

**First Session – Forty-Third Legislature**  
of the  
**Legislative Assembly of Manitoba**  
**DEBATES**  
and  
**PROCEEDINGS**  
**Official Report**  
**(Hansard)**

*Published under the  
authority of  
The Honourable Tom Lindsey  
Speaker*

**Vol. LXXVIII No. 3 - 1:30 p.m., Wednesday, November 22, 2023**

ISSN 0542-5492

**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Forty-Third Legislature**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
ALTOMARE, Nello, Hon.	Transcona	NDP
ASAGWARA, Uzoma, Hon	Union Station	NDP
BALCAEN, Wayne	Brandon West	PC
BEREZA, Jeff	Portage la Prairie	PC
BLASHKO, Tyler	Lagimodière	NDP
BRAR, Diljeet	Burrows	NDP
BUSHIE, Ian, Hon.	Keewatinook	NDP
BYRAM, Jodie	Agassiz	PC
CABLE, Renée, Hon.	Southdale	NDP
CHEN, Jennifer	Fort Richmond	NDP
COOK, Kathleen	Roblin	PC
CROSS, Billie	Seine River	NDP
DELA CRUZ, Jelynn	Radisson	NDP
DEVGAN, JD	McPhillips	NDP
EWASKO, Wayne	Lac du Bonnet	PC
FONTAINE, Nahanni, Hon.	St. Johns	NDP
GOERTZEN, Kelvin	Steinbach	PC
GUENTER, Josh	Borderland	PC
HIEBERT, Carrie	Morden-Winkler	PC
JACKSON, Grant	Spruce Woods	PC
JOHNSON, Derek	Interlake-Gimli	PC
KENNEDY, Nellie	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	River Heights	NDP
MOSES, Jamie, Hon.	St. Vital	NDP
MOYES, Mike	Riel	NDP
NARTH, Konrad	La Vérendrye	PC
NAYLOR, Lisa, Hon.	Wolseley	NDP
NESBITT, Greg	Riding Mountain	PC
OXENHAM, Logan	Kirkfield Park	NDP
PANKRATZ, David	Waverley	NDP
PERCHOTTE, Richard	Selkirk	PC
PIWNIUK, Doyle	Turtle Mountain	PC
REDHEAD, Eric	Thompson	NDP
SALA, Adrien, Hon.	St. James	NDP
SANDHU, Mintu	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
STEFANSON, Heather	Tuxedo	PC
STONE, Lauren	Midland	PC
WASYLIW, Mark	Fort Garry	NDP
WHARTON, Jeff,	Red River North	PC
WIEBE, Matt, Hon.	Concordia	NDP
WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, November 22, 2023

### *The House met at 1:30 pm*

**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, and know it with certainty and accomplish it perfectly for the glory and honour of Thy name and for the welfare of all our people. Amen.

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

Please be seated.

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

**The Speaker:** Introduction of bills?

### COMMITTEE REPORTS

#### Standing Committee on Public Accounts First Report

**MLA Jim Maloway (Elmwood):** Honourable Speaker, I wish to present the first report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

**Deputy Clerk (Mr. Rick Yarish):** Your Standing Committee on Public Accounts—

**Some Honourable Members:** Dispense.

**The Speaker:** Dispense.

*Your Standing Committee on Public Accounts presents the following as its First Report.*

### *Meetings*

*Your Committee met on June 5, 2023, at 1:00 p.m. in the Chamber of the Legislative Building.*

### *Matters under Consideration*

- *Province of Manitoba Annual Report and Public Accounts – dated March 31, 2022*
- *Auditor General's Report – Public Accounts and Other Financial Statement Audits – dated December 2022*

### *Committee Membership*

- *Mr. BRAR*
- *Mr. GUENTER*
- *Mr. ISLEIFSON*
- *Mr. LAMONT*
- *Ms. LATHLIN*
- *MLA LINDSEY*
- *Mr. MALOWAY (Chairperson)*
- *Mr. MARTIN*
- *Mr. MICHALESKI*
- *Mr. SMOOK*
- *Mr. WISHART*

*Your Committee elected Mr. MARTIN as the Vice-Chairperson.*

*Permanent substitution received prior to committee proceedings:*

- *Mr. GUENTER for Hon. Mr. TEITSMA*
- *Ms. LATHLIN for Mr. WASYLIW*

*Substitution received prior to committee proceedings*

- *Mr. BRAR for Ms. NAYLOR*

### *Officials Speaking on Record*

- *Mr. Tyson Shtykalo, Auditor General of Manitoba*
- *Mr. Silvester Komlodi, Deputy Minister of Finance*
- *Ms. Andrea Saj, Provincial Comptroller*

### *Reports Considered and Passed*

*Your Committee considered and passed the following reports as presented:*

- *Province of Manitoba Annual Report and Public Accounts – dated March 31, 2022*
- *Auditor General's Report – Public Accounts and Other Financial Statement Audits – dated December 2022*

**MLA Maloway:** I move, seconded by the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Redhead), that the report of the committee be received.

**Motion agreed to.**

### **Standing Committee on Public Accounts Second Report**

**MLA Maloway:** Honourable Speaker, I wish to present the second report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

**Deputy Clerk:** The Standing Committee on Public Accounts presents the following as its second report.

**The Speaker:** Dispense.

*Your Standing Committee on Public Accounts presents the following as its Second Report.*

#### **Meetings**

*Your Committee met on June 6, 2023, at 1:00 p.m. in the Chamber of the Legislative Building.*

#### **Matters under Consideration**

- *Auditor General's Report – Aging Information Systems dated February 2022.*
- *Auditor General's Report – Information Systems - Privileged Access dated October 2022.*

#### **Committee Membership**

- *Mr. GUENTER*
- *Mr. ISLEIFSON*
- *Mr. LAMONT*
- *Ms. LATHLIN*
- *MLA LINDSEY*
- *Mr. MALOWAY (Chairperson)*
- *Mr. MARTIN (Vice-Chairperson)*
- *Mr. MICHALESKI*
- *Mr. SCHULER*
- *Mr. WISHART*

*Substitution received prior to committee proceedings*

- *Mr. SCHULER for Mr. SMOOK*

#### **Officials Speaking on Record:**

- *Mr. Tyson Shtykalo, Auditor General of Manitoba*
- *Mr. Joseph Dunford, Deputy Minister of Consumer Protection and Government Services*
- *Ms. Lanette Siragusa, CEO of Shared Health*
- *Mr. Hong Chung, CIO for the Province of Manitoba*
- *Mr. Doug Snell, COO of Shared Health*

#### **Reports Considered and Passed**

*Your Committee considered and passed the following reports as presented:*

- *Auditor General's Report – Aging Information Systems dated February 2022.*

*Auditor General's Report – Information Systems – Privileged Access dated October 2022.*

**MLA Maloway:** I move, seconded by the honourable member for River Heights (MLA Moroz), that the report of the committee be received.

