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of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS

**Official Report
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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

Thursday, December 4, 2025

The House met at 10 a.m.

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

We acknowledge we are gathered on Treaty 1 territory and that Manitoba is located on the treaty territories and ancestral lands of the Anishinaabeg, 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.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Mr. Derek Johnson (Official Opposition House Leader): Honourable Speaker, could you please call Bill 222, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Speed Limits on Provincial Roads).

SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 222—The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Speed Limits on Provincial Roads)

The Speaker: It has been announced that we will now proceed to second reading of Bill 222, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Speed Limits on Provincial Roads).

Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye): I move, seconded by the member for Lakeside (Mr. King), that Bill 222, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Speed Limits on Provincial Roads), be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Narth: It is a true privilege to rise today in this Chamber as the sponsoring member bringing forward Bill 222, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Speed Limits on Provincial Roads).

As many members of this House know and recognize, and many members of the public, it's not often and it's not easy for private members of opposition to bring forward legislation. That's why I'm proud today to bring forward a bill that has been years in the works, something near and dear to me from my years of experience.

Honourable Speaker, this bill comes from the real world, not from the abstract. It comes from 12 years of first-hand experience serving on municipal council in southeastern Manitoba, from sitting at the table of the RM of Stuartburn, where road safety wasn't hypothetical. It was practical, constant and, many times, personal.

When a provincial road runs through the centre of town, beside schools, sidewalks, campgrounds, senior housing, farmyards and community halls, speed limits are not just numbers. They are decisions that separate safety from tragedy.

That experience shaped a core belief I carry into this House today: the best safety outcomes happen when decisions are made closest to the communities who live with those consequences.

The legislation before us amends The Highway Traffic Act to enable local traffic authorities, including municipalities and First Nations, to set speed limits on provincial roads within urban areas inside their jurisdictional boundaries.

Honourable Speaker, this is not permission to set speed limits across all rural highways, highways outside of communities or arbitrary stretches of provincial roads. It is an urban-only authority: authority that begins where the sidewalks begin and ends where the townscape ends. In short, it restores the principle that communities should control speed limits where communities exist.

Honourable Speaker, this bill answers a democratic request carried by elected local governments through the Association of Manitoba Municipalities. In 2024, municipalities from across this province debated and passed resolution 26-'24, calling on the

provincial government to make exactly this change—not some of Manitoba, not part of Manitoba; all municipalities in Manitoba had supported that AMM resolution unanimously. This bill exists because local governments, the entities responsible for protecting residents day to day, said give us the tools to address risk when the Province will not expediate safety decisions or consult us properly.

Honourable Speaker, too often communities have seen speed zones changed by provincial officials and offices without the meaningful dialogue needed with the councils whose boundaries they pass through. Communities request safety changes and the process stalls for months, and I've seen personally for many years. Then changes land without justification, explanation or collaboration. Communication flows only one way: from the silo into the community, but seemingly never back; no answers, no rationale and, most importantly, no partnership.

This Chamber has debated infrastructure for decades: roads, bridges, growth—all important. But, Honourable Speaker, growth inside communities is now moving faster than the safety approvals. And speed zones, sign relocations and school zone designations—the processes that once kept up no longer do.

Communities are watching growth outstep the process. And, Honourable Speaker, there are many examples—many examples from the communities in western Manitoba that brought forward the AMM resolution; many examples through every community that's represented in this House, including my own.

* (10:10)

A community like New Bothwell that struggles to protect kids where provincial roads pass right through a school entrance; the community of Marchand residents face confusing and dangerous speed sign relocations that create risk beside pedestrian infrastructure; Hanover region sees increased traffic from expanded rural housing and commercial corridors; First Nations across Manitoba face similar jurisdictional confusion, trying to protect residents on roads they cannot legally adjust inside their own communities.

In each case, local traffic authorities acted, have identified the risk or also proposed solutions and were either ignored, delayed or blocked by process—first thinking instead of people-first partnerships. Honourable Speaker, safety should never need pressure negotiation when danger was identified years earlier.

Honourable Speaker, I'll give another example in my constituency in the community of Marchand. Along the busy PR 210, a 70-kilometre-an-hour speed zone was arbitrarily changed to a 100-kilometre-an-hour speed zone right beside a sidewalk in a community that is experience—experiencing rapid growth. The municipality voiced their concerns, the community voiced their concerns, but yet nothing was done to make the change.

Honourable Speaker, that's wrong. The community knows what the risks are within their boundaries. They voice that concern to their local municipality or town council. That was done by a local advocate in that community, Jackie Loeppky, who we have with us in the gallery today. She's advocated for these changes and the municipality supports her, but yet no changes have been made.

Honourable Speaker, we've identified that as wrong across all municipalities in our province to the extent that municipal representatives came forward, came together, supported, sponsored a resolution at a local level, and then that was brought forward to the provincial Association of Manitoba Municipalities convention a year ago when it was passed and brought forward to this government to take action.

Honourable Speaker, I'd like to take this time before my time expires to recognize some of the distinguished municipal leaders and community advocates that we have in the gallery: as I mentioned just earlier, Jacquie Loeppky, a community advocate for safety in the community of Marchand is here with us today; Michelle Gawronsky, the reeve of the RM of Stuartburn; long-time councillor Dan Bodz, who's worked many years—decades—on the challenges of setting speed zones; Duane Davison, the reeve of Souris-Glenwood, together with his lovely wife; Jeff Owens, the councillor of the RM of Whitehead, who are sponsors of that AMM resolution; together with vice-president Brad Saluk and vice-president Scott Phillips are with us in the gallery today.

So, in closing, Honourable Speaker, I encourage everyone to come together and support this common sense piece of legislation that gives a voice where the voice belongs.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Questions

The Speaker: A question period of up to 10 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed to the sponsoring member by any member in the following sequence: first question to be asked by a member from

another party; this is to be followed by a rotation between the parties; each independent member may ask one question. And no question or answer may exceed 45 seconds.

The floor is now open for questions.

Mr. Logan Oxenham (Kirkfield Park): Could the member opposite point to any credible evidence whatsoever for Manitoba or even Canada that raising speed limits in urban areas leads to safer roads, fewer collisions or reduced fatalities, because every study we've seen tells the opposite story: higher speeds mean higher risks.

So what research, exactly, are they relying on?

Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye): The point of this resolution is to achieve almost the exact opposite from what the question poses. Many times, communities grow, infrastructure—pedestrian infrastructure grows along with those communities, so now you have sidewalks alongside full-speed provincial roads, like a 100-kilometre-an-hour stretch.

Municipalities want the ability to reduce the speed to increase safety. I don't think there's any example of where a municipality has called to increase speed within an urban area.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Mr. Trevor King (Lakeside): I want to thank the member from La Vérendrye for bringing forward this very important, non-partisan bill—as far as I'm concerned.

But I would—just want the member to maybe explain to the members opposite who claim to be a listening government just how supporting this opposition bill also supports the resolution from the AMM and all local municipalities?

Mr. Narth: I'd like to thank the member for Lakeside for that great question. I think it's important and I think this is a non-partisan bill, and that's the intent of me bringing it forward is that it shouldn't be political.

But I think it's important that government listens to the Association of Manitoba Municipalities that represent all municipalities in the province. The resolution that was brought forward exactly aligns with my plan for Bill 222 and answers the concerns of municipalities across our entire province.

Mr. Oxenham: Why are the members opposite prioritizing convenience over safety when Manitobans have been crystal clear that they want safer streets, not faster ones?

Mr. Narth: Out of complete respect for the minister from—Kirkfield Park, I think we need—you need to adjust your speaking notes there because, again, similar to the first question, this is—achieves exactly the opposite.

This aims to give authority and jurisdiction to local communities, local governments to adjust speed zones to address safety concerns. So, many times, that's lowering speed limits or allowing for school zones adjacent to schools within urban boundaries.

The Speaker: Order, please. Order, please.

I'd just remind members to make sure they're always addressing their questions or answers through the Chair.

MLA Jeff Bereza (Portage la Prairie): I want to welcome some of the members and the people that have come to speak here—or come to see this bill hopefully pass unanimously this morning.

Have—has the member had an opportunity to speak with the executive of AMM or other members of other communities that might benefit from this bill passing?

Mr. Narth: Thank you to the member for Portage la Prairie.

Yes. In fact, as I mentioned in my opening remarks, this bill was spurred on by my more than a decade time on municipal council with the RM of Stuartburn, working with all of the municipalities regionally around my municipality, hearing their concerns.

Then, speaking to the Association of Manitoba Municipalities at the convention that this resolution was brought forward, seeing that it directly aligns with what I had first-hand experienced in real life, and bringing those concerns together into a draft of a bill that's supported by the drafters of this Legislature.

Mr. Oxenham: Before proposing this bill, did the member opposite consult with police or first responders or highway engineers about the increased risks of collisions, or are they simply guessing their way through road safety policy?

* (10:20)

Mr. Narth: Yes. In fact, I've had an extensive dialogue with the engineers of the Province, Glenn Cuthbertson, who's recently retired, but the head of that department, I've had the pleasure of working with on speed zone concerns in communities across my constituency.

