demand that she return the money that she took from Manitoba taxpayers to pay—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

**New Markets for Manitoba Farmers
Request for Ministerial Action**

Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye): When I recently asked the Ag Minister in this House about his inaction, what he said was that the Saskatchewan premier, Scott Moe, went to Indonesia and came back with, I quote, nothing.

I'd like to enter into the record this stack of news articles on the new Saskatchewan-Indonesia trade deal, as well as the official news releases from the government of Saskatchewan and the government of Indonesia detailing Saskatchewan's new trade deal for agriculture.

Saskatchewan has been successful in opening up Asian markets in the tune of \$10 billion for Saskatchewan agriculture.

Can the minister explain why Saskatchewan has been successful in opening up billions—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Just one moment, please. You said you were—the member said he was going to table something? *[interjection]* Oh. Was the document the member was talking about public or private?

An Honourable Member: It's tabled.

The Speaker: So the document has been tabled?

An Honourable Member: Yes.

Hon. Glen Simard (Acting Minister of Agriculture): So I guess I know who they're cheering for on the 17th: Roughriders, maybe?

But what I would have to say is that our minister is working very hard at opening new markets. In fact, that's what our minister does. He's actively working on building those markets for canola, and they're also working to make sure that our farmers have the respect that they deserve.

The members opposite didn't respect producers: they closed offices; they ignored them; they put their heads in the sand.

Crown lands? Three hundred per cent. Like, I mean, I'm just channelling our great Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Kostyshyn) here. The problem here is when they talk about respect for farmers, they don't even respect voters.

So let's be clear: I'm all for team Manitoba. We will continue to work with our agriculture producers to make sure that their lives are affordable, that the products get in the bins and that they can market it to the world.

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

Mr. Narth: Potentially there's a Cabinet shuffle there with a new Ag Minister.

My question for the minister or this Premier (Mr. Kinew) is: Why is Saskatchewan going out and able to get more than \$10 billion in new trade deals for the farmers of Saskatchewan, and in Manitoba, the Premier and this minister are sitting on their hands without getting anything?

Can the minister—or, potentially the new minister—tell us how many new markets Manitoba has opened up to its farmers?

Mr. Simard: I think it's very interesting that the members opposite look at our bench and see what's going, but they refuse to look within. Look at—within yourself.

And we know that they are going to the public right now, saying the sky is falling, everything is bad; they're the Chicken Little opposition. It's just not true. They tried to sell it in the general election; they tried to sell it in Transcona; they tried to sell it in Tuxedo,

and they failed every time. Even tried it in Spruce Woods and barely, barely got by—barely. But we're coming.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Simard: We are coming. Celebrating an overtime win because the refs threw a flag—that's the only—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Highway 34 in Spruce Woods Request for Repair Timeline

Mrs. Colleen Robbins (Spruce Woods): The NDP committed to the residents of Spruce Woods for repairs of their failing infrastructure that the PCs had a five-year plan on. The CAA report just came out and Highway 34, from Holland to Gladstone, is the worst highway in Manitoba.

* (14:40)

Since no answer last week, I will simplify it for the minister: When will this work begin?

Hon. Lisa Naylor (Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure): It's my first chance to stand in the House and say congratulations to the new MLA for Spruce Woods.

Most of the time when folks are standing on the other side of the House, I hear them complaining about all the commitments that we have made in the Spruce Woods area over the last few months. I've even heard the member opposite take issue with the amount of commitments that our government has made in that community.

So I'm really happy to stand here and remind members opposite and members in Spruce Woods that our government is investing \$115 million to improve Highway 2 by resurfacing between Souris and Deleau. We're improving water quality in Oak Lake; we're investing \$2 million in the Spruce Woods Provincial Park for trails and campgrounds, new—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Minimum Wage Increase Cost of Living Concerns

Mr. Mark Wasyliv (Fort Garry): Probe Research polled Manitobans and found 72 per cent of them said \$16 is not enough for minimum wage.

A living wage is \$19.21 an hour; that's \$3 more than the Kinew government is willing to pay Manitobans.

Adding 20 cents to minimum wage is a 1.1 per cent increase.

Last year, shelter costs went up 4.8 per cent; food went up 3 per cent; transportation costs went up 5.3 per cent. Even the Premier's (Mr. Kinew) salary went up 2.5 per cent.

Will this Premier commit to immediately—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wasyliw: —raising the minimum wage to be the exact same raise that he got this year, and if he won't, can he explain why he deserves an 'increase' twice as much as what Manitobans are getting?

Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister of Finance): Honourable Speaker, one thing's for sure is that for years, Manitobans had a government that wasn't responding to their affordability challenges.

But finally, that's exactly what our government is doing, is we are doing the work to make life much more affordable here in Manitoba including with, of course, our hydro rate freeze, with our gas tax cut which we ultimately made permanent for Manitobans, a renters tax credit increase.

We know the members opposite took away a tax credit from renters: \$175. They reduced that; we're restoring that.

We're building more social and affordable housing to make sure there's housing there for those who need it in our province, taking PST off new social and affordable housing builds and, of course, very proud the work that's been done through our education and our Premier to drive a universal school nutrition program so every single child in this province can start the day with a—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

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

Mr. Wasyliw: Manitobans to be treated just as well as their MLAs. Minimum wage increases should be no lower than the cost-of-the-living increases that MLAs receive each year.

The price of housing is skyrocketing; renting an apartment is not affordable to someone on middle—minimum wage. In fact, according to the centre of policy alternatives, you would have to make \$29 an hour to afford a two-bedroom apartment in north Fort Garry.

That number climbs to \$31 an hour for the greater Winnipeg area. That's not right.

Will the Premier commit to immediately raising the minimum wage to match the increase he received this year, yes or no?

MLA Sala: Honourable Speaker, housing certainly is a concern here in Manitoba, and that's why it was so worrisome to see the former government sell off 385 units of social housing only a mere couple blocks from this building, taking away that housing that we know Manitobans needed.

Fortunately, Manitobans now have a government and a team led by, here, Minister Smith—or, sorry, our member for Point Douglas (Ms. Smith), who's doing the important work of ensuring that we invest in bringing more social and affordable housing online for Manitobans so that we have the housing we need. And that's in addition, of course, to the 25 ways to save we brought in with our last budget.