**Motion agreed to.**

### **Standing Committee on Public Accounts Third Report**

**MLA Maloway:** I wish to present the third report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

**Deputy Clerk:** The Standing Committee on Public Accounts presents the following as its third report.

**Some Honourable Members:** Dispense.

**The Speaker:** Dispense.

*Your Standing Committee on Public Accounts presents the following as its Third Report.*

#### **Meetings**

*Your Committee met on June 7, 2023, at 1:00 p.m. in the Chamber of the Legislative Building.*

#### **Matters under Consideration**

- *Auditor General's Report – Quarry Rehabilitation Program Investigation dated May 2020*
- *Auditor General's Report – Follow-Up of Previously Issued Recommendations dated March 2023*
  - *Quarry Rehabilitation Program Investigation*

#### **Committee Membership**

- *Mr. BRAR*
- *Mr. GUENTER*
- *Mr. ISLEIFSON*
- *Mr. LAMONT*
- *Ms. LATHLIN*
- *MLA LINDSEY*
- *Mr. MALOWAY (Chairperson)*
- *Mr. MARTIN (Vice-Chairperson)*
- *Mr. MICHALESKI*
- *Mr. SCHULER*
- *Mr. WISHART*

*Substitution received prior to committee proceedings*

- *Mr. BRAR for Ms. NAYLOR*

**Officials Speaking on Record:**

- *Mr. Tyson Shtykalo, Auditor General of Manitoba*
- *Lori Stevenson, Acting Assistant Deputy Minister, Resource Development Division*

**Agreements**

*Your Committee agreed to conclude consideration of Quarry Rehabilitation Program Investigation of the Auditor General's Report – Follow-up of Recommendations – dated March 2023.*

**Reports Considered and Passed**

*Your Committee considered and passed the following report as presented:*

- *Auditor General's Report – Quarry Rehabilitation Program Investigation dated May 2020*

**MLA Maloway:** I move, seconded by the honourable member for Fort Garry (Mr. Wasyliv), that the member of the—the report of the committee be received.

**Motion agreed to.**

**TABLING OF REPORTS**

**Hon. Nello Altomare (Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning):** I'm pleased to table the Annual Report for the Department of Education and Early Childhood Learning for the year ended March 31, 2023.

**The Speaker:** Further tablings?

**Hon. Renée Cable (Minister of Advanced Education and Training):** I'm pleased to be able to table the 2023 Annual Report of the University of Manitoba.

I'm pleased to be able to table the Annual Report of the University of Winnipeg for the year ending March 2023.

**The Speaker:** Excuse me. The honourable Minister of Advanced Education and Training.

**MLA Cable:** I'm pleased to be able to table the Annual Report of the University of Winnipeg for the year ending March 2023.

I'm pleased to be able to table the Annual Report of the University College of the North for the year ending March 2023.

I am pleased to be able to table the Annual Report for Red River College Polytech for the year ending March 2023.

I am pleased to be able to table the Annual Report for Brandon University for the year ending March 2023.

I am pleased to be able to table the Annual Report of Université de Saint-Boniface for the year ending March 2023.

I am pleased to be able to table the Annual Report for Research Manitoba for the year ending March 2023.

And last, but not least, I am pleased to be able to table the Annual Report of Advanced Education and Training for the year ending March 31st, 2023.

\* (13:40)

**The Speaker:** Further reports?

**Hon. Ron Kostyshyn (Minister of Agriculture):** Mr. Honourable Speaker, I'm pleased to table the following reports for the Department of Agriculture: the 2022-2023 annual report for the Department of Agriculture.

Oh, one more, there. Sorry. *[interjection]* Thank you, yes. Okay.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to report the 2022, twenty-thousand-three annual report for Manitoba agriculture services corporation and also, Mr. Honourable Speaker, the 2023 report of Manitoba farm production marketing council respecting their certification of qualified organizations.

**The Speaker:** Any further tabling of reports?

It's been pointed out that the—we don't have copies of the last report that the minister tabled, so they will have to be tabled at a later time, either today or tomorrow.

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS**

**The Speaker:** And I would indicate that the 90 minutes' notice prior to routine proceedings was provided in accordance with rule 27(2).

**Call for Ceasefire in Gaza**

**Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier):** Our government's Throne Speech articulated a core commitment of our new administration: that we are going to work together with all Manitobans.

That includes when we are confronted by challenges like the conflict in Gaza between Israel and Hamas. While the battles are being fought overseas, there are real repercussions here in Manitoba.

For Jewish families who are afraid and who have experienced terrible acts of anti-Semitism against them. For Muslim families who are experiencing impacts on their mental health and are the victims of Islamophobic violence.

Our government has stood with Manitoba's Jewish community to condemn Hamas and their evil October 7th attack which took the lives of some 1,200 people, the majority of them civilians, and took hundreds more as innocent hostages. It was an outrage that cannot be justified.

We were shocked by the news of the murder of Vivian Silver, a Winnipegger. Our government has reached out to those affected by her killing to offer our support.

Our government has stood with Manitoba's Islamic community to call for peace and to call for the protection of the lives of innocent civilians. We have spoken with Palestinians in Manitoba who have lost family members in Gaza in recent weeks and offered our support.

Our government reiterates our commitment to being there for all Manitobans from all walks of life so that we can live together in peace and understanding here in these lands.

The news of a temporary ceasefire, negotiated and agreed to by the Israeli government, and the release of some hostages, is a significant development. It is our hope that there is an opportunity here to forge a lasting peace.

We can not see a return to future Hamas attacks like the one on October 7th, which saw the murder of the greatest number of Jewish people in one day since the Holocaust.

We can not see the continuation of a conflict that has seen the killing of over 10,000 Palestinians, according to media, including civilians, among whom many are women and children.

We mourn the loss of innocent lives.

That is why today our government is calling for an enduring ceasefire in Gaza. This ceasefire should be immediately preceded by the complete release of all hostages taken from their families on October 7th, and the end of Hamas forever.

This statement is about trying to articulate a reasonable, compassionate path forward that makes sense for Manitobans. As a democracy, Israel is an important ally in the Middle East, and it has a right to exist that is not negotiable. Israel also has the right to defend itself.

A Palestinian state also has a right to exist, and Palestinians, as with all people, deserve to have their human rights respected. How do we reconcile these facts? I do not know for certain.

But I do know, however, that each additional civilian life lost pushes the possibility of such a reconciliation further into the future and risks further entrenching hardline views.

Each civilian life lost, whether of an Israeli hostage or of a Palestinian child, also makes it more difficult for us as Manitobans to live together, as Jewish people, as Islamic people or simply as people who value the sanctity of human life.

We as Manitobans can do some things to support peace in the Middle East. We do have a responsibility to speak out in favour of doing the right thing, which in this case is to call for a lasting ceasefire and the end of Hamas.

We make these calls because it might help us live in peace here in Manitoba and, perhaps most importantly, because it is the right thing to do.

**Ms. Heather Stefanson (Leader of the Official Opposition):** I rise today to address the horrific events that have unfolded in Israel and Gaza since October 7, and our hearts go out to all of those families who have lost loved ones.

We offer our sympathies to anyone in Manitoba who has been impacted by this war, and call for peace and unity within our communities as we work together to ensure Manitoba remains a safe and welcoming place for all.

We believe Israel has the right to defend itself, and we condemn Hamas, the terrorist organization that does not represent peaceful Palestinian people. We understand that there could be a pause in this conflict in the Middle East, which should allow for humanitarian aid and evacuations to take place, and we are hopeful of the safe return of hostages.