So the department—the bureaucratic department of this exact government, this NDP government, I had worked together with before drafting this bill; also in consultation with the RCMP through my time in the RM of Stuartburn with—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Mr. King: Again, I can appreciate the member from La Vérendrye's experience—municipal experience, along with mine. We are certainly here to advocate for municipalities and bringing forward good legislation on that.

But I just want to ask the member if he can share why he thinks that this government has failed to act on this particular issue?

Mr. Narth: Thank you to the member for Lakeside (Mr. King).

We really—I was really trying to avoid making this political, but, unfortunately, we have to address the elephant in the room. We've seen time and time again that concerns brought forward to this NDP government die on the ministers' tables. There's concerns around speed zone changes across my entire constituency—and I understand they're across the entire Westman region—that have gone simply unanswered.

This resolution—the resolution '24 dash—or 26-'24 from the Association of Manitoba Municipalities isn't the perfect example of that—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Mr. Oxenham: During their seven and a half years in the previous failed government, the members opposite had the time to introduce this bill themselves but failed to do so.

Can the member please explain why they chose not to introduce this bill during that time?

Mr. Narth: As I started out saying that this is a non-partisan piece of legislation, I can answer that; I can perfectly answer that, Honourable Speaker.

I've been elected to this House for two years now. I've brought my experience from municipal government to help draft this piece of legislation. So my answer to the member opposite is that—exactly that: this is their government now, this is a new time with a new PC team, and we're bringing forward common sense legislation that protects the safety of all Manitobans.

MLA Bereza: With looking at reducing speed zones going through a lot of the smaller communities,

shouldn't—should—to the member from La Vérendrye, shouldn't this affect how a municipality is able to attract more business to their community?

Mr. Narth: For sure—and I thank the member for Portage la Prairie (MLA Bereza) for tying that to economic viability of communities—for sure. Many times when a community is looking at where they're going to expand development, they're hampered by the regulatory process that holds up their abilities to make those changes. Many times you're not going to build the sidewalk that you need that the community calls for because you know that the Province is going to take a decade to make that decision. So, definitely, it hampers growth and development in our communities.

So I thank you for that question.

Mr. Oxenham: Can the member opposite explain how drivers are supposed to safely navigate a provincial road where the speed limit may jump from 70 to 90 or down to 60 again as it crosses municipal boundaries? Does that sound like good road design to them?

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Narth: I apologize to the municipal representatives that we have with us in the gallery today. I'd like everyone to realize that these representatives—as you see the snow outside today, they came hundreds of kilometres to be here in support of this legislation today.

Honourable Speaker, the speeds change in communities. This legislation doesn't change the ability for municipalities to change the speed zones outside of urban areas. So it's not a talking point, even. It's no concern. It's within town. Speeds change within towns; it's when and how fast those changes can happen.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

The Speaker: The time for questions has expired.

Debate

The Speaker: The floor is open for debate.

MLA David Pankratz (Waverley): You know, I want to start by just welcoming our guests here for being here for this debate on this new legislation that's been brought forward. The safety of Manitobans obviously is a priority for everybody in this Chamber, and I know that it's a priority for municipal leaders like the ones who are joining us here today, and I also

know that our team is committed to continuing to work with municipal leaders across this province. So I do want to thank them for making the trek down to the Legislative Building today to here the important conversations that we're having here.

You know, and as I look through legislation on something like the topic that we're talking about today on road safety, the big piece that I take away isn't necessarily specifically the policy and the bullet points and all of that sort of stuff. It's the actual people that this could affect and the safety issues that we're trying to address here.

And I do have to say that, you know, it's—as a person who worked as a first responder prior to coming into this, I've seen the real effects of what speed can do, right. It's energy, it's force, it is physics and, at times, it meets flesh and bone, frankly.

And so I do—like, I want to talk a little bit about the people that I actually picture when I'm talking about safety issues here. And I apologize if it's slightly graphic because I think it's important for us to really have a good conversation about what safety in legislation like this affects every single day here, right.

So when we're talking about this stuff, I picture calls like a motorcycle accident that I went on where a rider hit something in the road. This was rural.

I worked, actually—and I want to say again to the AMM and municipal leaders who are here—I worked in Westman, actually, as a paramedic at the beginning of my career; so, in Virden, I took people into Souris often. So I thank the reeve for being here today from Souris as well.

I remember specifically a motorcycle accident where somebody had hit something in the road and he was travelling at a pretty high rate, and we got there, he was in the middle of the road and had a fractured femur. And I will say, if you've seen that in person, what that looks like when somebody has been thrown from a bike in the situation that he was in, and you're the one that has to try to deal with that, it is—it's gruesome.

And so, again, we're talking about really important safety issues here and making sure that we take a co-ordinated approach to avoid situations like this. We all want to avoid situations like this.

You know, and that's the effect of speed. I also think of the family of five that I responded to, who was on summer vacation, in a head-on collision. And you pull up and, you know, it was a Dodge van just

like mine. We've got a minivan, my family and I. I've got a family of five myself.

They were pulling a trailer out to the lake and they'd been in an accident on the highway. The person that was in the other vehicle was speeding. Unfortunately, the vehicle that hit them, the driver passed away. Everybody in the vehicle that I responded to, that van, the family, we were able to save. But I still remember to this day, the two kids were stable enough that they came in the back of the ambulance with myself and the mom. When we got to the hospital in Souris, I carried the two kids in and I still remember them asking me as we were walking in: Is my mom okay? Is my dad okay?

* (10:30)

Right, so I'm bringing all of this up not to try to be overly dramatic, not to try to paint a gruesome picture here, but just to say that we—when we talk about this stuff, there's a lot of nuance within the rules that we set, within the work that's done and in the collaboration that we have with municipalities.

And one thing that I will say, the member opposite said they didn't want to make this partisan and then started talking about things that are clearly partisan, part of the reason that—[interjection]—well, no, part of the reason that we're having these issues is because, while—and I know you weren't a part of this government at this time, member for La Vérendrye (Mr. Narth)—but when you cut almost 39 per cent of a department and you create a two-year backlog in terms of requests for safety issues, that directly affects families like that family of five, like that person on the motorcycle that I responded to.

And so everything we do in here is political, so don't pretend that it's not. It's offensive, frankly. And so when we have these discussions—

An Honourable Member: Tell those people.

MLA Pankratz: This is exactly what I'm telling them: we collaborate with members from municipalities every day. We're constantly collaborating. We're trying to work through the backlog that was created under the government that is sitting in the opposition benches now.

And we agree that there should be more conversation around what's going on in municipalities and the speed limits and we listen to those requests and we work through them. And we've hired more staff to try to work through those things more quickly. And so it

is—it's disappointing that I hear laughter from the other side when I talk about collaboration, frankly.

You know—and I will say that the father in this story that I was speaking about ended up being a family friend of a good friend of mine. He ended up in the hospital for six months. He had bilateral femur fractures, he had multiple broken ribs, a fractured pelvis—and it was all around a speed issue, specifically on our highways here. This was back—it would've been 2016, I believe, this happened.

So these aren't hypotheticals; these are everyday realities. And yes, we're talking about school zones, about kids, about keeping kids safe, about crosswalks within municipalities and how our highways run through those. And I know that our Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure (MLA Naylor) is working incredibly hard to work through that backlog of requests for safety issues.

And so—listen, we're going to keep on collaborating, we're going to keep on working with experts on grassroots realities and hearing from municipal leaders to make sure that we're getting that actual grassroots feedback from the people who are living it and seeing it every day.

So we're working through that backlog, like I said. But I also just want to make a quick point about speed generally and the fact that, when we have these increases or decreases, we have to look at making sure that we don't have a patchwork approach here, right, that we have some sort of conversation between the provincial government and the municipalities as well.

So we are restoring co-ordinated safety reviews. We're modernizing standards across the province. We're doing it with municipalities at the table. I know that my colleagues were just at AMM and had some fantastic conversations with leaders across this province.

There's also a piece of work that's been doing that I noticed as I was reading through this from our government, so we committed to a blue-ribbon infrastructure panel that ensures Manitobans get the roads and highways that they need. And that is also being developed through careful consultation, right? We'll partner with those communities across the province to build the roads, the bridges, the highways, the vertical infrastructure, the water infrastructure of the future, and that panel will head up the Manitoba government's infrastructure strategy.

So as the member opposite mentioned, you know, our infrastructure is also closely tied to our economic

development, right, and this will create jobs, it'll support economic growth and help those municipalities grow in the best way possible. And it's also a critical step here in the Manitoba government's commitment to create those 10,000 new jobs for Manitobans.

So the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation has also been installing new traffic lights, widened the highway to prevent pedestrian casualties at—on 59.

In 2022, actually, one of the MLAs—who I won't mention here because they may be sitting in a Chair at this point—but introduced a bill which would strengthen provincial laws to keep highways clear of snow so that families can stay safer.

And, you know, a major highway has to be cleared of snow and sanded within four hours of the end of a storm, so highways that are part of the regional network would have to be prepared within eight hours, and that's been followed now to make sure that folks stay safe when they're driving on our Manitoba highways.