This government cares about everyday Manitobans. We're going to keep doing that work; we're listening, and every single day, we're going to keep focusing on making life more affordable for those who need those supports.

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

Mr. Wasyliw: The Premier of Manitoba received a \$5,000 cost-of-living increase this year. Manitobans received a 20-cent-an-hour rise that, over the course of a year, amounts to \$416.

The Premier received a raise that was 10 times what he was prepared to give Manitobans. That 1.1 per cent increase to the minimum wage doesn't even cover rent.

Manitoba government capped rent increases at 1.7 per cent this year, which means that the minimum wage workers are falling further and further behind. The cost-of-living increase doesn't even match how expensive the Province is making their rent.

Will the Premier do the right thing and immediately raise the minimum wage to 2.5 per cent to match what he received this year, yes or no?

MLA Sala: Honourable Speaker, we are putting more in Manitobans' pockets, and every single Manitoban is benefiting from a broad middle-class tax cut that we brought in changing brackets, raising the basic personal exemption. That's in addition to those 25 ways to save.

Again, for many years, Manitobans had a government that wasn't responding to these affordability challenges. Finally, they have a government that is really focused on making life more affordable.

And, in addition to that, we are building a stronger economy for all Manitobans to create more opportunities for Manitobans to create wealth and build opportunities within their family, including that \$3.7-billion capital plan commitment. We're seeing 5,300 new jobs online in August and September. We're seeing announcements about new mines. We're seeing exciting things coming forward with our economic development plan and affordable energy plan. We're focused on getting Manitobans to work, creating those opportunities for Manitobans across this province—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

The time for question period has expired.

Point of Order

Mr. Richard Perchotte (Selkirk): Honourable Speaker, on a point of order.

The Speaker: The honourable member for Selkirk, on a point of order.

Mr. Perchotte: Honourable Speaker, during my private member's statement yesterday, October 14, 2025, I misspoke identifying my guests. I'd like to correct the record. They were, in fact, Holly and Dennis Whall.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

The Speaker: So I do believe it's not a point of order, but the correction will be noted today.

* * *

The Speaker: The honourable Leader of—no, the honourable member for Tyndall Park.

MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): Honourable Speaker, on House business, I would just like to table the email correspondence that was requested during members' statements.

The Speaker: The honourable member for Tyndall Park, on House business. Appreciate the fact that you tabled the documents. Thank you.

The time for oral questions has expired.

PETITIONS

Location of Safe Injection Sites

Mr. Obby Khan (Leader of the Official Opposition): Honourable Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

The Province of Manitoba has filed paperwork with the federal government proposing the establishment of a drug injection site for illegal drugs at 200 Disraeli Fwy. without sufficient public consultation.

(2) The decision to locate the facility at 200 Disraeli was made despite that the site is located in the immediate vicinity of a daycare centre, a high school and multiple community gathering sites, including churches and cultural institutions.

(3) Residents, business owners and community organizations have raised concerns that the location is incompatible with nearby institutions serving thousands of youths and families, and believe it will erode public safety and confidence in the area.

(4) Existing community consultation specifically ignored concerns about public safety and were criticized by community members for being artificial and scripted.

(5) The provincial government has failed to introduce legislation and regulation to control where drug injection sites can be located.

* (14:50)

(6) Other provinces are closing drug injection sites and adopting a recovery model, following the expertise of groups such as the Canadian Centre of Recovery Excellence.

(7) The decision to ignore the experts will leave people suspended in addiction and will not give Manitobans their lives or their loved ones back.

(8) The provincial government has failed to fund and operate any treatment or additional Rapid Access to Addictions Medicine clinics to break this cycle.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to cancel drug injection sites in the Point Douglas community, including the proposed location at 200 Disraeli Freeway.

(2) To urge the provincial government to legislate that no future site will be proposed without community support.

Honourable Speaker, this petition was signed by Sara Raposo, José Raposo and Kenina Monoreira [*phonetic*] and many, many, many other Manitobans.

Rural Community Policing Services

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) All Manitobans deserve to feel safe in their homes and communities.

(2) Throughout Manitoba, rural communities are seeing dramatic increases in criminal activities targeting individuals and property, which has eroded their sense of safety.

(3) Though communities pay taxes for RCMP coverage, many have lost local policing as RCMP detachments consolidate. This situation is unacceptable to communities who expect a level of service and police protection.

(4) The lack of community policing has led to many Manitobans losing faith in the rule of law and the availability of emergency services when they are needed.

(5) The provincial government has a responsibility to act and ensure that communities receive adequate services and coverage from police resources.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to immediately work with the RCMP to restore rural community policing and provide adequate resources to protect Manitoba communities.

This petition is signed by Garry Patterson, John Halaschewski, Gail Mauthe and many, many more Manitobans.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

MRI Machine for Portage Regional Health Facility

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) 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, diagnosis and treatment monitoring.

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition has been signed by Patricia Nichols, Charlotte Jones, and Joah [*phonetic*] Parker—sorry, Joan Parker and many, many, fine other Manitobans.

Elm Creek School Gymnasium

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) All Manitoba students deserve access to appropriate physical education facilities, not only as a part of their education, but as a part of living an active and healthy life.

(2) The current gymnasium at the Elm Creek School is insufficient for the needs of the student population. Physical education classes are overcrowded, and there is insufficient space for whole-school assemblies and events.

(3) The current gym structure is aging and showing the impact of years of usage. Parents have significant safety concerns of the physical space and the aging electrical systems.

(4) Uneven and heaving floors pose a safety risk for students participating in physical education classes or sports.

(5) The existing ventilation system was designed to meet old standards for a smaller student population and poses serious risks for students.

(6) The current facility is the only option available to students and, should it become inoperable, students at Elm Creek School would be deprived of physical education spaces.

* (15:00)

(7) The government has a responsibility to make funds available to replace this aging infrastructure and provide appropriate activity and recreation activities to students in Elm Creek.

We urge the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the government of Manitoba to immediately work with the Prairie Rose School Division to begin the process of replacing the gymnasium facilities at the Elm Creek School, in consultation with parents and the community.

This is signed by Darryl Enns, Kennedy Dykun, Justice Dykun, and many, many more Manitobans.

MRI Machine for Portage Regional Health Facility

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

Mr. Tyler Blashko, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

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

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

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

(7) The average wait time for Manitobans to receive an MRI scan is currently six to eight months. Having an MRI machine in the Portage regional

health facility will help reduce these wait times for patients and provide better care sooner.