We simply cannot imagine what people impacted by this conflict are going through. We mourn the loss of Vivian Silver, who lost her life as a result of this, and our heart goes out to Vivian's family today.

In Manitoba we all want to see a resolution in the interest of peace and mutual respect for this conflict. As Manitobans, we do not tolerate any form of hate or discrimination, including anti-Semitism and Islamophobia. These trends are very concerning, and it is an issue that we will continue to bring to the attention of the provincial and federal governments.

I want to thank people on both sides that have brought some calm to our communities and reached agreement to de-escalate local protests here in Manitoba. In this House, we must always stand for peace.

Thank you.

\* (13:50)

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

**The Speaker:** Is there leave for the member from Tyndall Park to respond? *[Agreed]*

**MLA Lamoureux:** Thank you to the Premier for bringing forward today's statement and for the words that he has shared.

The ongoing wars and conflicts happening all over the world right now are heartbreaking. The issues created in the lead up, throughout and now, they continue to come, and they continue to be incredibly complex and very personal to so many, many of whom are here in Manitoba.

To be clear, I condemn wholeheartedly the violence committed by Hamas and its violence against Israeli civilians. There is never a justification for terrorism.

We must remember, Hamas is an illegal terrorist group that has been classified by Canada and many other nations as so. They do not represent all Palestinians.

We need to recognize that there is also immense suffering in Gaza. Entire buildings have been levelled. Food, water and power have been cut off. We must ensure humanitarian aid is provided for all who need it.

The events of the escalated armed conflict are affecting millions of people. The suffering has reverberated beyond the Middle East. In Canada and around the world, unrest has been growing. People from all backgrounds have been feeling unsafe due to rising anti-Semitism and Islamophobia.

My heart goes out to those who are suffering, the victims of violence in the region—civilians, families and children. For them, we all mourn.

I sincerely hope that the conflict can be resolved quickly and peacefully with a return to diplomacy before any more lives are needlessly lost.

I'd like to ask for leave for a moment of silence for Vivian Silver and her family.

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

*A moment of silence was observed.*

**The Speaker:** The honourable Minister of Agriculture.

**Hon. Ron Kostyshyn (Minister of Agriculture):** Honourable Speaker, can we—

**The Speaker:** The honourable Minister of Agriculture.

**Mr. Kostyshyn:** Honourable Speaker, I was wondering if we can go back to the final reports of—the reports regarding the 2023 report of Manitoba farm production? *[interjection]* Leave to go back to tabling of reports, please.

**The Speaker:** Is there leave to go back to tabling of reports? *[Agreed]*

## TABLING OF REPORTS

*(Continued)*

**Hon. Ron Kostyshyn (Minister of Agriculture):** I wish to report the 2023 report of the Manitoba farm production marketing council, respecting the certification of qualified organizations.

I table it, please.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, honourable Minister.

\* \* \*

**The Speaker:** No further ministerial statements.

We'll go on to members' statements.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### Transgender Day of Remembrance

**Mr. Logan Oxenham (Kirkfield Park):** Honourable Speaker, November 20th marked the trans day of remembrance, a day to mourn and honour the two-spirit, trans and gender-diverse folks we lost to anti-trans violence. It's a day to come together in the presence of each other's pain, reflecting on the lives of those we knew intimately and those whose names we

will never know due to the systemic underreporting of anti-trans violence.

The first day of trans—the first trans day of remembrance was held in 1999 as a 'vigil' for Rita Hester, a Black trans woman who was stabbed to death in her Boston home. Hester's community knew that if they did not demonstrate publicly, then anti-trans violence would prevail.

Honourable Speaker, there are many incredible organizations in Manitoba working to disrupt anti-trans violence. Klinik, Manitoba Moon Voices, Rainbow Resource Centre, Sunshine House, Trans Manitoba, 2Spirit Manitoba and other grassroots organizations advocate for greater protections and create accepting spaces for two-spirit, trans and gender-diverse folks. They need our support now more than ever in combatting the alarming rise in anti-trans violence.

On Monday, I attended the first-ever trans day of human—trans day of remembrance ceremony at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights. It was powerful, Honourable Speaker, and deeply moving.

We need to continue to fight for trans lives every day through investments in trans resource organizations and affirmative health care, through policy changes that uplift people's gender identity and by confronting violence and silence when it threatens trans folks, especially our trans youth.

Thank you.

### **Springfield's 150th Anniversary**

**Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield-Ritchot):** I have had the pleasure of representing Springfield—the Rural Municipality of Springfield—in the Manitoba Legislature for the past 24 years. During that time, I have seen the community blessed with many changes and much growth.

One particular event that I am most fond of is the announcement of funding that our previous PC government was able to provide toward the construction of a brand-new community and recreation center in Oakbank.

I also had the pleasure of once speaking to the late Prince Philip regarding Springfield, impressing him by mentioning that Springfield is the oldest rural municipality in the province and that I had the pleasure to represent them.

The fact that Springfield is the oldest RM in the province is something to celebrate, and celebrate we did, with Springfield's 150th anniversary celebration

three months ago. It was a wonderful event, with speeches, food, cake and, of course, family and friends. I had the pleasure of speaking to the event and presenting the mayor and council with a certificate and letter commemorating this fantastic milestone.

I also want to thank the people of Springfield. I've always been proud to represent Springfield in the Manitoba Legislature. It is home to fantastic people who have given their time and energy to make the community the growing and vibrant place it is. Volunteers from the Cooks Creek Community Centre, Dugald Estates and Dugald Place and the Oakbank Dinner Theatre, just to name a few, have put in the time and effort to make our community a place to raise our children and grandchildren.

Thank you to Springfield. I cannot wait to see what the future has in store for you in the years to come.

### **Kildonan-River East School Division**

**Mrs. Rachelle Schott (Kildonan-River East):** Honourable members, it gives me great pleasure to rise for the first time in this Chamber to highlight some of the great work educators are doing in Kildonan-River East.

Since taking on this new role within my community, I have already had the chance to tour many schools in my constituency.

John G. Stewart School is an alternative education setting for at-risk students that is changing lives and ending the stigma around alternative education. Partnering with the Knowles Centre, the school provides wrap-around supports for students and their families, including rapid access to social workers, psychologists and occupational therapy. Using Jordan's Principle, the goal at John G. Stewart is to work with students towards a successful return to their community school.

Only a few blocks away, but in a great demonstration of varying needs and demographics of our neighbourhood, the—a wide range of programming offered at River East Transcona School Division, another example of creative education is at Maple Leaf School, stripping away systemic barriers and focusing on the needs of students.

Each day, students work across grade levels in a unique setting led by specialty teachers. This instruction is focused on individual student needs in literacy and recognizing gaps in learning following the pandemic. An added benefit of this school-wide approach has been the strengthening school community. Just

this month, students had led their own Remembrance Day activities, demonstrating the organic examples of peace through the eyes of children.

I can't say enough about all these 'amazing'—amazing students and staff seeking unique and creative ways to learn, grow and build our great neighbourhoods in Kildonan-River East.

Thank you, Speaker.

\* (14:00)

### La Vérendrye Constituency Events

**Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye):** I rise in the House today to bring recognition for some very notable accomplishments and events within the La Vérendrye constituency in recent weeks.