So, unfortunately, 10 minutes goes far too quickly here for these private member bill debates, but I want to thank again all of the members of AMM who are in attendance and municipal leaders who are here today. We appreciate the work that you do. We know how hard you work for the people in your community, and we are absolutely committed to making sure that we continue conversations with you about how we can make your communities safer.

I think that what we've heard from you is that you want partnership, you want predictability and you want safety in your communities. And that is exactly what we are committing to today.

Mr. Trevor King (Lakeside): Honourable Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to stand here today and put a few words on the record for the great bill that my colleague from La Vérendrye has brought forward.

But first I do—I want to welcome the municipal officials in the gallery today. Some of them I've had over the years the opportunity to work with personally as a municipal official and now again, today, as the critic continue to communicate with them. So I thank you for being here today in your support of this bill that my colleague has brought forward.

I spent 12 years in municipal government; eight years, as well, on the AMM board. And as the member opposite talks about emergency response, I spent

15 years—before becoming a municipal official, I spent 15 years on our volunteer firefighter department in the RM of Woodlands. So experienced many of those situations, as well, that the member opposite talked about as far as being an emergency responder.

Now, this bill, Bill 222 that the member from La Vérendrye has brought forward, is something that municipalities have been asking for for years, in all the years that I was on municipal government. I have the small communities—many small communities throughout Lakeside: Warren, where I live; Woodlands; Marquette; Stonewall. Just to name a few that many these provincial highways run through.

And many times we've had the discussion about how we could lower the speed limit to make those communities safer. Honourable Speaker, I don't want to take up all my time if I can help it, but I've got many words to say because I know my colleagues across the aisle there have got some great things to say about this legislation as well. So I want to give them that opportunity.

But, you know, the AMM have brought these resolutions forward to governments many a times, and I just want to say, in 2023 during the PC government, and I know I wasn't here at that time, but AMM had the most successes with resolutions brought forward to government.

So what I want to challenge to the members opposite is to see if they can outdo that by listening to municipalities on their request for things like Bill 222. So I challenge the government across the aisle to see if they can beat those successes that the previous government did in those wins for AMM and the municipalities in Manitoba.

After all, we are told that they're a listening government. So this is one very important issue that I think we can all agree on. We're—the NDP government could listen and join us in passing this great legislation. And I just want to put a few things on the record that I think, you know, makes this good legislation.

We—you know, we believe that local knowledge does lead to better decision making. And municipalities are the ones that are most familiar with their traffic patterns, their collision hot spots, their pedestrian activity and their growth trends. So I think it's important that we listen to those grassroots local areas with our safety concerns. And, of course, they can account for their unique local conditions: the school zones, their tourist zones, their commercial districts

and the high-risk intersections that the provincial standards may not fully capture.

* (10:40)

I know the—our Department of Infrastructure works hard to do what they need to do to keep our communities safe, but I think it's really important that we listen to our local people on what they see going on in their community.

It's—this legislation is going to improve safety outcomes. Local governments can react more quickly to emerging safety concerns, I think, than the provincial government can.

Honourable Speaker, that's the thing I find since I've been elected to—as an MLA from—coming from being a municipal official. Things can happen a lot faster in local governments and municipalities than it can in this Chamber, I can see that quite obviously.

Tailoring speed limits to local contexts, like your curves, your congestion, your roadside development, it reduces collisions and serious injuries in our communities. And it aligns with our community values as well, Honourable Speaker. Residents often expect lower, more carefully managed speeds in their populated areas, so—and it gives communities a stronger voice in prioritizing livability, walkability and noise reduction.

So, being involved in municipal government, there's a lot of planning in your communities that go on: developments and whatnot. So those are the ones that are most involved in that planning in their communities. So setting these speed limits to make those parts of their communities is a big part of it. And again, a faster response to that change. Much faster changing these policies and procedures in our local communities than it is coming out of this building, and consistency with the local planning initiatives.

And it enhances the enforcement of it too, Honourable Speaker. And our local police and service bylaw enforcement may have better insight into where speeding is actually—is a problem.

And when municipalities set the limits, they can ensure enforcement resources align with their safety priorities. And municipalities are better positioned to consult the residents that live there, respond to their concerns and communicate why changes are actually being made.

And transparency and community buy-in are actually easier to achieve at the local level. So if your municipalities are setting these speed limits in your

communities, the people in your community are more likely to abide by those speed rules and much likely that more enforcement is less needed.

So, Honourable Speaker, I could go on and on. I know some of my colleagues across the aisle are looking forward to putting some great words on the record to this resolution. I fully encourage everyone in this Chamber to support this resolution, to help make our communities safer and support the decisions and advocacy of our community leaders.

So, with that, Honourable Speaker, I thank you.

MLA Robert Loiselle (St. Boniface): It's a pleasure to have the chance to speak about Bill 222 this morning.

I know that the bill comes from a good place. I recognize that at the municipal level there are a lot of hard-working people in our municipal communities that, you know, do have their communities at heart. I know that AMM is here this morning. I've had the chance to work closely with them over the last couple of years. Also the AMBM communities. Let's not forget as well that we have a lot of Indigenous communities across Manitoba and that this bill would affect all of those communities.

As the member for Lakeside (Mr. King) pointed out, we are a listening government. In fact, AMM asked us to consider a 2 per cent increase escalator in their funding, and, in fact, we met them, exactly, at that ask. For seven and a half years, I'm pretty sure there was no escalator, and it was at zero per cent for seven and a half years; it was flatline. So yes, we are a listening government.

But this bill, to me, brings across a couple of important points. First of all, there's safety. And second of all, there's standards. I know that the member of Waverley who was a first responder, a firefighter, spoke about the safety aspect. But safety and standards go hand in hand, and I know that the member from La Vérendrye often talks about common sense.

When it comes to safety, when it comes to an accident on the road, when it comes to someone needing help and EMS having to be deployed, I'm not sure we want common sense to be part of a life-saving event.

An Honourable Member: Let's clip that.

MLA Loiselle: No, but let's be serious about this for a second. Because common sense doesn't replace provincial standards when it comes to safety and it doesn't replace provincial standards when it comes to

our roads, our bridges, our highways, our bypasses, et cetera. We need provincial standards.

So it's important that we consider those things and I know that the members have spent a number of years at the municipal level, but at the provincial level and the national level and the international level, we have to consider safety and standards at those levels.

You know, just recently I certified with the Canadian Ski Patrol. I'm a first responder as well. I didn't certify with the La Vérendrye ski patrol or the Piney ski patrol or the Winnipeg ski patrol. I certified with the national ski patrol because there are national standards when it comes to saving people's lives and ensuring that they are safe when they drive through our towns, through our cities, on our highways, all right.

So I want to make sure that we're considering provincial standards when it comes to safety and when it comes to provincial assets like highways, having spent a lot of time with our AMBM partners.

French spoken

L'Honorable Président, ce projet de loi permettra aux municipalités d'établir elle-même les limites de vitesse sur les routes provinciales situées dans les zones urbaines jusqu'à 90 kilomètres à l'heure, sans supervision coordonnée de la Province.

Les Manitobains s'attendent à ce que nous utilisons le temps législatif pour améliorer la sécurité, l'abordabilité et les infrastructures, pas pour adopter des mesures qui rendent les routes plus dangereuses et embrouillent les conducteurs.

La vitesse contribue déjà à des milliers de collisions chaque année, et ce projet de loi risque d'aggraver la situation en créant des limites plus élevées et incohérentes sur les routes provinciales qui traversent plusieurs de nos communautés.

Au lieu de renforcer la sécurité routière, les Conservateurs proposent un système fragmenté qui nuit à l'application de la loi, augmente les risques pour les piétons et les automobilistes, et ignore les objectifs à long terme du Manitoba en matière de transport et de climat.

Les Manitobains ont été clairs. Ils veulent des rues plus sûres, des limites qui sont prévisibles et un gouvernement qui place la sécurité publique avant la commodité. Le Projet de loi 222 fait exactement le contraire.

Nous continuerons de mettre l'accent sur la sécurité des Manitobains et des Manitobaines, point final. Le renforcement des infrastructures et de la construction du système de transport qui soutient la croissance, la durabilité et la sécurité à long terme de toutes les communautés.

Le Projet de loi 222 propose de permettre aux autorités locales, telles que les municipalités, d'établir des limites de vitesse sur les routes provinciales situées dans les zones urbaines sous leur juridiction jusqu'à 90 kilomètres à l'heure sans nécessiter l'approbation provinciale. Bien qu'il inclue une exigence d'avis et de normes pour les signalisations, il déplace essentiellement les décisions hors du cadre provincial coordonné.

Ce projet de loi est inutile et dangereux, quand il compromet la sécurité routière, crée des règlements incohérents et ignore les objectifs plus larges du Manitoba en matière de transport et de climat.

Il faut comprendre que les routes provinciales sont essentielles pour relier les communautés, le commerce et les services d'urgence – c'est essentiel. Fragmenter l'autorité sur celles-ci entraînerait de la confusion, des risques accrus pour les conducteurs et les piétons, ainsi que des défis en matière de l'application de la loi.