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 has been signed by Janet Parker, Monica Grant, Myrna Hancock and many, many more Manitobans.

Thank you, honourable Speaker.

Provincial Road 210

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

(4) The condition of Provincial Road 210 from Woodridge to Highway No. 12 is in an unacceptable state of disrepair.

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

(2) To urge the provincial government to include the stretch of Provincial Road 210 from Woodridge to Highway No. 12 in its reconstruction plans.

This petition has been signed by Dylan Bell, Reed Sutherland, Marcel Lemire and many, many more Manitobans.

MRI Machine for Portage Regional Health Facility

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

* (15:10)

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

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

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

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

(6) Located in close proximity to the new Portage regional health facility is the Southport airport. This aerodrome has a runway length that is more than adequate to support medical air ambulance services.

This would provide the opportunity to transport patients by air from more remote communities to access MRI imaging services.

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This is signed by Arishya Aggarwal, Ajay Aggarwal, Judy Verwey and many other Manitobans.

Removal of Federal Carbon Tax

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

(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 indicates the—oh, sorry. Did I—okay. I'm going start with No. 5 again, sorry.

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 Canadian homes—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 with much-needed relief.

This petition has been signed by Marlie Slack, Lezlie Husband and Morgan Somersall and many, many other Manitobans.

MRI Machine for Portage Regional Health Facility

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

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

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

* (15:20)

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

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

(4) An MRI machine located in the Portage regional health facility will reduce transportation costs for patients as well as reduce the burden on stretcher

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

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

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

Honourable Deputy Speaker, we petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition is signed by Beverley MacDonald, Joanne Chudzir, Brenda McConnell and many, many Manitobans.

Thank you, honourable Deputy Speaker.

Provincial Trunk Highway 45

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

These are the reasons for this petition:

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition has been signed by Oliver Joslin, Leona Chipelski, Judy Usunier, and many, many, many other Manitobans.

Thank you, honourable Speaker.

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

These are the reasons for the petition:

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

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

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

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

* (15:30)

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition has been signed by William Kuz, Vincent Berg, Booth Ashcroft and many, many more Manitobans.

Thank you, honourable Deputy Speaker.

Support for Border Communities

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(6) Despite these challenges, there has been little communication or support from the provincial and federal governments regarding their plans to assist

border communities, leaving them under-resourced and unprepared to manage this escalating crisis.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

This petition has been signed by Judy Peters, Mary Reimer, Ann Wolfe and many, many, many Manitobans.

Phoenix School

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

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

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

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

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

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

There are currently hundreds of children on a wait-list for child care in Headingley. The daycare operator in Phoenix School has been told that they will

continue to have space within the school for the 2024-2025 school year only, that further expansion of child-care space within the school is not possible and that space may be reduced moving forward due to the shortage of classrooms. If new space is not constructed as planned, many families may be left without child care.

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

And this petition is signed by Margo Price, Kristie Todd, Michelle Ragasa, and many, many other Manitobans.

Opposition to Releasing Repeat Offenders

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

* (15:40)

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

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

Honourable Deputy Speaker, this petition was signed by Dallas Barber, Sandra Cullen, Sherwin Cabok [*phonetic*] and many, many other fine Manitobans.

Thank you, honourable Deputy Speaker.

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

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

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

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

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

(5) The provincial government has the ability and the responsibility to advocate for and implement measures that protect its citizens by ensuring that

repeat violent offenders are not released into our communities without proper safeguards.

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

Honourable Deputy Speaker, this petition is signed by Kennedy Hardridge [*phonetic*], Eric Harndry [*phonetic*] and Shelley Gray and many, many more fine Manitobans.

Funding Crime Cost Mitigation for Small Business

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

The background of this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We urge the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This has been signed by Chance Horn, Dwight Barre and Dirk Michaluk and many other fine Manitobans.

MRI Machine for Portage Regional Health Facility

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): I wish to present the following petition to the Manitoba Legislature.

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

(4) An MRI machine located in the Portage regional health facility will reduce transportation costs for patients as well as reduce the burden on

stretcher service and ambulance use. It will bring care closer to home and reduce wait times for MRI scans across the province.

* (15:50)

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

And, honourable Deputy Speaker, this petition is signed by Kelly Robinson, Kimberly Nikkel, Jamie Morrisseau [*phonetic*] and many other fine Manitobans.

Green Valley School Expansion

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

This petition has been signed by Kitana McDougal, Richard Heese, Rod West and many, many other Manitobans.

Opposition to Releasing Repeat Offenders

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

And the background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

This petition has been signed by Amanda Clemis, Rod deLaroque, Matt Park and many, many Manitobans.

Thank you.

Morden Waste Water Project

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

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

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

* (16:00)

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

This petition was signed by Karen-Denise Cyr, John McLean *[phonetic]*, Tammy Hendrickx and many, many other Manitobans

The Deputy Speaker: Seeing no further petitions.

GRIEVANCES

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): I rise on a grievance, which, members will know, members only have one per legislative session to bring forward issues of concern to them and to their constituencies. So I don't do this lightly, knowing it is my only opportunity to do so during this session.

But as I've listened to debates and I've heard our esteemed Finance critic pose important questions to the Finance Minister, particularly with the issue regarding the Province's commitment and yet inability, it seems, to balance the budget, I feel that I do need to bring forward the concerns that I've been hearing from my constituents and also from Manitobans more broadly.

Specifically—and I'll be honest and clear as I can on this issue, honourable Deputy Speaker, while staying within parliamentary language—my constituents don't believe this government. They simply don't believe the commitment that was made two years ago that they were going to balance the budget.

They don't believe it for a lot of reasons. I mean, some of it's historical; we used to hear the former Selinger government say, each and every year, that they were either going to reduce the deficit or balance the budget; more often they would say they would reduce the deficit, and they missed their targets each and every year.

I don't remember a year that the Selinger government was in power they actually met their target, and the fact that I would say to members opposite, if you'd go back and look at the budgets that were brought forward by the NDP government at that time and the targets that they set out for deficit reduction, they not only never met them, they missed them in an extraordinary way.

And, of course, we know what happened as a result of that: Ultimately, taxes were increased and then there was the big tax increase. There were lots of tax increases that were bigger from a financial perspective than the PST, but the one that caught the attention of the public, of course, was the PST because it was so visible and so obvious, and then Manitobans drew the connection between the massive deficits that the NDP were running and the fact that they had to pay for those deficits in an immediate sort of way.