This month has started with the 100th birthday of a very respectable constituent. Denis Joubert is a retired farmer from St. Pierre. He farmed the paternal farm, growing grain and raising registered purebred Holstein cattle. He was a man for the community and passionate about giving back. As a result, he was the past director of the St. Pierre ag society and also worked together with neighbouring municipalities to set up a veterinary clinic in St. Pierre.

As Mr. Joubert grew older, his passion shifted to seniors' quality of life within the community and as a result he co-founded Club Jolys seniors club and served as president of the Eastman Senior Citizen Council. When not farming or contributing to the progression of his community, Mr. Joubert could be found enjoying a game of golf, fishing or canoeing.

As I stand here today, I wish Mr. Joubert many more healthy years and would like to thank him for the contribution he has made to the constituency.

Along with Mr. Joubert's birthday, we were also able to celebrate the 10-year anniversary of the Woodridge Fire Hall and 10 years of the La Broquerie-Steinbach Operation Red Nose initiative.

Also this month, a very important initiative created by Mrs. Chalmers of the Vita Shevchenko School where students focus on being kind and grateful. Calling it the 30 Day Gratitude & Kindness Challenge, students are challenged each day to do a variety of feel-good tasks that range from make a small gift for a friend to hold the door open for someone, each day including new gratitude or kindness of challenge.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker, for the opportunity to share a couple of the highlights of my constituency.

### New Session Acknowledgements

**MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** I want to begin by congratulating our new, and our first First Nations Premier.

I believe that being the premier is a very honourable and often challenging position, and I wish our new Premier (Mr. Kinew) the best as he continues to settle into his position and works to better serve Manitobans.

I want to congratulate all of the new ministers, first-time MLAs and you, Honourable Speaker.

To the new ministers, you have some big portfolios in front of you, but I am assured that you'll be guided with the departments around you and that you'll be able to act quickly.

To all the new MLAs, it is a steep learning curve, but the impact you have is huge, and I'm excited to see how you'll all use it.

And to you, Honourable Speaker, let's demonstrate how provincial elected officials can, in fact, work together and how can—we can respectfully hold each other accountable.

I want to recognize my new opposition colleagues. Although we don't always agree—not very often—I've always been very, very grateful for your friendship.

In my almost eight years of being elected, a big highlight will always be witnessing our first-ever female premier, and I truly commend her for her efforts.

Lastly, I want to recognize my two former colleagues, Jon Gerrard and Dougald Lamont. I am so fortunate to have had the opportunity to work with two individuals who made it their priority to make the lives of Manitobans better. They both had long political careers—in one form or another, changed the lives of thousands of Manitobans and demonstrated such courage, compassion and vulnerability in their actions.

Jon, thank you for showing me the ropes, for sticking by my side and for always challenging and pushing me to learn more about topics that I may have otherwise not studied.

And, Dougald, thank you for helping teach me so much about Manitoba's history and for always encouraging me and giving me opportunities to use my voice.

Thank you.

### Introduction of Guests

**The Speaker:** Seeing as there are no other member statements, I do have some statements to make, but before I do that, I'd like to direct members' attention to my—to the loge on my left, Dr. Jon Gerrard, former member of River Heights.

### Speaker's Statements

**The Speaker:** I now have some statements for the House.

First off, I would like to take this time to introduce the new pages for 2023-2024. I'm pleased to introduce to the House the nine students who have been selected to serve as pages it—for this session. I would ask members to hold their applause until I have completed the introductions.

Starting from my right: from West Kildonan Collegiate, Ms. Abigail Bergagnini. From École secondaire Oak Point High School, Ms. Ubar *[phonetic]* Bouhadi. From Murdoch Mackay Collegiate, Ms. Liz Deacosta. From St. John's-Ravenscourt School, Ms. Sophie Jaxa Debicka. From St. Paul's High School, Mr. Sean Ehmann. From Collège Churchill High School, Ms. Mai-Anh Huynh. From Collège Béliveau, Ms. Ivanka *[phonetic]* Ivanovska. From École Héritage Immersion, Ms. Ava Piyete *[phonetic]*. From Murdoch Mackay Collegiate, Ms. Debra Rotimi.

This year, we are pleased to announce that we have created a pilot program for a senior page position within our provincial page program. The senior page is a returning page who is currently in their final year of high school. The senior page assisted in training the new pages and will mentor and work with them as they learn their duties.

Our senior page for this year is Ms. Elena Verrelli, who is a student at St. Boniface Diocesan High School. Elena attended the Assembly's education and outreach program, Learning at the Leg! opening dinner, where she was the keynote speaker. She promoted the page program to the educators in attendance, and she assisted in training this year's pages. The Assembly is very pleased to have Elena back with us for a second year, and we are hopeful that this pilot project will become a feature of our program.

Ladies and gentlemen, the pages.

At this point in time, I would like to introduce the 2023-2024 legislative interns. I would like to draw attention to all honourable members to the Speaker's gallery where we have six individuals who are serving on the Manitoba Legislative Internship Program for '23-24 year are seated. In accordance with established practice, three interns were assigned to the government caucus and three to the official opposition caucus. They will be performing a wide variety of research work and other important tasks for members of each caucus.

The interns commenced their assignments on September 11th, 2023, and will complete them in June of 2024. Working with the government caucus this year we have Ms. Ella-Shadi *[phonetic]* Nyakiir, from the University of Manitoba; Mr. Nicholas Pauls Harder, from the Canadian Mennonite University; and Ms. Kayla *[phonetic]* Willms from the Canadian Mennonite University.

Working with the caucus of the official opposition this year, we have Ms. Robyn Foxton, from Brandon University; Ms. Emily Diane *[phonetic]* Martin, from Brandon University; and Mr. Donald Plant, from the University of Manitoba.

The day-to-day administration of the intern program is carried out by Arlene Finkel, administrative assistant, Clerk's office internship program, under the direction of our Deputy Clerk, Rick Yarish.

\* (14:10)

The new caucus representatives on the internship administration committee are the member for Riel (MLA Moyes) and the member for Spruce Woods (Mr. Jackson).

Professor Kelly Saunders of the Brandon University has been the academic director for the program for the last 10 years. As this will be her last year with the program, I would like to take a moment to thank Professor Saunders for her service to the Legislative Assembly. You have provided a great guidance and mentorship to a hundred interns over the past decade, and on behalf of all members and interns past and present, I would like to thank you for your dedicated service.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of all members to congratulate the interns on their appointment to the program, and hope they will have a very interesting and successful year with the program.

Ladies and gentlemen, the interns.

I now have one further statement for the Assembly. This statement is in relation to the retirement of Clerk Patricia Chaychuk.

I have a statement for the House regarding our former Clerk, but before I begin, I understand there is a will to have responses to this statement. Accordingly, I am seeking leave of the House to allow for one response to this statement from each recognized party and from the independent member.

Is there leave? *[Agreed]*

I would like to take a moment now to pay tribute to someone who was a fixture in this Assembly for the last several decades.

As members know by now, our former Clerk of the House, Patricia Chaychuk, retired from her position on August 25th, 2023. To say that Patricia had an impressive career at the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba would be a massive understatement. Thirty-five years of service anywhere in the modern world is an accomplishment, but 35 years of service in this extremely challenging building is the most demanding roles—in an incredible feat, worthy of acknowledgement and celebration.