* (10:50)

Notre principe directeur est simple : la sécurité publique doit primer sur la commodité.

La vitesse est déjà un facteur majeur dans les collisions mortelles au Manitoba. 'Cession' – Selon MPI, la vitesse est déjà un facteur dans 30 pour cent des décès ici au Manitoba liés à la circulation en 2023. De 2022 à 2024, 10 499 collisions liées à la vitesse ont été enregistrées, entraînant 68 décès de trop et plus de 2 200 blessures.

De plus, les études récentes d'Autopac montrent déjà que 40 pour cent – 40 pour cent – 40 pour cent des véhicules dépassent déjà les limites de vitesse, et que les super-excès de vitesse, soit de plus de 50 kilomètres à l'heure, sont en hausse.

Au lieu d'augmenter les limites de vitesse, nous devrions renforcer l'application et l'éducation. Ce projet de loi d'ailleurs n'en parle pas. Où est la composante de l'éducation dans ce projet de loi ? On n'en parle pas.

Les conducteurs s'attendent à de la clarté. Si ce projet de loi est adopté, les limites pourraient varier considérablement sur une même route provinciale à

mesure qu'elle traverse différemment d'une municipalité à l'autre – 70 kilomètres dans une ville, 90 dans la suivante. Cette incohérence augmente les risques d'infraction et de collision.

Les experts en transport s'accordent à dire que des limites uniformes sont essentielles pour la sécurité et la commodité à travers la province. Fragmenter 'l'autorini' – l'autorité créera des casse-têtes pour la police et de la confusion pour les conducteurs, particulièrement en transition en zones rurales et urbaines.

Le Projet de loi 222 se concentre également trop étroitement sur les limites de vitesse sans tenir compte des engagements climatiques et du transport des Manitobains et des Manitobaines.

Translation

This bill will allow municipalities to set their own speed limits on provincial highways in urban areas up to 90 kilometres per hour, without co-ordinated oversight from the Province.

Manitobans expect us to use legislative time to improve safety, affordability and infrastructure, not to pass measures that make roads more dangerous and confuse drivers.

Speed already contributes to thousands of collisions each year, and this bill risks making the situation worse by creating higher and inconsistent limits on provincial highways that run through several of our communities.

Instead of improving road safety, the Conservatives are proposing a fragmented system that undermines enforcement, increases risks for pedestrians and motorists and ignores Manitoba's long-term transportation and climate goals.

Manitobans have been clear. They want safer streets, limits that are predictable and a government that puts public safety before convenience. Bill 222 does exactly the opposite.

We will continue to focus on the safety of Manitobans—period. Strengthening infrastructure and building a transportation system that supports the long-term growth, sustainability and safety of all communities.

Bill 222 proposes to allow local authorities, such as municipalities, to set speed limits on provincial highways in urban areas under their jurisdiction up to 90 kilometres per hour without requiring provincial approval. While it includes a requirement for notice and standards for signage, it essentially moves

decisions out of the co-ordinated provincial framework.

This bill is unnecessary and dangerous, as it compromises road safety, creates inconsistent regulations, and ignores Manitoba's broader transportation and climate goals.

It must be understood that provincial highways are essential for connecting communities, trade and emergency services—this is critical. Fragmenting authority over them would lead to confusion, increased risks for drivers and pedestrians, and enforcement challenges.

** (10:50)*

Our guiding principle is simple: public safety must take precedence over convenience.

Speed is already a major factor in fatal collisions in Manitoba. According to MPI, speed is already a factor in 30 per cent of traffic-related deaths here in Manitoba in 2023. From 2022 to 2024, 10,499 speed-related crashes were recorded, resulting in 68 unnecessary deaths and more than 2,200 injuries.

In addition, recent Autopac studies already show that 40 per cent—40 per cent—40 per cent of vehicles already exceed speed limits, and that super-speeding, or speeds over 50 kilometres per hour, is on the rise.

Instead of raising speed limits, we should strengthen enforcement and education. This bill does not mention that. Where is the education component in this bill? It is not mentioned.

Drivers expect clarity. If this bill is passed, limits could vary significantly on the same provincial highway as it crosses from one municipality to another—70 kilometres in one city, 90 in the next. This inconsistency increases the risk of violations and collisions.

Transportation experts agree that consistent limits are essential for safety and convenience across the province. Fragmenting authority will create headaches for police and confusion for drivers, especially when transitioning between rural and urban areas.

Bill 222 also focuses too narrowly on speed limits without considering climate commitments and the transportation needs of Manitobans.

English

So, Honourable Speaker, I want to come back to safety and standards. We want our roads to be safe. We don't want to create roads with speed limits that are confusing from point A to point B.

And my last point is that this bill does not keep into account the education piece. So imagine a patchwork of roads where speed limits go from anywhere from 30 kilometres an hour to 90 kilometres an hour from one city to the next. How are we going to keep our education system and our driver safety system up to par on teaching people what those safety standards are and those speed limits, Honourable Speaker?

Merci. Miigwech. Thank you.

MLA Jeff Bereza (Portage la Prairie): I just want to put a couple of words on the record, here.

First of all, I want to apologize to the AMM members that heard some of these comments here today. And I want to mention to the members across the way, some of the comments that were made here today undermine road safety; 100 kilometres per hour past a sidewalk is not public safety.

Right now, decisions about speed limits on provincial highway—provincial roads, PR roads, are made by the minister of transport and the Department of Transportation, often far removed from the daily realities that local leaders deal with.

Local officials are the ones who we see first-hand how traffic flows near schools, farms, residential areas. They hear from the residents. They understand the needs and the concerns of their own communities better than anyone—anyone—in a downtown Winnipeg office ever could.

Despite that, the NDP government has refused to listen. They've dismissed the concerns of all you local leaders and ignored Manitobans who have repeatedly asked for safer, more appropriate speed limits. This is a significant public safety issue, yet the government has not taken it seriously. And that simply is unacceptable.

To the AMM that it's in the audience today: This bill will pass. This bill will pass either by us or the NDP will take it—

An Honourable Member: Point of order.

Point of Order

The Speaker: The honourable member for St. Boniface (MLA Loiselle), on a point of order.

MLA Loiselle: It seems like the MLA for Portage la Prairie is trying to engage with people in the gallery. I believe that's against the rules.

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

Mr. Derek Johnson (Official Opposition House Leader): Yes, on the same point of order, it's very common that we refer to guests when they're in here. And the member said he apologizes to AMM; he didn't actually start a conversation with anybody in the gallery.

This is ridiculous and it's not a point of order. The member is just trying to create stall tactics and he's failing miserably. *[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order, please.

I do believe that the member may, in fact, have a point of order because I was about to call the member for attempting to engage members in the gallery. So I'd caution all members, as I did yesterday, to make sure we're not engaging members in the gallery.

* * *

MLA Bereza: Thank you for your direction, Honourable Speaker.

We urge the opposition to join us to unanimously pass this today.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Mr. Tyler Blashko (Lagimodière): It's a pleasure to rise this Thursday morning, last day before session comes to a close for the season. Happy to have folks from the AMM in the gallery—

An Honourable Member: He's engaging.

Mr. Blashko: I won't engage. I apologize. *[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Blashko: And yes, I think partnerships with local leaders, working together to make sure our communities are safe—that's what our government's all about, hearing from local people impacted by the realities and also the decisions we're making, but also, like, safety is an—is of utmost importance for all Manitobans.

So I think I'm going to—I'll start with just outlining some of the road safety measures our government has taken over our time in government.

So our government has always prioritized highway safety in Manitoba. We committed to a blue-ribbon infrastructure panel that ensures Manitobans get the roads and highways they need. We will partner with communities across the province to build the roads, bridges, highways and vertical infrastructure and water infrastructure of the future. The panel will

head up the Manitoba government's infrastructure strategy to create jobs, support economic growth and help municipalities grow in the best way possible. This announcement is a critical step in the Manitoba— in Manitoba government's commitment to create 10,000 new jobs for Manitobans.

We installed new traffic lights and widened the highway to prevent pedestrian casualties at the intersection of Provincial Trunk Highway 59 north, with Bison Drive, Anishinaabe Way.

In 2002, a very well-respected MLA introduced a bill that would strengthen provincial laws to keep highways clear of snow so that families can safely travel. A major highway must be cleared of snow and sanded within four hours of the end of a storm. Highways that are part of the regional network must be prepared within eight hours of plowing and gravel or service roads must be plowed within 48 hours—

The Speaker: Order, please.

I would ask the member to please keep his comments relevant to the bill we're discussing here this morning.

Mr. Blashko: I appreciate the guidance, Honourable Speaker.

So yes, safety is a really important piece of what our Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation— what she considers in her work, what her department does. And it's done in partnership with Minister of Public Service Delivery (MLA Sandhu), minister of business, job creation, mining and trades. And so it's really an all-of-government priority, the safety of Manitobans. And so I just want to—I'll leave those comments there.