And so that is why Manitobans are now coming to me and saying: What is going on here? We have a provincial government that was left with a very healthy surplus from the previous government. *[interjection]* I'm glad to hear that members opposite

are agreeing with that. I hear ministers saying, yes, that's right; we were left with a surplus. I'm glad that they confirm that. In fact, they actually confirmed that at Public Accounts when the Auditor's Report for that particular year was brought forward. They voted in favour of the Auditor's Report because they knew it to be true. If they would have had any concerns, I'm sure they would have raised it at that point.

And so now that all members of the House have confirmed the surplus—the NDP and, of course, this side, and I suspect the Liberals would be in favour of that as well, but I know that they have other issues that are going on too. The issue, when it comes to the surplus, is specific around—there was a good shape. There was a good opportunity for the government to still be able to bring in their own programs that they ran on and maintain a good financial situation.

But what did they do instead? They brought in a record surplus in a non-flood, non-pandemic year. They then said there was going to be a bunch of targets that they were going to try to meet when it came to the deficit. And, surprise, surprise; they've missed every target—every one. They haven't met a single target.

Now I've heard the Minister of Environment chirping over there. That's a person who knows about missing targets. He absolutely knows about missing targets—environmental targets, every other kind of target. But in this particular case, when it comes to environmental targets—*[interjection]* I know—he's still going now—he's riled up now, because he knows when there's nothing that hurts more than the truth. And for the Minister of Environment this is the truth, so this one stings more deeply than anything else.

But if he actually had the opportunity to speak to the Minister of Finance (MLA Sala)—I actually don't know who talks to each other there or anymore, if they actually talk to each other—but if he actually talked to the Minister of Finance, he could ask him the poignant question: When exactly and how are we actually going to balance this budget that we promised two years ago? Because every year that the budget comes out or the quarterly updates come out, they're getting further and further away from that. They missed their deficit projections more, more and more.

Of course, we all know what's going on in the economy. There's great uncertainty with the tariffs that have been brought in by the United States, tariffs that we're facing from China, tariffs from other countries, great uncertainty from a fiscal perspective.

Now, the federal Liberals have already said that they're going to be bringing in a massive deficit in the

tens and tens of billions of dollars. They've already forecast to Canadians to buckle up, put your helmets on, get ready for the mother of all deficits when it comes to the federal Liberal government. That, apparently, is coming in about three weeks. Of course, they don't want to bring in a budget at all. They apparently were going to run the country without ever bringing in a budget, but they were forced to bring in one this fall.

But the mother of all deficits, this is going to be coming in from the federal government. They've already prepared us for that.

Meanwhile, you know, we've got the Finance Minister here who is going along and saying, don't worry; be happy. Everything's fine. And yet when you look at the books, you clearly know that's not true. The last financial update that they put out with the quarterly report, it was clear they're missing every projection, again, just like the Selinger government.

In fact, I don't think there's been an NDP government, when you combine the Kinew government and the Selinger government, that's actually met a fiscal quarterly target in about six or seven years. I'm happy to be proven wrong, but I think they've actually missed every one of those targets for six or seven years.

But the Finance Minister says, oh, don't worry; be happy. Somehow we're going to magically balance this budget.

Now I did hear the minister—or the Premier (Mr. Kinew)—say, oh, yes, I've given targets now to the departments. He said this at a press conference, an unrelated press conference, a few days ago. He said, I've given targets to the department for all of them to cut their budgets.

* (16:10)

Now, that'll be interesting to see which ministers are actually going to come forward and try to meet those targets—what that actually looks like. We certainly are hearing things in the community—is Child and Family Services and other regional agencies are coming and saying, hey, we've been told to cut this; we've been told to cut that. So we're going to find out exactly what those cuts are.

But I think it is incumbent upon the government to be clear with Manitobans, and with Canadians, really. Because at a time when we have this great uncertainty, it's incumbent upon all governments across our country to be transparent about what the financial situation truly is. Businesses need to know, Manitobans need to know. We don't know what kind of a trade

deal, if any, we're going to get with the Americans; of course, we hope that we get a good deal. We actually hoped that they would continue to live under CUSMA because we think that deal was just fine. But whatever's going to happen, we need to know what our prospect is for trade; we need to know what the prospect is for tariffs. But just as importantly in Manitoba, we need to know what the prospect is for the finances.

What is the deficit going to be? Let's put aside the issue of the balanced budget. I don't think anybody in this House or in the public believes that the NDP government is ever going to balance the budget. I don't think they believe that if the times were good, if the crops were full, if there was no tariffs, if there was record surpluses from the federal government—which I think there actually are, right now—that they would ever balance the budget even then. Nobody actually believes that the NDP is going to balance the budget in good times, let alone difficult times. But then the question is: What's going to happen?

So if the Treasury Board through the Minister of Finance (Mr. Sala) sent memos out to all the different departments, and they would've done it already at this time of the year, that this is your target for expenditures that you have to meet, and to drill down those savings, Manitobans need to know: What are those targets? What are the expectations for—that are going to come, that are going to hurt Manitobans? And what is that deficit going to be that, ultimately, it's going to have to be repaid going through higher taxes by Manitobans? We need to know that.

Now, there are different ways that the Minister of Finance could do that. I suppose he could bring in a fall economic statement; I don't suspect that's going to happen. He could simply bring forward more clarity on the quarterly reports. He could bring forward a revised budget. There are actually lots of different ways that the Finance Minister could bring that forward.

The only thing that isn't acceptable is to continue on with the blinders and just say, yes, we're going to balance the budget. Don't worry, we're going to somehow magically balance the budget. Even though we took a 300-and-some million-dollar surplus and turned it into a \$2-billion deficit, we're somehow going to balance this budget. Nobody believes it; nobody feels that's going to happen.

And I know, there's some, you know, magical pixie dust going over there, and we saw the Premier come out and bring forward an economic plan that says we're going to grow the economy in 2040 or 2050

or something like that, when probably nobody, maybe other than the member for Elmwood (MLA Maloway), is actually going to be in this House still in 2050. But, I mean, that's absolutely ridiculous to suggest that in 2050 we're going to actually turn around and try to grow the budget at the time.