Patricia, who grew up in Thompson, Manitoba, had a very long association with this building. Well before being hired by the Assembly, she held two key roles in the Youth Parliament of Manitoba—premier and Speaker—which, of course, has held their sessional—annual sessions in this very Chamber for many decades.

Later, she worked as a Manitoba legislative intern, which, in a nice turn of fate, is a program she was later responsible for running for over 20 years.

Patricia then served in the challenging role of clerk assistant/clerk of committees during turbulent political times from 1989 to 2000, before taking a big step up to her next position.

On January 10, 2000, Patricia became the first woman appointed as Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, an impressive achievement.

In 2021, she added another extraordinary accomplishment to her legacy by becoming the longest serving Clerk in the 150-year history of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba. As of August 2023, she had served as our Clerk for 23 and a half years, beating the previous record by a full two years.

Beyond these notable achievements, Patricia has a long list of other accomplishments and acknowledgements, including past president of the Association of Clerks at the Table in Canada; past president of the Canadian Study of Parliament Group; past chair of the editorial board of the *Canadian Parliamentary Review*; member of the Society of the Clerks-at-the-Table in Commonwealth Parliaments, as well as being the Canadian representative on the advisory committee; distinguished alumnus of the University of Manitoba faculty of arts; receiving the Alumni Achievement Award from the Youth Parliament of Manitoba; honoured as a Trailblazer of the First 100 Years of Women of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba; and receiving the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Medal.

Having all of these impressive accomplishments in one career is truly mark—remarkable and well worth celebrating.

Patricia's commitment to the Assembly was unmatched, and her diligence and dedication to this place is worthy of recognition and respect.

Beyond her role here, Patricia remains very well known for a super fan of the Manitoba Moose, the Winnipeg Blue Bombers and the Winnipeg Jets. I am certain that we will be seeing her at games even more now that she is retired.

Congratulations, Patricia, on 35 years of exceptional service to the Assembly. On behalf of all honourable members and staff of the Assembly with whom you worked so closely, I wish you a long and happy retirement.

**Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Minister of Families):** On behalf of our NDP team and caucus, we want to say *miigwech* to Patricia.

It was an absolute honour to be able to work with Patricia for these last—for my almost eight years here, and certainly six years as, formerly opposition House leader, and now as Government House Leader.

I have to say that—and I've said this many, many times in this House—I don't think that the public really truly understands what clerks do in our legislative buildings and in Parliament. And until you're actually in this building doing this work, you realize how important the work is that the clerks do.

The clerks that are here, the clerks that are behind the scene and Patricia did phenomenal work in this Legislative Assembly. Again, the Honourable Speaker has already stated so many of her accomplishments, but I think it's particularly poignant to point out—again, as

the first woman Clerk of the Manitoba Legislative Assembly—is quite an accomplishment, and I know for myself that that is something I'm incredibly proud of for our Legislature.

I just want to say this as well in respect of Patricia and her work and her dedication to this institution, to this Chamber and to this House. She led us through a really difficult time during the pandemic, and I know that myself and the former—at the time, government House leader, the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen), we really relied on Patricia to help navigate this House, to do the work of this House.

And so I really want to acknowledge that phenomenal work that she led us through. And if she's watching, I want to say that you are missed, and a personal *miigwech* for all of the support and advice that you've provided me, and also again on behalf of our whole team here, *miigwech*, and you are missed.

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach):** I want to add some comments and build upon words from my friend from St. Johns, the Government House Leader (MLA Fontaine), regarding the work of Patricia and of clerks.

And the honourable member is correct that the public generally doesn't know the important works that clerks do. For example, there are often times when I was serving as the Government House Leader—or in opposition, previously as the Opposition House Leader—the counterparts would get together, and we were trying to figure something out in terms of how to move the agenda along or end a session. And we would spend some days, and then we would finally figure out what we wanted to do, but we didn't know how to do it.

And so we would go to Patricia and say, we as politicians know what we want to do, but we don't know how to do it. And she would figure out how to do it and write up a script, and then I would stand up and read it and my colleagues would say, boy, you're so smart about the rules. Well, I wasn't smart about the rules; I knew how to read. Patricia was smart about the rules and made it happen.

There were many different scenarios and situations like that. My friend had mentioned COVID and going through that time, the extraordinary work that Patricia and her team did. But there were other times in this House that I remember. I remember in 2013 when we sat through the summer, and of course you had to remember that the Clerk is also the head of many staff here in the Assembly. And when we as

politicians decide to do something, it often impacts many other people in the House.

So all of those staff were captive to the summer sitting as well, and Patricia had to lead the staff and talk to them about holidays that were cancelled and different sorts of things. So she had that human-resource role, and she did that in an important way.

I remember in 2015 when we decided to change the rules, because there was a former opposition House leader who has talked about sitting until Christmas, and so we decided to get together and look at the rules and change them. And she was really thoughtful, had historical perspective about some of the things that we could do.

And so for new members, the fact that we now have a sessional calendar is largely because of the work that Patricia and others did to make this place work better. I know, in talking to Patricia before she retired, before the election, she indicated she thought it was a good time to retire because new members wouldn't have a memory of her as the Clerk, and she thought it was good to have that sort of separation, that break.

\* (14:20)

I think that some members will be lesser for that experience because having known her as a Clerk, I think, would've been beneficial, but her DNA will always be here in the Legislature through things like the rule changes and other things.

But, as importantly, and finally, Honourable Speaker, it's recognized that she built a team because she knows that democracy exists beyond any of us here as elected officials and any of us at the centre table. It has to continue for future generations. So, she ensured that there was a succession and good people to take over her work so that democracy could continue long after she is gone and others are gone.

Patricia, it was an honour to work with you. I truly enjoyed it. On behalf of a grateful Progressive Conservative caucus, all members of the House and grateful Manitobans, thank you for your service to democracy and our province.

**MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** So much has been shared. I was very fortunate to know Patricia, actually, my entire life. From when I was first born and I used to hang out here at the Manitoba Legislature, Patricia was around, and I remember her from probably about age four onwards. And so, I

remember when I first got elected back in 2016 being able to reminisce with her a little bit about that.

And Patricia has been such a healthy pillar here in our Manitoba Legislature. She has been there for many of us here in the Chamber, in many different capacities. She was a great friend, non-partisan, of course, to many of us in these Chambers. And between her infectious smile, her love of the Winnipeg Jets and her master-filled brain just filled with endless information about legislative protocol, she's going to be deeply missed here in this Chamber. But I do really, really thank her and appreciate her for her 35 years of service to the Manitoba Legislature and for leaving us in some very capable hands.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you for that.

### Introduction of Guests

**The Speaker:** And, unfortunately, we had some students up in the gallery that I should've recognized a little earlier, because they had to leave.

Seated in the public gallery from Exchange Met School, there were 30 grade 9 students under the direction of Jonathan McPhail. This group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Point Douglas, the honourable Minister of Housing, Addictions and Homelessness (Ms. Smith).

Time for question period. Oral questions, sorry.