But maybe we can look at some of the steps the PCs took around safety in communities and along streetways. The members opposite are claiming to put Manitobans first, but during their time in government, they continually failed to prioritize the future and safety of the next generation of Manitobans, showing—

* (11:00)

The Speaker: Order, please.

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

RESOLUTIONS

Res. 1—Affordability and the Economy

The Speaker: The hour is now 11 a.m. and time for private members' resolutions. The resolution before us this morning is the resolution on Affordability and the Economy, brought forward by the honourable member for La Vérendrye.

Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye): I move—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Narth: —seconded by the member for Roblin (Mrs. Cook),

WHEREAS the Provincial Government has made multiple disingenuous commitments to Manitobans regarding household affordability, specifically committing to lowering grocery prices; and

WHEREAS since this Provincial Government took office, Statistics Canada has calculated Manitoba's food inflation rate at 7.7 per cent despite commitments to Manitobans to reduce these costs; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Government's half measures have made no tangible impact on the price of groceries; and

WHEREAS one in four Manitobans struggle to put food on their table while 42 per cent of Manitobans are struggling to make ends meet; and

WHEREAS the recent decisions of the Provincial Government to increase income taxes and school taxes on every Manitoban will compound the affordability and cost of living crisis; and

WHEREAS the Manitoba employment rate has plummeted, meaning more unemployed Manitobans struggling to meet basic needs; and

WHEREAS declining employment opportunities are forcing Manitobans to pursue work beyond provincial borders; and

WHEREAS youth unemployment has risen substantially under the Provincial Government, meaning youth have fewer opportunities to look forward to in the province; and

WHEREAS Manitoba's rate of inflation is the second highest amongst all the provinces; and

WHEREAS property taxes and other taxes are 19.5 per cent higher year over year; and

WHEREAS the provincial economy is struggling under the management of the current Provincial Government, leading to higher taxes, higher fees and rates that are making life more unaffordable for all Manitobans.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba call on the provincial government to apologize and urge it to immediately fulfill the promises made to Manitobans by abandoning reckless policies and supporting real economic growth in Manitoba to address the ongoing affordability crisis.

Motion presented.

Mr. Narth: It is a true honour to rise today and move this private members' resolution entitled Affordability and the Economy. What we saw just before this, and the unwillingness of the provincial government to support local representation and local municipalities, is exactly why we're seeing such a traumatic downturn in our economic strength in this province, affordability for residents from corner to corner, north to south, urban centre and rural communities.

Honourable Speaker, this resolution is not anchored in partisanship. It is anchored in people, data and consequences. It is anchored in the unmistakable reality that Manitoba families are being squeezed. Household incomes are shrinking and economic opportunity is being smothered by the government that refuses to act: this NDP government.

Today's debate is about more than the rising cost of essentials; it is about the rising ensuring of uncertainty driven by an out-of-touch NDP government that increases taxes, increases regulation, increases bureaucracy, but cannot increase jobs, investment or affordability to justify it.

Let's look at the facts Manitobans are living through today. Unfortunately and very concerning, nearly half of Manitobans live within \$200 of monthly insolvency. These are facts. Average disposable funds left after monthly expenses have plummeted by nearly \$250, the single largest drop of any province in the entire country. That's what Manitoba under this government has to be proud of.

Twenty-five per cent of Manitobans have reduced utility consumption to cope with that; 20 per cent report eating less to save money, now forced into a heat or eat decision. How concerning is that, Honourable Speaker? Food inflation in Manitoba has climbed 7.7 per cent since this government took office, and that's according to Statistics Canada.

Honourable Speaker, those numbers are not abstract, they are alarms. But affordability does not collapse in isolation, it collapses alongside the opportunity. And right now, this government is failing Manitobans on both fronts. Because while families are tightening their belts, this government is tightening the chokehold of bureaucracy.

Industry is not fleeing Manitoba because Manitobans lack ingenuity. They're fleeing because ministers are lacking urgency. Manufacturers, miners, processors, loggers, investors—they are not leaving for better weather; they are not—they are leaving for better government.

This government is chasing business out of Manitoba because ministers listen, apparently, nod and then shelve. Industry raises concerns, get silence; licensing files sit for years, as we've seen with Bill 222; regulations stack like sandbags; approvals crawl like winter sludge; and red tape is admired, not reduced.

Honourable Speaker, red tape is not harmless paperwork anymore, it is economic shackles. Businesses cannot make money while waiting for answers, and if businesses cannot make money, they cannot hire Manitobans. And if Manitobans cannot be hired, they cannot afford Manitoba anymore. It's quite that simple.

And, Honourable Speaker, this government refuses to provide the one thing industry needs most, action on the warnings that they give. Let me give an example. A Manitoba quota-holding logging company in eastern Manitoba, Deadwood Trucking, was forced to shut down, lay off staff and move operations into Ontario after this government refused to reduce timber dues, reduce approval friction or level the competitive playing field.

Honourable Speaker, these are real Manitobans. This isn't a big industry that we're talking about in a broad scope. These are real people. This example is the Roch family from Sprague, Manitoba. Their address is still Sprague, Manitoba. They love our province. They love that corner of the province. They call Manitoba home.

But they also need to make a living. They want to make a living doing what they love: an industry that apparently is supported, not outlawed, in this province. But, because of government regulation and restriction, they are being shackled within this province.

I've raised concerns. They've raised concerns. Their industry association has raised concerns, given presentations. And yet, the minister responsible for Natural Resources has done nothing; can't even raise an eyebrow as he sits in the Chamber today, and that's concerning, Honourable Speaker.

Every job that leaves Manitoba is a paycheque no longer spent in this province. The example of that company, laid off every single one of their employees—every single one of their employees—in a community in the far southeast corner of our province that has limited employment to start with.

Know what that translates into? That translates into more people at the food bank. More people struggling to make ends meet. More people that look at their children at the end of the month, not knowing how they're going to afford food, hydro or the fuel in their cars and the maintenance to get them to a different job in a different community. That's the reality.

Honourable Speaker, every business that shuts down removes family income from the ledger, local tax contributions from the community and future affordability from young Manitobans.

And we are seeing this pattern everywhere: 4,000 manufacturing jobs evaporated last August alone—one month, 4,000 manufacturing jobs—and Manitoba isn't known as the Canadian manufacturing hub; 4,000 jobs is a lot of families now answering to those children.

Mining approval timelines now stretch longer than other provinces' entire project life cycles. Let that sink in. It takes longer in Manitoba to approve a mine than a mine has a life cycle in another province.

* (11:10)

Value-added agriculture is moving west—and I bring up these real-world examples, the NDP laugh. They laugh, they say, oh, where are you getting that from? I'm getting it from the minister's desk, because I've been included in the same correspondences they are. Unfortunately, I'm not sure what they're so busy with doing, but they can't check their emails, they can't open letters and they can't respond to phone calls. Not sure what they're doing, but, unfortunately, Manitobans and families across this province are now needing to make tough decisions.

And, Honourable Speaker, it's extremely concerning. It's extremely concerning because you cannot make Manitoba affordable by making Manitoba industry unaffordable. We have a land of plenty but we do not currently have shared prosperity.

Honourable Speaker, I will say this plainly in the record: no Manitoba—no Manitoban should ever be hungry, no Manitoban should ever have to choose between rent or food and no Manitoban should ever have to choose between eating or heating. That is why affordability is economic policy and it is why regulatory responsiveness must be affordability policy.

And, Honourable Speaker, that is why I move this resolution today, so that this government can address the real problems facing real Manitobans each and every day and at the end of every month.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Questions

The Speaker: A question period of up to 10 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed in the following sequence: first question may be addressed by a member from another party; any subsequent questions must follow a rotation between parties; each independent member may ask one question. No question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

The floor is now open for questions.

MLA David Pankratz (Waverley): Well, the members opposite seem to be more interested in our TikTaks [*phonetic*] or our social media accounts, inexplicably. We're doing the work of trying to actually make life more affordable for people here in Manitoba.

I'm just wondering how many of the member opposite's constituents have asked him whether—or sort of supported the idea that it was a good affordability measure to give their leader half a million dollars, or to cut cheques for billionaires—maybe which one of those worked better for his constituents as an affordability measure?

Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye): I'd like to thank the member opposite for at least starting the conversation, anyways.

Constituents of mine are examples that I've brought forward in front of this Legislature. It's NPI, an ag processor in southeastern Manitoba; it's Deadwood Trucking; it's La Broquerie Transfer; it is Law-Marot, the grain-dryer company. These are people that are being affected by the lack of action of this government.

They're not able to provide the good jobs they were once able to provide, so that is what people are concerned about. These are millions of dollars—the member opposite talks about a \$500,000 grant, these are people that generate—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Mrs. Kathleen Cook (Roblin): The member touched on a really important topic in his answer to that question, and I'm just wondering if he could expand on that and tell us more about how the failure of the NDP government to stand up for producers and agriculture in our province has impacted the ability of farmers to put food on their own families' tables?

Mr. Narth: I'd like to thank the member for Roblin for bringing up that great question, because the ag sector—the agriculture sector of Manitoba is one of the powerhouses of our economy. Unfortunately, now, under this government and under this minister, it has fallen stagnant.