So—[interjection] Well, I'm glad to hear that the Minister of Families (MLA Fontaine) is concerned about my future and my well-being, I appreciate that. She's got lots of other concerns she should be worried about—sorry, the Minister of Housing and Addictions. Minister of Families clearly has other problems too. There's lots of problems over on that side of the House and I'm not trying to fix any of them.

The only one that I'm trying to deal with today is to ensure that the Minister of Finance (MLA Sala) is clear with Manitobans, that he actually brings forward the clear facts to Manitobans, what is actually happening on the finances. Nobody believes there's going to be a balanced budget. But where are the targets for cuts coming from, what are Manitobans going to have to pay in the future because of missing all of those targets and turning a surplus into a deficit, and how much and how deep are they going to be reaching into our pockets?

Thank you very much, Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for La Vérendrye, on a grievance.

Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye): I rise today on a grievance. It's one with deep concern, on behalf of Manitoba farm families. As my colleague, the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen), had mentioned and pointed out that we don't rise on a grievance just because of anything, as we only have one per session. But watching the action or inaction of this government and the Ag Minister over the past several months, now going on two years, it's something that I felt needed to be brought forward.

Our producers who grow the food that sustains us and drives one of Manitoba's most important economic engines are facing escalating pressure from tariffs imposed by the United States and China. These two countries are Manitoba's top destinations for agricultural products, and when trade barriers go up, no province feels it harder than ours.

Sadly, this NDP government and especially the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Kostyshyn) has failed to take any meaningful action. Instead, they have attempted to pass off existing programs as tariff supports while doing nothing new to address the specific crisis at

hand. This government owes producers honesty and real solutions, not smoke and mirrors.

The minister has repeatedly pointed to long-standing business risk management programs administered by Manitoba agriculture services corporation, programs like crop insurance, wildlife damage compensation, the AgriInvest and other programs. But let's be clear: crop insurance is not tariff support; wildlife predation and damage insurance is not tariff support; AgriInvest is not tariff support.

These are long-standing programs, costs shared with Ottawa, designed to help producers manage normal production risks, not global trade wars. To suggest otherwise is not only misleading, it is an insult to the intelligence of Manitoba farm families.

Is this government really trying to snow producers into believing nothing needs to be done because the status quo is good enough? Does the Minister of Agriculture truly believe crop insurance, a program based on actuarial science and weather risks, suddenly qualifies as a tariff relief program?

I suspect the minister knows better. In fact, I believe the minister understands full well what the challenges are. He's a farmer himself, as am I. We both come from multi-generational farm families. We know what it means to face risk, to manage uncertainty and, in those tough years, to depend on governments for fair and honest support. That's why it's so frustrating to watch this minister forced to repeat these ridiculous talking points that even he knows are misleading because they are not true supports for the tariffs.

In question period, he has admitted these programs are set by federal-provincial agreements with allocations determined by MASC and their actuaries, not by his government. That tells me he knows the limits of these tools, but instead of being trusted with the resources and freedom to stand up with farmers and to stand up for farmers, he's being held back.

When the questions get difficult in this Chamber, the Premier (Mr. Kinew) himself jumps up to rescue him. We have seen this time and time again, not just with Agriculture but with so many of his ministers. Does the Premier not trust his own Cabinet to answer the questions?

I can certainly understand why he wouldn't: there isn't a ton of real-world experience over there, which makes the sidelining of the Minister of Agriculture so disappointing. Here's a minister who actually has some real experience in their portfolio. Here's a minister

who's not a professional activist like many of the others over there; he's an actual farmer. Yet, the Premier doesn't trust him to speak for farmers. Or is he afraid, if given the chance, these ministers might finally speak honestly and, in doing so, bring down the carefully curated house of cards that this government has built up?

* (16:20)

Either way, Manitobans can see it plainly. When the tough questions come, the Premier grabs the wheel. The ministers sit silently, avert their eyes, and Manitobans are left with the cheesy, disingenuous pep talk rather than real answers.

This government's inaction is especially troubling given the scale of this specific problem. China's retaliatory tariffs on Canadian canola, soybeans and pork have struck a direct low—a direct blow to Manitoba producers. Each year Manitoba exports over \$1-billion worth of canola and soybeans to China alone. Pork exports regularly top hundreds of millions of dollars. These are not abstract numbers. They represent farm income, jobs in processing and the backbone of our rural communities. These numbers represent real Manitobans.

When those markets slam their doors on Manitoba's exports, our producers are left with nowhere to turn. Bin-busting harvests become worthless when there are no markets to access. Livestock herds can't simply be paused while governments wring their hands. Every day without action is another day of lost income and lost opportunity for Manitoba farm families.

The NDP government knows these numbers. They know the impact, and yet they remain silent. The Premier is leading partisan pep rallies, the minister is missing and farmers are shaking their heads.

Now, contrast this with what we've seen elsewhere. When tariffs began to hit, the federal government stepped up. They brought forward increased loan limits under the Advanced Payments Program. Producers could access up to \$1 million in loans, with a quarter-million interest free to help manage cash flow during market disruptions.

The Speaker in the Chair

Was this perfect? Course not, but it at least was a concrete measure that acknowledged the problem.

Compare to our neighbours: Saskatchewan Premier Scott Moe led a trade mission to China to stand shoulder to shoulder with their producers to keep doors open, to keep the conversation going and to

make the case for prairie producers. As a result, they've successfully opened up Asian markets in the tune of \$10 billion. That's \$10 billion for Saskatchewan farmers, but it also means \$10 billion of ag sales for Canada.

But Manitoba? Nowhere to be seen.

Here's the point I want to make clear: I believe the minister knows better. He's a farmer, like some other 15,000 Manitoba families. He has seen the challenges first-hand, and I don't doubt that he understands what it takes.

At the end of the day, this grievance is about trust. Farmers need to be able to trust their government will have their backs when global forces beyond their control threaten their livelihoods. Right now that trust is being broken.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

ORDERS OF THE DAY GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

House Business

Hon. Tracy Schmidt (Acting Government House Leader): Could you please canvass the House to see if there is leave for the following limited debate provisions to apply tomorrow, October 16, 2025, for the consideration of condolence motions for Herold Driedger, Harry Schellenberg and Gérard Lécuyer: (1) up to two members from recognized parties and each independent member may speak to each motion; and (2) each member may speak for up to 10 minutes.