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### Carbon Tax on Home Heating Bills Request for Manitoba Exemption

**Ms. Heather Stefanson (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Thank you very much, Honourable Speaker, and I welcome you to your new role in the Manitoba Legislature. I also want to welcome the Premier and other members of his Cabinet to the Legislature and, of course, welcome all members back.

I also want to recognize Patricia for her outstanding job here as Clerk and welcome Rick into a new role soon. But thank you so much for everything that you have done.

Manitobans are struggling to make ends meet. Trudeau's carbon tax is making life less affordable for Manitobans, and now he is pitting Canadians against each other by introducing exemptions in Atlantic Canada without offering the same to Manitobans.

What action is—the Premier's government taken to ensure Manitobans are offered the same exemptions on home heating and natural gas bills right here in Manitoba?

**Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier):** Thank you, Honourable Speaker, and I want to congratulate you on your taking the Chair in this esteemed Chamber.

Also want to add my word of thanks to our former Clerk, Patricia, for her excellent, excellent service to our democracy, and to welcome the pages and all the members to this Chamber including newly elected ones. I hope that your time here is as rewarding as my colleagues and I have found it over the years.

Also want to acknowledge the Leader of the Opposition and welcome her to her new role. Up until October 3rd, that job was the great honour of my life, and I hope that she finds it as rewarding as I did.

In yesterday's Throne Speech, we clearly articulated that we are bringing a new heat pump program here to Manitoba to help reduce the cost of home heating and to help fight climate change. I'd encourage the members opposite to vote in favour of this great document.

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

**Ms. Stefanson:** Well, Honourable Speaker, the first question and the first answer—and there was no answer—it's clear that the NDP Premier is not doing his job to make life more affordable for Manitobans. He is not supporting Manitobans who desperately need the carbon tax off of their home heating bills today.

Will he stand up for Manitobans who are struggling to make ends meet and remove the carbon tax on all home heating bills for all Manitobans?

**Mr. Kinew:** I think it's interesting the Leader of the Opposition is already talking about people not doing their job when she didn't show up for her first day of her new job.

Working people in Manitoba—

**The Speaker:** Order. If I could just call the First Minister to order. There should be no reference to whether a member is here or not.

**Mr. Kinew:** Well, I definitely withdraw the comment and I would point out that our government is doing something that nobody in the PC Party ever did—ever did. We're cutting the provincial fuel tax to save you 14 cents a litre every single time you gas up. This is real relief for Manitobans, right? This is real relief for Manitobans.

They want to play games. We're about delivering results for you, the people of this province. I encourage them to vote in favour of this bill when we bring it forward.

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

**Ms. Stefanson:** Not even five minutes into the question period and the Premier is already breaking the rules in this House. Shame.

Five premiers have signed a letter calling on the Prime Minister to implement the same tax exemption on natural gas as the one offered on home heating oil in Atlantic Canada. Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Alberta, Ontario and Saskatchewan residents are all getting leadership from their premiers, Honourable Speaker.

Why is Manitoba's NDP Premier not standing up for Manitobans who are struggling to make ends meet?

**Mr. Kinew:** I recognize that they had strategic conversations and they figured that this was a good idea for them to raise this in the House. But there's such a glaringly obvious hypocrisy at the start of this line of questioning.

They implemented a provincial fuel tax on the people of Manitoba, and when all those other provincial leaders were delivering relief to their respective provinces, that former government stood pat. They continued to charge that provincial fuel tax to people in Manitoba at a time of record inflation.

And while the Leader of the Opposition may be interested in governing for Nova Scotia and for Alberta and Ontario, we're focused on governing for Manitobans, and that's why we're going to cut the provincial fuel tax for you, the people of this province, on January 1st. We just want to know if the opposition is going to support us.

### **Carbon Tax on Home Heating Bills Request for Manitoba Exemption**

**MLA Obby Khan (Fort Whyte):** Honourable Speaker, this is the first day of question period, so let's start off with a very simple question. Speaking of playing games, he's already dodged, ducked and dived and skirted the question. It's a very simple question.

So I ask this NDP Premier: Why did he not stand up for Manitobans and ask for immediate affordability relief for the carbon tax on heating your home in Manitoba like other premiers in Canada have done

and, more importantly, like he said he would do for Manitobans?

\* (14:30)

**Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier):** There are questions about working people and we're delivering real results for working people who need help with affordability. The working people have to show up for the jobs that they're asked to do.

And I see that the Leader of the Official Opposition is already skipping out after one set of questions. We know it's a long-standing practice for the Leader of the Opposition to ask two sets of questions.

When it comes to the assertion made by the member in the second row there, I would say that we've been clear that Manitobans should enjoy this kind of affordability. However, at the same time, we've brought forward real results.

We're cutting the provincial fuel tax for Manitobans and we're delivering a heat pump affordability program, something the PCs never did during their time in office, but they have the chance to support now that we've won government.

**MLA Khan:** Oh boy, oh boy. Speaking of games, and now we're speaking of magical bills that we haven't even seen yet. You talk about this bill. Where is this bill to be seen, Honourable Speaker?

Manitobans deserve a government that will stand up for them and not flip-flop, just like this government has done over here, and will not do what Justin Trudeau tells them and not be bought off by the federal finance minister.

Instead, we have an NDP team where their Minister of Finance (MLA Sala) says he supports the carbon tax, and then the Premier says he doesn't, and then the Premier says he does. How many more times will they flip-flop?

The question is, what will this Premier do to make life more affordable for Manitobans today?

**Mr. Kinew:** I welcome the fact that the member opposite thinks that our forthcoming legislation is, quote, magical, end quote.

I also point out that the new Leader of the Opposition took to Twitter yesterday and to say that she was glad to see some of the announcements in our Throne Speech yesterday.

But I wonder why the PCs have to come in today and put on this charade, that they don't think we're

bringing forward good ideas. They should tell the people of Manitoba right now if they support the measures that we are taking immediate action on to deliver affordability.

Do they support our proposal to cut the provincial fuel tax, as well as to deliver a new heat pump program that would benefit to the tune of 90 per cent people in rural Manitoba?

**MLA Khan:** I understand it is his first day in this job, but he is all talk and no action. Action actually means doing something. Not one mention of the most impactful burden on Manitoban families today—the Justin Trudeau NDP carbon tax. Not one mention in his Throne Speech.

In four years, Honourable Speaker, the federal carbon tax on homes will have cost over \$1,700. If they really wanted to protect Manitobans from rate increases, they would join other leaders. That's what leaders do.

Why will he not do the right thing and stand up today for affordability measures in Manitoba for Manitobans like he said he would?

**Mr. Kinew:** Honourable Speaker, the member opposite has certainly heard our message that we are going to help with affordability for the working families out there. That's why we're going to cut the provincial fuel tax.

But what, apparently, he hasn't heard, is that every PC MLA in that front bench ran on a carbon tax twice. That was part of their 2016 and 2019 election campaigns, so I wonder how that front bench feels—*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**An Honourable Member:** —at his line of questioning, because they flip-flopped on this issue more times than a pickerel on a dock.

Our team, on the other hand, real results. We're cutting the fuel tax. We're bringing heat pumps. We just want to know if they're going to support the bill.