It has fallen stagnant because this government is not able to negotiate unique deals to combat the tariffs of our current customers to the south in the United States. It's unable to clear the regulatory backlog that's preventing businesses from growing, expanding or even remaining in our province.

So that's what we're hearing from everyday Manitobans in the agriculture sector is that we need to clear the regulatory backlog to allow—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

MLA Pankratz: The member opposite knows that many of his constituents are better off now under our government with the home affordability tax credit that they receive every year. He also knows that while we're working for everyday Manitobans, they were sending cheques to billionaires.

I was just wondering if he could comment on constituents who've maybe reached out regarding other affordability measures like free birth control with—which over 110,000 Manitobans have benefitted from.

Mr. Narth: Businesses in my constituency and I'd say businesses across Manitoba that provide jobs to everyday Manitobans—none of them have reached out to me about free birth control; not a single one, unfortunately. I'm not saying that it's not important, but I'm also not—I'm also saying that is not what's building our economy. That's not what's providing jobs and that's not what make—that is not what is making sure that people pay their hydro bill at the end of the month.

Home affordability rebates—not a single constituent of mine said that they're better off under this government than they were under the previous PC government.

Mrs. Carrie Hiebert (Morden-Winkler): One of the things that we hear a lot about is how they brought in this gas tax.

And I'm just going to say, can the member please tell us in the Chamber how a single mother who doesn't own a car or a parent who has to walk to—their kids to school and they don't have money and they need to go to the feed—food bank—how the gas tax helps that family with affordability?

Mr. Narth: I'd like to thank the member for Morden-Winkler for bringing that question forward. Yes, there is a number of families that were not affected by the gas tax holiday that this NDP hangs their hat on being the single only affordability item they've brought forward.

And unfortunately, I think most Manitobans now see the bait-and-switch tactics that were behind the gas tax holiday, because it gave Manitobans a break on taxes for a year but has now bombarded them with dozens and dozens of new taxes in the millions of dollars that is adding to the deficit of our Province and also subtracting from the bottom line—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

MLA Pankratz: I appreciate that the member brought up single mothers here in Manitoba. We're doing a ton to support them, whether it's the gas tax that we've cut, saving them money every time they take their kids to hockey or soccer, or it's free birth control or reopening the new Women's Health Clinic, which was closed under the PCs.

I'm just wondering if the member opposite would care to comment at all on some of the affordability measures we've brought forward to help with women's health specifically and single mothers here in Manitoba?

Mr. Narth: Thank you for the question. I think what's more important is the large picture, economic position and strength of our province.

Like I said in my presentation that, you know, a strengthened private sector strengthens good jobs for Manitobans. And the domino effect, the trickle down, is overwhelming. And we're seeing it; we're seeing 5,000 jobs lost in one month; we're seeing 4,300 manufacturing jobs in that month alone; we're seeing building permits down in September; we're seeing consumer insolvency are up 3.2 per cent; we're seeing the unemployment rate up; we're seeing export—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Mrs. Cook: Can the member tell us about how the NDP's broken promise to not raise taxes is making life more unaffordable for Manitoba families including women, since two thirds of bank users in Manitoba are women?

Mr. Narth: Thank you for that great question.

Every day, Manitobans are seeing the slippery slope of additional taxes throughout our province. They're seeing it on home properties; people are seeing it for—within additional taxes on all goods that we have throughout our province. These are taxes that are new; these are taxes that are slid into everyday Manitobans' expenses without them noticing it. Without them raising the provincial sales tax, they have managed to raise taxes for all Manitobans.

* (11:20)

MLA Pankratz: Well, since the member opposite is sort of equivocating on the idea of helping moms and single mothers here in Manitoba, I'll mercifully let him off the hook here and move on to something else.

You know, we have cut—the home affordability tax credit is helping out Manitobans. We cut the gas tax. Now we are freezing hydro rates. While the PCs were in power, they quietly carved it up. Assets were sold out—sold off and expert jobs were shipped away.

Why should Manitobans trust their economic judgment when they destabilized one of our most important economic Crown jewels?

Mr. Narth: Honourable Speaker, I think all Manitobans need to be made aware of, if they aren't already or tricked into believing something different by this NDP government, but hydro rates are set by the Public Utilities Board, and, in fact, right now, Manitoba Hydro has before the Public Utilities Board a substantial increase and that substantial increase is staring Manitobans in the eye, staring Manitobans in the face that are already struggling to pay their hydro bill.

This government is misleading Manitobans by saying that they had any role in freezing Manitoba Hydro rates. Instead, they're misleading Manitobans each and every day and making it less—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Mrs. Hiebert: We've heard about how parents are going to the grocery stores and they're having to make decisions between groceries or putting—paying their electric bill or putting—paying their rent. And the—we know that the Premier (Mr. Kinew) promised to cut

grocery prices and we've seen nothing but grocery prices going up.

Can the member please tell us how the higher grocery prices are affecting his constituents?

Mr. Narth: I'd like to thank the member for that question.

Each and every day in my constituency, a constituency that for the most part is quite prosperous, is seeing food bank usage skyrocketing. And it's a result of regulatory restrictions and limitations by this government. So I'll tie that together to industry.

A company like La Broquerie Transfer, who transfers food products inside our province and also outside our province for producers is now not able to get an SRE policy from this government through the Manitoba Public Insurance system, making it less affordable for products being delivered to the grocery stores.

So that's how the inaction of this government is relating in higher food prices for all Manitobans.

The Speaker: The time for questions has expired.

Debate

The Speaker: The floor is open for debate.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: But before we begin the debate, there are some guests in the gallery that I should introduce. We have seated in the public gallery, from Lord Selkirk Regional Comprehensive Secondary School, 25 grade 9 students under the direction of Trish Hallson, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Selkirk (Mr. Perchotte).

We welcome you here today.

* * *

Hon. Jamie Moses (Minister of Business, Mining, Trade and Job Creation): I'm really pleased to get a chance to speak to this resolution. And I've got to honestly begin, Honourable Speaker, by saying, what a failure from the opposition. What a failure by the opposition by bringing forward, in such an insincere way, this resolution.

But even more so, what a failure for their time in past, former government and their failure to do anything to address real affordability or real economic development and growth. What a failure their policy is. And so for them to come in here today and pretend like they actually care about affordability or actually

care about economic growth, true economic growth, is such a fraud and a failure.

Mrs. Rachelle Schott, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

And so I want to make sure that Manitobans know quite clearly the actions that we are taking very positively to make sure we grow and sustain our economic success well into the future. And so, honourable deputy Speaker, it's very clear to me to see some of the examples and some of the things that member opposite, member for La Vérendrye (Mr. Narth) brought forward here today is in no basis based on fact. And so I want to disprove some of these issues.

Talks about some of the regulations around permitting quarries. Well, the reality is that the former failed government left us with a two-and-a-half-year backlog on quarry permits. It's disgraceful—quarries that we're developing to help produce economic activity in rural communities; quarries that help to sustain economic activity and build infrastructure, build up our highway network across rural communities, were stalled, delayed. I think it must've been intentionally prevented from moving forward because of their lack of ability to get the job done as a former failed government. They completely abandoned that quarry system.

The good news is that our government is working efficiently and quickly to get the job done. We've cleared the backlog by over 40 per cent already in just the last year. They dug a hole so deep, it was nearly impossible to get out. But, fortunately, you've got a government that is efficient enough to get the job done. We have the tools to get it done and to find success.

They actually dug the hole so deep, not only in quarries but in permitting for mines. They were so backlogged and regressive in their approach, they couldn't get a gold mine, that was begging to operate, off the ground. They tried so hard but every effort led to failure to failure to failure to failure to failure.

What did we do? We worked together. We worked with the municipality; we worked with Lynn Lake; we worked with Marcel Colomb, with Mathias Colomb; we worked with Alamos Gold, and we start up a brand new billion-dollar gold mine in northern Manitoba within 18 months of being in government.

The list goes on, honourable Speaker. We take not only an approach that grows businesses in our community but also grows employment opportunities for Manitobans from all walks of life, from every region

in the province. That's why we're happy to continue to show that our workforce is moving forward, with 25,000 new jobs in our province.

And so member opposite talks about the failures, much of which happened under the former failed government's time in office, where there were tens of thousands of Manitobans fleeing the province because of the former failed government and their former failed leaders, but now are keeping and staying and returning and retaining here in Manitoba because of the opportunities that we have in place.

I'll like to make sure members opposite know for the record, and that Manitobans know for the record, that we've created in the last year: 3,400 new construction jobs, that's the third highest rate in the country; 2,700 new wholesale trade jobs, that's the second highest rate in the country; and 1,600 new jobs in agriculture, the second highest rate in the country. That is actual economic development that is putting more Manitobans to work. That's how we grow an economy, where we support industry, where we support workers, where people from all walks of life, in every corner of the province, have an opportunity to find economic success.