Furthermore, is there leave for consideration of the condolence motions to occur immediately following oral questions tomorrow, postponing petitions and grievances until a consideration of the motions is complete?

The Speaker: Is there leave for the following limited debate provisions to apply tomorrow, October 16, 2025, for the consideration of condolence motions for Herold Driedger, Harry Schellenberg and Gérard Lécuyer. Up to two members from recognized parties and each independent member may speak to each motion, and each member may speak for up to 10 minutes.

Furthermore, is there leave for consideration of the condolence motions to occur immediately following oral questions tomorrow, postponing petitions and grievances until consideration of the motions is complete.

Is there leave? [*Agreed*]

* * *

MLA Schmidt: Can you please call the start of third reading of Bill 12, The Housing and Renewal Corporation Amendment Act; followed by the start of third reading of Bill 40, an act respecting O Canada and other observances and land treaty acknowledgements in schools, the education administration act and public schools act amended; followed by second reading debate of Bill 49, The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment Act (2).

The Speaker: It has been announced that we will now move to concurrence and third reading of Bill 12, The Housing and Renewal Corporation Amendment Act; followed by Bill 40, an act respecting O Canada and other observances and land treaty acknowledgements in schools, education administration act and public schools act amended; followed by debate on second reading of Bill 49, The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment Act (2).

CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS

Bill 12—The Housing and Renewal Corporation Amendment Act

The Speaker: So we will now move to concurrence and third reading of Bill 12, The Housing and Renewal Corporation Amendment Act.

Hon. Bernadette Smith (Minister of Housing, Addictions and Homelessness): I move, second by the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning (MLA Schmidt), that Bill 12, the housing renewal corporation amendment act, reported from the Standing Committee on Justice, be concurred in and now be read for the third time and passed.

The Speaker: Been moved by the honourable Minister of Housing, Addictions and Homelessness, seconded by the honourable Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning, that Bill 12, The Housing and Renewal Corporation Amendment Act, reported from the Standing Committee on Justice, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Ms. Smith: I'm so proud that our government has taken action to help protect the investments of all Manitobans in the supply of social and affordable housing through the introduction of Bill 12, an amendment to the housing and renewal corporation amendment act.

When the former Lions Place seniors' non-profit housing was sold to an Alberta-based, for-profit real estate company in 2023, Manitoba lost social and affordable housing units, and tenants saw significant

rent increases, and Manitobans lost their investment in a central downtown building.

It became clear to us on this side of the House, Honourable Speaker, that future sales or changes of ownership of housing that received public funds required some future checks and balances. While the former Conservative government was able to protect the sale of Lions Place, it sold hundreds of social housing units at 185 Smith St.

The passing of Bill 12 protects Manitobans and the non-profit housing supply. Owners of provincially-funded buildings or federally funded under the Social Housing Agreement wanting to sell will now have to receive the consent of Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation prior to selling, demolishing or changing the use of their building.

Members opposite have suggested that Bill 12 will have a cooling effect on development. I would suggest that when those members were in government, they cancelled the building of hundreds of social and affordable housing units and sold social housing. The only cooling effect on development in this province is a Tory government.

Bill 12 will help protect the long-term security of public investments in social and affordable housing and support our government priorities. It is important to Manitobans, and that there is an adequate supply of affordable housing, and that housing remains affordable to low to moderate income tenants.

* (16:30)

Bill 12 will apply to approximately 152 existing projects, or over 5,000 rental units will be protected by this legislation when it comes into effect on January 1, 2026.

Bill 12 will go a long way towards providing a needed measure of control over the sale or transfer of buildings that have received public funding and will help preserve our social and affordable housing stock for generations to come.

I want to thank all of the Manitobans that came to present at committee and thank all of the non-profits and those that are helping to keep social and affordable housing here in Manitoba.

Miigwech. Merci.

MLA Jeff Bereza (Portage la Prairie): Honourable Speaker, thank you for this opportunity. As the critic for housing, homelessness and addictions, I thought it was important that I get up and put a few words on the

record about this that might not have come through committee.

The—there's a few things with this bill, and I think we need all Manitobans, all those that are watching today, to be aware of some of these things. So some of the things are: this bill will discourage investment in social housing; this bill will make the affordable housing crisis even worse by discouraging developers from investing in housing; this bill meddles in the real estate market and will discourage developers from creating new housing units; this bill will hurt Manitobans looking for affordable housing.

Again, I talked about it meddling in the real estate market, and that's where a lot of our information came from, was from the real estate market and developers that spoke out to us. It will discourage investors from creating new housing units. This bill will make the affordable housing crisis even worse by discouraging investors from creating new units.

The bill is bad for Manitoba families looking to purchase affordable housing. Developers will be discouraged from partnering with government to build new housing units because the government will control whether or not their assets can be sold.

Few questions that we heard from some of the people were: Why is the government meddling in the open real estate market? Will housing costs increase because of a lack of investment from developers who don't want to partner with the government? This bill will cause housing developers to flee our province. Why is the government meddling in this? How will this help our current housing crisis and affordable living for Manitoba right now?

The housing and renewable corporations amendment act—this legislation introduced by the NDP government may sound good on paper, but let's be clear: it will do the exact opposite of what Manitobans need.

We see the affordability issues that Manitobans are running into right now, including the cost of groceries which this NDP government said that they were going to force grocery stores to hold the prices on that. By doing that, it affects the amount of money that people can spend on their housing needs.

So now, does the person that's looking at buying a house, does he decide whether to make a housing payment or whether to buy groceries? Whether to pay for child care, whether to buy groceries? Or whether to buy a new house or find a place to live?

At the time when Manitoba families across Manitoba are struggling to buy groceries, to afford utilities, find affordable homes, when rents are rising and when the housing crisis is at its absolute worst in decades under this failed NDP government, this bill will make matters even worse if that's even possible.

Instead of encouraging investment in affordable housing, it discourages developers from building. Instead of creating more options for families, it will scare away the very partners we need. Instead of solutions, once again, this government has put up red tape and barriers to make it nearly impossible.

Bill 12 is bad for Manitoba. It's bad for investment, it's bad for families and it's bad for the future in our housing province. We talked about, at committee, about developers that had come forward. In fact, there was a committee of them that came forward to speak to us, and again, they want to do business in this province. But again, this government is handcuffing them from doing business, so now they are looking elsewhere to find places to do business where it is much easier to do business.