### **Carbon Tax on Home Heating Bills Request for Manitoba Exemption**

**Mr. Grant Jackson (Spruce Woods):** Well, Honourable Speaker, we've got a carbon tax flip-flop on our hands. With the Trudeau government's sweetheart carbon tax relief deal for Atlantic Canada, Manitobans are still being left out in the cold, literally.

The Premier (Mr. Kinew) has flip-flopped on asking Ottawa for tax fairness across the country, and refused to bring the issue up when the Deputy Prime Minister was in his own office.

Will the Premier stand up for Manitobans today and stop collecting Justin Trudeau's carbon tax?

**Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro):** It gives me a great honour to rise here today as the new Minister of Finance with our new NDP government: the most diverse caucus in this province's history, something we can all be incredibly proud about.

I'm really honoured to be able to have this chance to respond to this important question about energy affordability in this province. We know that for many years under this previous government, Manitobans suffered under high hydro prices, their endless efforts to raise energy prices on Manitoba, their inactivity in reducing the cost of energy.

Everything's changed now, Mr. Honourable Speaker. Things have changed in this province. We are going to work steadily to make life more affordable.

**The Speaker:** The honourable member from Spruce Woods, on a supplementary question.

**Mr. Jackson:** Well, Speaker, what we're hearing from the NDP government is that they're okay with one region of the country being treated differently than another. That it's okay for families in Manitoba to be left out in the cold while Atlantic Canadian families get financial relief.

Manitobans believe that all Canadians are equal and deserve relief from the carbon tax on heating their homes.

Will the Premier direct Hydro to stop collecting Trudeau's carbon tax on home heating bills today?

**MLA Sala:** Appreciate the question from the member opposite because it gives us a great opportunity to talk about all the important work we're going to do to improve energy affordability for Manitobans.

Number 1, we're going to be bringing in a fuel tax holiday to save Manitobans 14 cents per litre at the pump.

We're also partnering with the federal government to bring in geothermal heating in Manitoba that will help to reduce the cost of home heating for Manitobans.

That's real action, not like what Manitobans saw from this previous government.

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

**Mr. Jackson:** Well, it's too bad, Honourable Speaker. The Minister of Finance was initially very clear that he believed Manitoba should be treated fairly and receive a carbon tax carve-out similar to the Maritimes provinces.

It's too bad the Premier (Mr. Kinew) won't follow his lead, stop flip-flopping on this issue and stand up for Manitobans.

As Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro, will the Finance Minister issue the directive to stop collecting the unfair carbon tax on home heating bills and give Manitobans the relief that they need?

**MLA Sala:** Again, I appreciate the opportunity to respond to this question.

I know that the member is new to this House, but one thing he should familiarize himself with is the fact that this previous government spent an incredible amount of time figuring out new and novel ways to raise the cost of electricity on Manitobans. That's their record. That's a record they should be ashamed of.

This government is going to do the opposite: we're going to give Manitobans a fuel tax holiday, we're going to reduce the cost of home heating and we're going to actually do the work of improving affordability in Manitoba.

### **Agriculture Industry Request to Remove Carbon Tax**

**MLA Jeff Bereza (Portage la Prairie):** Honourable Speaker, the agriculture industry is contributing to nearly 10 per cent of our provincial GDP.

Our farmers are dealing daily with the Trudeau carbon tax that this Premier supports, that makes our farmers less competitive and groceries more expensive. This affects our farmers' ability to be competitive at a global market.

Will this minister ask the Premier to call Justin Trudeau to remove the carbon tax on farm production inputs?

**Hon. Ron Kostyshyn (Minister of Agriculture):** It's my pleasure, first and foremost, to be back at the legislative.

\* (14:40)

As the member opposite has indicated, the importance of agriculture in the province of Manitoba—and I couldn't agree more with you.

I am very proud to announce also that I have been involved in agriculture from 40-some-odd years, that these hands have been involved in a number of occupations during my time as being an agriculture producer. Whether it's the beef operation, grain operations, I am very proud of my legacy and continue to work on the betterment of the agriculture society.

And I will assure you we will continue to work with agriculture producers to make Manitoba a more profitable province than we've ever had in the province of Manitoba—

**The Speaker:** Member's time has expired.

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

**MLA Bereza:** Honourable Speaker, this government makes—

**The Speaker:** On a new question, I'm sorry.

**MLA Bereza:** —promises to address affordability but still supports the Trudeau carbon tax.

Will this government provide immediate relief to Manitoba families and producers by calling on Ottawa to pass Bill C-234 and remove the punitive carbon tax on all food production?

**Mr. Kostyshyn:** I guess I should be not take any lessons from the members opposite. Would you please go talk to the Crown lands representatives in the province of Manitoba, where the government had the opportunity to raise 300 per cent in their Crown land leases and then also double-bill them in the same year?

I would feel, when we want to talk about affordability in the province of Manitoba, why would the government—the previous government—now retaliate in that first or second year? Oh, we've made a mistake; we've got to cut back; we've got to win the next election. So they cut back 150 per cent from their original increase on 300 per cent.

So I ask the member opposite: Do you believe your government was making life easier for producers in the province of Manitoba by increasing the Crown land rates?

**The Speaker:** The honourable member for Portage la Prairie, on a final supplementary.

**MLA Bereza:** Honourable Speaker, I believe the question was around carbon tax. Does this minister want grain to rot in the bins because of the carbon tax imposed on them, that this government continues to support? This is also affecting the price of groceries to increase, making it very difficult for both Manitoba families and farmers.

Will this minister stop siding with the Trudeau government and instead side with Manitoba farmers and Manitoba families?

**Mr. Kostyshyn:** Honourable Speaker, I think today is a great day, and this is no better moment for all us in the elective representative for the province of Manitoba to show our appreciation to all agriculture producers of what they've done 'til now in the province of Manitoba.

And let's—hopefully, they have a good harvest and rewarding—as we know, the cattle industry has improved considerably, but it wasn't because of the fact that the Conservatives, the opposition party, chose to make life more challenging when they raised Crown land leases 300 per cent.

And I think it's a long time that the government—previous government—should apologize to the livestock producers of their choices to try and get rich on behalf of the cattle producers in the province of Manitoba.

#### **Diagnostic and Surgical Wait Times Government Decision to Dissolve Task Force**

**Mrs. Kathleen Cook (Roblin):** Thanks to the work of the Diagnostic and Surgical Recovery Task Force, more than 85,000 Manitobans received the surgery or diagnostic procedure they were waiting for.

This NDP government's first and only tangible action since being elected has been to cut the task force, a premature decision that's going to increase wait times for Manitobans. This is a blatantly ideological move designed to appease the NDP's friends.

Will the Minister of Health tell us why they're playing politics with Manitoba patients?

**Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care):** I'd like to welcome the member opposite to the Chamber, and I know that we're both going to work hard to advocate for better health care across the province.

I appreciate the question very much on the task force. Maybe the member opposite has not read the letter that was brought forward by chief medical

officer, indicating that it was long overdue, the task force be wound down.

But what I would say is that the decision that we made was in the best interests of Manitobans across the province. We need to strengthen health care here in Manitoba and work with health-care experts in our own province to make sure no matter where you live you get the health care you need.

**The Speaker:** The honourable member from Roblin, on a supplementary question.

**Mrs. Cook:** Curiously absent from the NDP's announcement last week was any plan to recruit or train the staff they will need to restore capacity locally. Big on talk; short on details.