Now, honourable Speaker, we are working to break down regulatory red tape. We brought in legislation to remove restrictive covenants for the grocery sector, which not only is a direct red tape reduction effort, it also goes to the affordability piece. By bringing in more competition in our grocery sector, we're allowing and forcing companies to be more competitive, to drive down those prices of groceries and actually deliver real and meaningful impacts on affordability for Manitobans.

Where was this sort of policy under the former failed government? Nowhere to be seen. Instead, what was their policy? The—some of the biggest land owners and taxpayers in our country—what did they do—they sent them cheques—sent cheques to billionaires on Bay Street who own properties in Winnipeg, here. Why? Because I guess they have to help out their friends, their billionaire and millionaire friends. That is their policy.

That was their policy to—how to grow their economy. When they wanted to grow the economy, what did they do? They sent out cheques to their billionaire friends, many of which lived out of province—lived in Ontario. And that was their economic development policy.

When we went to the job site—for seven and a half years—what did we see on the job site? We saw licence plates from Alberta, from Saskatchewan, from Ontario, people from other provinces coming here to take Manitoba jobs. That's not economic policy for success of Manitobans. That helps their billionaire friends.

* (11:30)

But we take a different approach. We have a jobs agreement that's going to put more Manitoba licence plates on the job site, more Manitobans to work and make sure we have an economy that works for Manitobans. Manitoba jobs for Manitobans; it's a simple idea.

It's radical for the members opposite, who've never considered actually investing in Manitobans. Instead we'll actually do that good work and put more Manitobans to work.

And, honourable Speaker, we're investing in private sectors too, to create more opportunities here. I mentioned the new Alamos Gold billion-dollar goldmine. We're also supporting a multitude of industries like our aerospace industry: investing in Magellan and StandardAero, making sure that they have opportunities to hire more good workers in Manitobans to build up our aerospace sector, the third-largest in the country.

Member opposite said—claimed that we don't have manufacturing expertise here in Manitoba. What a shame. We are one of the best manufacturing jurisdictions in the entire country. Advanced manufacturing happens here in Manitoba like nowhere else in the country, even nowhere else in the world.

And I'm very proud about manufacturers here, whether you're manufacturing trucks, ambulances, aerospace sector. This is incredible work—whether you're manufacturing in the life sciences sector. We have some of the leading researchers, advanced manufacturing technology and innovators anywhere in the country, and we should be proud about that.

We're not only proud of that, but we're investing in those businesses so they can grow even more. Recently I announced investment at Duha colours, which is the leading manufacturer of paint swatches in the world—No. 1 in the world.

How did they get there? They got there with government support, but by hiring good Manitoba workers to do what? To work here, work hard. And as

they expanded their operations, they bought over their competitor in the United States, and what did they do?

With our help, working together with government, they brought those American jobs right back here to Winnipeg so more Manitobans had good-paying jobs. That's how we grow an economy; that's how we Trump-proof an economy to make sure we're not losing jobs to the States but instead we're bringing jobs up from the States right here to Manitoba.

That's good economic development policy. That means more jobs and a better quality of life for all Manitobans, something members opposite quite frankly don't understand. They never were able to do this in their time as a former failed government. Even when they bring this resolution forward today, they still fail to understand that very premise.

And so I want to close, honourable deputy Speaker, by letting people know, not only are we reversing the course from the terrible failure of the former government, we are actually charting a new course where we're seeing success today by making sure we have one of the lowest unemployment rates and the highest job-creation rates and one of the strongest rates of growth into the future.

And I want to prove that we have actually really strong credibility in our economic and investment trajectory for the future where we had a recent Conference Board of Canada's outlook for Manitoba—says that Manitoba will join Alberta and Ontario in leading non-residential investments between 2027 and 2030.

That's right, Manitoba will be the leader in the country in non-residential investment gains. That is a record we should be proud of. That is a record because of our government's decision. That is a record because we work together to build a strong economy for all Manitobans.

Mrs. Kathleen Cook (Roblin): I'm very pleased to rise and put a few words on the record today in response to the resolution brought forward by my colleague from La Vérendrye, a very good resolution—so good I seconded it, in fact.

But I do want to comment on some of the words that have been put on the record by members opposite, specifically the words put on the record by the member for Waverley (MLA Pankratz) during the question period. He stood in his place and he tried to mansplain about women's health and he got quite sanctimonious about it.

Do you know what the single biggest predictor of a woman's health status is in this province? It's their socioeconomic status. It is—there's a direct link between a woman's ability to put food on the table and their health. It's called social determinants of health; it's widely documented.

So if the NDP actually care about women's health—if they actually care, they'll focus on improving this. Instead they have failed. And I brought receipts, honourable assistant deputy Speaker. I'm happy to explain to members opposite exactly how they failed women when it comes to affordability and exactly how that's going to have a direct impact on women's health.

Food inflation is up 7 per cent. Manitoba leads the country in food inflation. That is a fact. This is after this Premier (Mr. Kinew) promised that he was going to crack down on grocery retailers because he's such a tough guy. And of course he couldn't do that and of course he failed. And now food inflation is up 7 per cent.

Food bank usage is up. Guess what? Two-thirds of food bank users in this province are women trying to feed their families. And that's not all, honourable assistant deputy Speaker. The NDP stopped indexing tax brackets. They stopped indexing the basic personal amount, reducing Manitobans' take-home pay, effectively limiting their spending power at a time when the cost of everything is going up. In fact, taxes are up 19.5 per cent in Manitoba this year under the NDP, and that's according to their own department statistics. That's from the Manitoba Bureau of Statistics.

Pharmacare deductibles are up, and the NDP are, in fact, driving up rents in this province. And there's a couple different ways that they've done that. The first is by eliminating property tax rebates for multi-family properties. So what do landlords do in response? They find ways to drive up the rent to recoup those costs.

The NDP have also created an incredibly hostile environment for the development of new housing stock, particularly rental units. This limits supply. So what does that do? Drives up rents. And now we're seeing that, according to StatsCan data released just this week, rents are up 4.5 per cent.

Who does that impact most? Low-income Manitobans who are renters. This was entirely predictable; we told them this would happen. They didn't care. Unemployment is up, youth employment—unemployment is up. And this statistic shocks me every

time I hear it and I think it's worth repeating again, that 42 per cent of Manitobans are less than \$200 away from insolvency every month.

That's shocking, honourable assistant deputy Speaker, and not a position that anyone should be in. That's the position they're in under this NDP government that's taxing them out of the ability to feed their families, that's creating conditions where rents are going up, food prices are going up and failing to address any of those very serious issues. Families are struggling, businesses are struggling.

And that's why I support the resolution put forward by the member for La Vérendrye (Mr. Narth) and I would encourage all members opposite to do the same.

Mr. Diljeet Brar (Burrows): Thank you, honourable deputy Speaker, for the opportunity to debate this resolution entitled Affordability and the Economy. I want to thank the member for La Vérendrye for this opportunity that he created through this resolution.

And I also want to congratulate him on being a dirt biker champion's dad, a proud dad. So that's the good news when we talk about our next generation and parents and us as a society. We see many, many, many positive things happen in our government, in this society, in our wonderful province.

And when I think about positivity, I think about our government and the achievements that we have made the last two years. This resolution wants us, the government, to apologize for what we are doing so far. And they want us to keep our promises that we made during our election. And they say that we should abandon reckless policies; that's what they say in this resolution.

And something that I notice in this resolution is that they want immediate action. They want us to work faster than we do. We are doing good things, but they cannot wait to see more positive action from our government. They are so impatient.

When we talk about affordability, we need to understand what affordability means. And we need to understand what kind of affordability crisis we are in, if we are in. When I think about affordability in our province, I think that we cannot afford many things.

For example, Manitoba cannot afford a PC government again. Manitoba cannot afford writing cheques to billionaires. That is the affordability crisis

that we are addressing. And Manitoba cannot afford to sell our Crown corporations. That is the affordability crisis we are in.

* (11:40)

Manitoba cannot afford corporate greed. That's why we need to address this. And Manitoba cannot afford to lose our family farms. That's why we are standing up to address this crisis.

And the most important thing that we need to note, that I have noticed while working with the previous government, is that we cannot afford arrogant, dishonest, autocratic and divisive politicians like Pallister and Heather Stefanson.

Now, they stand up today and suggest to us how to build our economy and how to address affordability issues in Manitoba, just after failing to do the same. I don't play hockey, honourable deputy Speaker. If I stand up and start coaching people that this is how you play hockey, people would laugh at me. Nobody would trust me. What would they say? Go back and learn how to play hockey first.

They had this opportunity to address the issues that we are debating on the floor today. What did they do? They mismanaged, messed up everything. When I think about the previous government, previous PC government, there are some key words that hit my head. It reminds me about Cadillac Fairview. It reminds me about the big cheque they wrote to Loblaw's under their education property tax rebate policy. They want to sound like working for regular Manitobans, but actually they are working for billionaires. And people notice that. That's why they're sitting on that side of the Chamber.

We cannot afford this. That's why people made this choice to hand over the control to our team. When they were in government—it reminds me today, while debating this resolution, is that they paid Brad Wall—I don't know how much—a lot of money, for consultation—for consultation—how should we manage Manitoba Hydro. Even before he started his work on this file, the results were clear that cuts are coming. So he suggested: sell it.