Honourable Speaker, Manitobans know the reality. Families in Winnipeg, Brandon, Thompson, Portage la Prairie, Steinbach and every community in between are struggling to find a home. It's some of the most calls that I get in my office, are regarding the issues around housing: Where will we find affordable housing? How can we find affordable housing? But this government continue to discourage developers from doing that because if the developer does happen to want to sell his unit, he has to get the government's approval on that.

Young couples trying to buy their first house are priced out of the market. Seniors on fixed incomes are worried about rising rents. Low-income Manitobans waiting for social housing see this list get longer and longer and longer every day.

After spending so much time at Oak Tree Towers in Portage la Prairie where there was a number of issues that, again, the government accused me of exaggerating, but obviously there was a problem in there because they were able to get rid of the problem. And I want to thank the people of Oak Tree Towers for their advocacy to make sure that their issues do not go unnoticed.

What Manitobans need right now is more investment. We need more building. We need more partnerships that deliver new units. We need developers who are willing to work with government, with non-profits

and with communities to add to our housing supply. But Bill 12 sends the opposite message. If you build in Manitoba, if you invest in Manitoba, if you create new housing units in Manitoba, you may not have the opportunity or the freedom to manage your own assets. Can you believe that?

The people that build the buildings do not have the freedom to manage their own assets. You will have to go cap in hand to the government for permission to sell, to divest or to move your assets. So what happens if that developer passes on? What happens if that developer wants to sell his business? What happens if something tragically happens to that developer?

So then, the estate has to go to the government, cap in hand: Are we allowed to sell this property? Well, no, they're not, because the government is in control of that. That, Honourable Speaker, is not a recipe for investment. That is a recipe for developers fleeing our province.

And I can tell you that that's what's happening right now with a number of our investors that are building housing units in Manitoba. They've said no more. We cannot afford to do business here. So they're doing business, whether it's in the east, or the west, or in other countries, but they are not being hamstrung by a government that is not willing to deal with them. They are discouraging investment here in Manitoba.

* (16:40)

Let's not pretend otherwise. Developers and investors have choices. They can build in Manitoba, or they can take their capital to Saskatchewan, Alberta, Ontario or anywhere else in Canada, where those governments are standing with open arms, waiting for them to come to their province; waiting for them to build more doors; waiting for them to provide more tax money for those provinces when we could be having it here in Manitoba. They can choose to invest here or they can choose to invest where governments welcome them, not where governments interfere with their decisions.

Bill 12 tells developers, the NDP doesn't trust you. Bill 12 tells investors, I'm sorry, Manitoba is closed for business. And what happens when the developers walk away? What happens when the investors say, no. No more. I am tired of somebody meddling in this real estate market. The supply of housing shrinks. The cost of housing continues to go up and up and up. The waiting list for affordable housing gets longer and longer. And we're seeing that in my own home community. As I said before, most of the

questions that we get in our offices is, How can I afford to live here anymore? There is no available housing for me.

And the problem with that is because the government wants to meddle in the real estate business. And what happens when developers walk away? What happens when investors say no? As we said before, this list just keeps growing and growing.

This bill doesn't just discourage development; it worsens the housing crisis. It punishes Manitobans looking for an affordable home. Government meddling in the market.

Mr. Speaker—Honourable Speaker—my apologies, housing markets are complex. They work when governments create stability, predictability and fair rules. They fail—they fail—when the government meddles, when the government second-guesses them, when the government inserts itself into decisions that are best left to partners right here on the ground.

Bill 12 is the government meddling at its worst. It requires developers to seek provincial permission to sell their own asset. It creates red tape, uncertainty and delay. And in real estate, uncertainty kills investment.

We're also concerned because of—some of the developers have said to me they're concerned with some of the language that's coming from the Premier (Mr. Kinew), in saying that they are favouring unions to build these projects over non-union. Basically, what they're doing is they're splitting the province. They're pitting us against each other, and we want to, on this side of the government—or this side of the aisle, we want to see this province continue to grow.

Why would any developer risk partnering with government if the government ultimately controls where their assets can ever be sold? Why would any builder take on a risk when the government has the final say on what they can and cannot do with the property? Where is it? Why is the government meddling in their real estate business?

Honourable Speaker, this is not a partnership; this is control and it will backfire. It will impact families. Let us never forget who pays the price. It's not the developers. It's not the investors. It's those people: our seniors, our families, our single people of Manitoba that will suffer under this NDP's decision to take this on.

Sorry—families are already facing record inflation, record food costs and record rent increases. We'll see—we will see fewer housing units built because of this

bill. Families waiting for social housing will have to wait longer. Families saving for their first home will be pushed further and further away. These families, if they see an opportunity to move to another province that is far more hospitable to them, far more easier for them to buy a house, far more better and easier for them to get into social-assisted living, why would they not do that? Why do we have to take this kind of a position? Why are we ruining investment in Manitoba?

The Progressive Conservative caucus is united in our opposition to this legislation. We oppose it because it meddles uncertain—unnecessarily in the real estate market. We oppose it because it will discourage investment in social housing, and we oppose it because it will make Manitoba's housing affordability crisis even worse than it is today.

Honourable Speaker, Manitoba families deserve better. They deserve a government that makes it easier to build, not harder. They deserve a government that attracts investment, not one that drives it away. They deserve a government that puts people first, not one that uses legislation to score political points. *[interjection]*

Honourable Speaker, I understand from the other side of the bench—is ridiculing me on this, but it's tough to hear the truth, and I know that's going to bother the other side of the bench.

Honourable Speaker, Bill 12 is the wrong bill at the wrong time. It will discourage investment. It will scare developers. What Manitoba needs is more homes, more investment, more partnership and more opportunities for families. What Bill 12 delivers is the exact opposite: fewer homes, less investment, fewer partnerships and fewer opportunities. This is the wrong message we need to share with Manitobans because Manitobans deserve better than interference. They deserve better than red tape. They deserve better than higher housing costs. They deserve solutions, and Bill 12 is not a solution; it's a problem.

But I also want to talk about some of the amendments that we tried to introduce while in committee. And, again, is 15 per cent of an investment by the, you know, that the Province puts in, is that really worthwhile for the investors to put their money behind? I say no, and I think we all agree on that. We say no to that.