Let me remind everybody, all Manitobans, that the affordability crisis in Manitoba is that we cannot afford to sell our Crown corporations.

They closed ERs. We are opening it. They closed ag offices. We are opening them. And when we talk about the leadership and accessibility of the elected representatives, it reminds me of my personal

experience with their leaders at the time. Especially for new members on that side, they need to listen to this.

The leaders in your team—in their team, through you, honourable deputy Speaker—were not listening. They were not empathetic. They cut Manitoba ag positions. I was one of those people who was impacted by this. I stood up and tried to advocate for myself, tried to talk to the then-Ag minister, and I just requested for 60 seconds of his time to listen to me. How did he respond was, I'm not going to address this. That is arrogance. We cannot afford this arrogance.

Guess what? I had to resign because they were putting me in a position that was very tough. I had to find my new career path. You know what? Universe revolves in a way that it puts you in a position where you actually get stronger.

So what happened? I had to run for office and I won. And I became Ag critic against the same minister who refused to listen to me. And the same minister, that I still respect as a person but not his choices, came to me and said: Congratulations, Gentleman, you did it.

Sometimes you have to stand up for your people. Sometimes you have to stand up for yourself, even against those odds that I just shared. So our government knows how to address affordability. And just another example is how accessible this government is that this Saturday we are having holiday open house that PCs discontinued.

Any Manitoban can walk into the people's building, Manitoba Legislature, and they can walk into the Premier's (Mr. Kinew) office, they can walk into any minister's office, have some treats, have a cup of coffee, shake their minister's hand and discuss their issues and get to know them. That is accessibility.

And I have 25 seconds left. I would want to say this again that I want to say thank you to the member for La Vérendrye (Mr. Narth) for bringing this resolution and I want to congratulate the member for La Vérendrye for being a champion's dad in dirt biking.

Thank you, honourable deputy Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): Before recognizing the next speaker, I just want to kindly ask folks not to be hollering across at each other. You can do that at the holiday open house where you can speak to each other directly or outside of this Chamber, but no need to be hollering across.

Mrs. Carrie Hiebert (Morden-Winkler): I just—I'm honoured to be able to step—stand up for a few minutes and just put a few words on the record about affordability in our province and how it affects those in Manitoba.

And I just can't believe that the members opposite are not even listening to this conversation, because it's important. And I want to make sure that we bring attention to the actual issue at hand here. This isn't about yelling across and talking about how somebody did something and one team did or—government did something.

And we shouldn't be using this opportunity as attacking each other. We should be actually standing up for Manitobans in our province who are struggling every day to put food on the table. And I don't understand why we're sitting here talking about an open house that wasn't cancelled by the previous PCs. We should be talking about affordability. I'm ashamed that that's the conversation that the other side's bringing forward.

And I just want to bring some really key important points. That's why we're here today, to talk about. We need to talk about how parents aren't able to put food on the table and how promises were made that that would be a focus this year or this—by the government and nothing has been done. And that is important.

We need to talk about putting food on tables of families who are hungry and not—having to go to use those food banks. That's what we should be talking about. Can we talk about that?

I would encourage the members opposite to talk about some of the situations that are happening right now and come up with some solutions on how we can make this more affordable for every single Manitoban, including those mothers and those fathers who are struggling.

We need to talk about industries and businesses who are being affected by tariffs and nothing's being done. We need to talk about that. We need to talk about why they bring in a tax on equipment and when industry can't even buy the equipment because they're on work share.

* (11:50)

Like, those are the things we need to talk about here. And I just want to bring to the attention that there's industries all over our province who have five, six hundred employees who are concerned they might

not be able to keep their doors open. And that's families with no income. That's families who are not sure what'll happen. There's families right now that are on work share and their incomes are half of what they're used to, and it's Christmas.

This is an important issue, and I would encourage that we take this seriously. This is something that we need to talk about in an honest way. Things have changed. This year, things have changed. We need to address how we can make things better, not just talk about past, like, ridiculous issues.

And I just want to bring forward that, Manitoba, we are suffering. We are falling behind all of the rest of the provinces across Canada. We need to talk about that. We need to talk about how we can help support, from the ground up, industries, families.

We need to talk about how a parent with a car—without a car gets help from the tax—gas tax. How does that actually—I'd like to hear the member opposite talk about that, how that gas tax holiday helped the woman down my street who doesn't own a car and can hardly pay her bills. I want to know how that tax helped them. I'd love to hear that.

Those are the things we need to talk about. We need to have honest conversations, and I would encourage that happen today. We need to talk about the things we can do to make sure that we are watching affordability, across the board, for every Manitoban who is struggling this time of the year.

Thank you.

Hon. Mike Moroz (Minister of Innovation and New Technology): I am pleased to rise today to talk about this resolution and to put a few words on record, not just about the work that we've done so far on strengthening the economy, on supporting Manitoba businesses, but also to look to the future: what we can do here in Manitoba in order to extend the breadth of the economy into new areas.

And here, I get an opportunity to talk about the great work that's happening in my department. Apologies to my friends from Lac du Bonnet and Riding Mountain who were subjected to elements of this speech the other day—thank you for not heckling at that time; please extend that courtesy again today—but I want to cover some of the work that we've done.

I grew up in a—on a farm in northern Alberta, and you were always full of hope in the spring. You put the seed in the ground, and you know, or hope, that eventually in—over the course of the summer that it

will bear product that you can then take to market. That's very much what my department, frankly, does: Innovation and New Technology.

As the very first Manitoba Minister of Innovation and New Technology, I'm really proud to be able to stand today and talk about the work that we're engaged in. My department is focused on a number of very clear priorities: innovation, research, excellence in AI and cybersecurity, as well as building our digital infrastructure so necessary to ensure that we can take full advantage of the information economy. Canadian economy itself is, of course, at a turning point, but Manitoba is strategically placed to play a key role in shaping its future.

When the department was created a little over a year ago, we were dedicated entirely to innovation, research, digital transformation, technological adoption—not just within government, but across the entire province. I've always believed that the path to better is different, so we've leaned into that mindset here in my department. We've embraced it.

We've adopted a very non-traditional government approach, and that is: find the path to yes—to work with researchers, work with innovators, work with entrepreneurs. Their ideas may not be ready for prime time today, but we want to work with them as partners to ensure that they're able to get there.

A year into the mandate, we've attacked our work with focus and with great purpose. And I want to walk through a number of the areas in which we've made progress, that will build our economy out in time.

For example, we're working to overhaul and enhance our research and innovation ecosystems; to strengthen IP creation and protection; and to find ways to accelerate start-ups on their journey from concept to commercialization. A \$5-million budget-year increase to Research Manitoba is evidence of our commitment to ensuring success in this area.

What's more, we're leveraging private venture capital off the sidelines and into the game to better support founders as they travel that path. Our broadening of the Small Business Venture Capital Tax Credit has made a huge difference in engaging the venture capital community.

We're also developing a strategy to ensure data sovereignty in an age of growing international uncertainty. In an attention-driven economy, nothing is more valuable than data. And let's be honest: our data isn't actually in the cloud. It's on someone else's computer, and where that computer is located, what

they might do with it if it's not protected by Canadian law, matters more now than it ever has.

Additionally, as part of that work, we're finalizing our data centre road map, ensuring that we maximize the economic development opportunities that can be realized when government and the private sector actually work together.

In Manitoba, that meant using our low-cost clean energy to build the strategic partnerships necessary between innovators, industry and academia to create the compute capacity required to power a sustainable, value-added economy.

My department is also working across the whole of government to find new data usage opportunities, while at the same time ensuring Manitobans enjoy the strongest individual data rights protections found anywhere.

And finally, we're working with the federal government—a change in the case of Manitoba—working with the federal government to ensure that all Manitobans, no matter where they live, have reliable access to the digital infrastructure they need to be full participants in the economy.

It's clear to everyone that we leave economic growth on the table every single day in which that isn't the case. But that requires working in partnership.

Honourable deputy Speaker, I also want to highlight that in May, working with the Premier (Mr. Kinew), we were able to task former BlackBerry founder Jim Balsillie, who has deep family roots in Manitoba, to join a group of leading Manitobans as chair of our innovation and prosperity committee.

Their task was to take a clear-eyed look at both the opportunities and challenges facing Manitobans as it develops its digital economy. That work was completed late in October, and I'm incredibly grateful for the work of Jim and the other committee members.

I want to highlight that while that panel's work was both far reaching and comprehensive, its overarching

objective is clear and relatable: Make Manitoba a place where the impulse to innovate is a provincial mindset, where ideas are developed to have maximum economic and social impact, and where technology serves people, not the other way around.

So what does that mean in practical terms? Well, it means supporting AI and tech socialization and adoption in businesses of all sizes. To that end, we've invested—

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): When the matter is again before the House, the member will have two minutes remaining.

The hour being 12 noon, the House is recessed and stands recessed until 1:30.

CORRIGENDUM

On December 2, 2025, page 299, first column, the second through fifth paragraphs should have read:

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

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

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

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, December 4, 2025

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