If this government really wants investment in Manitoba, then let's make this a true partnership like we proposed in the amendments in the House, and that was to create a 50 per cent partnership. We also need to limit the amount of time before an investor can

either move on that property. Again, one of the reasons behind that is we need to make sure that if we are—that if somebody passes away, if a business is sold, if there's a bankruptcy involved, then what happens to that? Their hands are tied behind their backs, and they can't do that.

* (16:50)

So, again, it makes those real estate developers that are looking to continue to do business in Manitoba—it gives them a reason to leave. And that reason to leave is because of other opportunities with much friendlier provinces, like we talked about. So, again, that's the opportunities that we need to be sure of.

Honourable Speaker, if I can just take a moment here as well, too. Some of the questions, you know, again, that we asked there, and again I'll ask them again while it's my last time to speak on this, is why is this government openly meddling in the real estate market? Is the next move for them to be completely entrenched in the real estate business?

Will housing costs increase because of a lack of investment from developers, who don't want to partner with this government? That was a question, again, that was never answered.

This bill will cause housing developers to flee the province. Do we really, really need more unemployment and more people to leave our province? How bad is it when the real estate developers have said to me, please, take this information for us, please do what you can as this PC team, to try and get the NDP government to see the light, that this is not going to be good for development. But they said please, please don't use our names, because we are so afraid of retribution.

What does that say for this country, when some of our biggest developers, some of the people that are providing so much money to this province, and that's what happens. Our PC Party opposes this legislation as it meddles unnecessarily in the real estate market and will discourage investment in social housing in the midst of an affordable crisis.

I realize that we are in third reading on this, but Manitoba, you deserve answers, and answers we could not get. I apologize for not being able to give my constituency or the real estate developers any answers out there. We did what we could, but again, this NDP government has decided they should be in the real estate business.

So again, that's unfortunate, because we are going to see skyrocketing in prices. We are going to see people without housing. We are going to see things like encampments continue to grow because there is no place, nowhere, for these people to live.

So in saying that, Honourable Speaker, I would like to thank this—you for this time and thank you for this space. Thank you.

Mrs. Carrie Hiebert (Morden-Winkler): I'm honoured to be able to rise today to speak on Bill 12. It's something that I've been looking over and, you know, consulting with the community and different organizations in the province for the last several months. And I heard a lot of really great information from constituents, from those investing in our housing developments in our communities.

And I'm really concerned, because many of those that are investing in affordable housing have told me that they won't be doing it any more. And that's a concern, because we need housing in our communities, in our province. There's a housing shortage across the whole province, across the whole country, and this just—we're going backwards.

I agree, we need to protect the affordable housing that we have. We need to protect that. But to stop development isn't, like—others, from others from development, that's just a big mistake.

I talked to one organization that has rent-geared-to-income spaces among their market rent apartments, and it works really good. It's a great model. There was a percentage that was invested by the provincial government to cover those units, and it's been a great, great experience for all the tenants in that building.

And now, if they were to do that again, and the government gives them 15 per cent or 20 per cent, they can't. They'll never be able to sell their building. That's an investment. That's still 85 per cent of their own money they're putting into that building.

They're told they can't sell that because they—the government gave them 15 per cent investment. That's controlling someone who invested 85 per cent of their own hard-earned money for their investment, for their future, for their families, for the community, for whatever reason they're investing that money in. So we need to consider the amendments that were brought forward, but they were—you know, we need to consider them because 15 per cent is not very much.

And, again, if we look at the 17 years of neglect that the NDP—the previous NDP government—left

Manitoba Housing in, it's unacceptable. And they want to take and blame the government—the past government of Conservatives—for that short little window that they were trying to fix and all the issues from 17 years of neglect. Like, how does that even make sense to me?

So I'm just going to bring that to my—to the attention of everyone here, because 17 years of neglect for a house is a lot. And I do know, for—I know for a fact that non-profit organizations were—reached out and said, we want to help the situation with Manitoba Housing. We want to help people get into those homes that are being—that have been neglected for 17 years. What can we do to help?

Well, so there was an arrangement made, and it worked really well. I will give you an example of a community in rural Manitoba that made an agreement with the government, the PCs. They took over the Manitoba Housing units and they committed to keeping them affordable and rent geared to income, just like everybody else, just like all the Manitoba Housing units.

They took them, they fixed them up. And they're being used—every single one of them—there's not one empty. There's a wait list because they're such great, great places to live, and it gives dignity to the old people who really need that home. They deserve a nice place to live. They deserve something that's been invested in and fixed up.

So I just want to bring the attention that those ones that were sold to that non-profit organization are committed to not-to-rent geared to income. It wasn't like they were just sold off for profit, and I think we need to clarify that that was not the situation in 90 per cent—on all of those situations that I know of. They were sold off, but they were made with a commitment that they would stay affordable. And that's something that the government's not talking about.

Whatever the situation is, we need to make sure that we give those homes as much as we can. We need to make those homes—we need to fix up those homes that we have right now in stock. They're empty; they're sitting empty right now. The current government's not fixing them up. They're sitting empty. We need to make sure that we continually look at who needs those homes and put them first, give them the dignity to have a nice home to live in. And if we stagnate, if we stop investment from the private sector into these affordable housing homes, how is that going

to help any of our housing move forward? It's not going to.

So I just want to speak up a little bit about that. We need to make sure we work as partners, and 15 per cent is not a partnership. That's basically saying, here, we're going to give you a little bit of money but now we get to own the whole building.

I would never buy or invest in something if I had to pay 75 or 80 per cent—5 per cent of something and give—somebody give 15 per cent back and say, oh, well now, you can have ownership of my home. That's basically what you're doing. It doesn't make any sense to me.

If I invested in a property and I got 15 per cent given to me from the government to put affordable housing in there, I'm going to—let's say something happens. I pass away. My building goes to the

NDP government. That just doesn't make any sense. They have control over that. Meanwhile, my hard-earned life investments for my future of my family would be totally gone.

So we need really consider what this is actually doing; we need to, like I said again, we need to protect investments that are made. I agree with that. But 15 per cent is not the right number. If we want to protect, let's talk about amendments. Let's talk about how we can make this—

The Speaker: Order, please.

The hour being 5 o'clock, when this matter is again before the House, the honourable member will have 23 minutes remaining.

The hour being 5 o'clock, this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow morning.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, October 15, 2025

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