Will the minister explain how many more staff they need to implement their plan, where the staff are going to come from and when they'll be in place?

**MLA Asagwara:** I really do appreciate that question from the member opposite.

What was really interesting, over the past several weeks that I've had the privilege of being in this role to serve Manitobans, was that across the health-care system, leaders made it very, very clear that decisions made by the task force that really negatively impacted our health-human resource capacity were not made in cohesion with other folks.

And so the task force seemed to be working very much in isolation from the impacts of those decisions on staffing in our health-care system.

The step forward that we're taking now is so that everybody can work in collaboration. We can work together across the province to strengthen health care human resource capacity, something the previous government never did.

**The Speaker:** The honourable member from Roblin, on a final supplementary question.

**Mrs. Cook:** Honourable Speaker, the NDP's decision to cut the task force is cold comfort to Manitobans who are waiting for care today.

Up until last week, many Manitobans had the option of seeking the quickest care available, funded by the single payer public health-care system.

Today, they no longer have that option because the NDP took it away. Today, they must wait however long it takes for the NDP to figure out a plan.

Will the NDP Health Minister explain to Manitobans why they're prioritizing their ideology and their friends over the needs of Manitoba patients?

**MLA Asagwara:** Mr.—sorry—Honourable Speaker, I want to be clear that the decision to move forward and to take a new approach which prioritizes building capacity here in our province was a decision made alongside the experts in our province. It was a decision made that allows Manitoba to start investing in capacity here.

Honourable Speaker, I am very concerned with our friends here in Manitoba, not the previous government's friends in the United States and all other jurisdictions that have a vested interest in Manitobans not being able to access health care in their own communities.

And so, Honourable Speaker, we are going to continue to take an approach that builds capacity in Manitoba, that assures Manitobans will get care in their own province and that works in collaboration with health-system leaders and experts here in our own borders.

#### **Child-Care Spaces Government Intention**

**Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet):** The Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning has announced that the NDP will pause over 2,400 new child-care spaces.

Are you going to pause them, or you going to cancel them?

**Hon. Nello Altomare (Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning):** And I'd like to welcome the member for Lac du Bonnet back to the Chamber. We're both here to advocate for a fully funded public education system and a child-care system that serves the people of Manitoba.

I will say that the challenges being put forth by this industry right now are faced all throughout the country. One of them, of course, is having to deal with the proper human resources that we need to recruit. It's quite one thing to say, Honourable Speaker, that we're here to ensure that families actually get real true \$10-a-day child care.

With this other crew on the other side of the House there, people were not expecting that particular response and instead, right now, they're looking to us to lead in this area.

**The Speaker:** The minister's time has expired.

\* (14:50)

The honourable member from Lac du Bonnet, on a supplementary question.

**Mr. Ewasko:** The Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning, you, as the MLA for Transcona, have you called River East Transcona School Division and have you actually told them that you're cancelling their daycare, child-care spaces?

**The Speaker:** Before we get the answer to that question, I'd remind the members that questions should be, and comments should be directed through the Speaker, not directly to members opposite.

**MLA Altomare:** Thank you for your guidance in these procedures as we get back to the first day in the House. It is greatly appreciated.

The other thing that we greatly appreciate is the work of the civil service, especially those that have been staffing up in early learning and child care, Honourable Speaker. They have an awesome task that they have to accomplish.

And what we're doing right now is standing on their shoulders, their expertise, to provide the leadership that this province needs through their important work.

**The Speaker:** The minister's time has expired.

The honourable member from Lac du Bonnet, on a final supplementary question.

**Mr. Ewasko:** Honourable Speaker, not an answer. Not an answer from the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning.

Has he called the various school divisions? Manitobans deserve to know, Honourable Speaker. Is he pausing it, or cancelling them?

Obviously by the 'inanswers,' the 'unanswers,' from the Minister of Education, he is cancelling them. Twenty-four hundred child-care spaces, Mr. Honourable Speaker.

**MLA Altomare:** I want to thank the member for the question. It's an important one, it absolutely is.

And, of course, we're in communication with school divisions; but we're also—more importantly, Honourable Speaker—in communication with child-care centres. Yes, they're often attached to schools, but many child-care centres, especially outside the city of Winnipeg, are not.

And what we're doing is, we're staffing up by having ready-to-move centres being built quickly, and ensuring that there's enough training spots so that they can have the staff in place for those early learning and child-care centres.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

### **Wait Times at Grace Hospital Request for Government to Address**

**MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** It is heartbreaking hearing the experiences that the Grace Hospital and many families have had to face because of the wait times to see a doctor.

Honourable Speaker, 33 hours is far too long to be waiting in an emergency room. Nurses have cited seeing 32 patients admitted at the Grace lying in hallways. Media have reported patients spending days on stretchers without having access to a bed.

Our Health Minister was the Health critic for four years, and has no excuse to not take action immediately.

What is this government's short-term plan to reduce the chaotic wait times happening at the Grace Hospital?

**Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier):** I want to just take a short minute off the top to congratulate the member for Tyndall Park on her re-election. The fact that she's returning here as the leader of her party, I think, is also a testament to the constituency-level politicking that she practises, and it's one that I think we could all learn from.

When it comes to the issues at the Grace Hospital, the situation there is absolutely dire. We know that the families who've been impacted by the cases that have been reported on deserve to see improvement immediately and deserve to have answers. And, most of all, deserve to see a compassionate response.

Our Health Minister took immediate action upon assuming office, and has been responding to each of these issues. I do, however, want to indicate that it is going to take time to repair the massive damage caused to our health-care system by the previous government.

However, this is not an excuse; this is merely a telegraphing of the fact that we will be pursuing a timeline in both the short, medium and long term. Short-term—

**The Speaker:** The Premier's time has expired.

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

**MLA Lamoureux:** For all the promises this government has made, we have yet to see any timeline. If the Premier wants to talk about damage control, walk us through it. Demonstrate to us.

For all of us, in order for us to be opposition and Manitobans, we need to have confidence that this government is actually taking action. They've had seven years to consult. What is happening now?

Can this government give us a clear timeline on when they plan to have wait times at the Grace Hospital stabilized?

**Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care):** I thank the member for Tyndall Park for that very important question.

We take this matter with the utmost of seriousness. I can assure that member that we have been working since being sworn in, quite frankly, to address the issues in our emergency rooms, specifically the Grace, as well.

Upon receiving some difficult news—and I—my heart goes out to the families who've been impacted by what's going on at the Grace—I did meet with health-care leadership and immediately took steps to implement actions that are soon coming and actually happening right now. I'd be happy to brief the member on that if she would take me up on that offer.

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

### **Health-Care Workers Recruitment Inquiry**

**MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** I will definitely take the minister up on their offer. Thank you.

In order to stabilize all of our hospitals, we need to hire more health-care professionals. So, again, we need more details.

Where, specifically, is this government going to recruit health-care professionals?

**The Speaker:** The honourable Minister of Health—sorry.

**Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care):** Again, I thank that member for that very important question.

As we said during our campaign, and as we've made clear, staffing is our No. 1 priority in health care. You know, there is no system capacity without human capacity, and we are prioritizing having people at the bedside to deliver care.

It is so important for folks to understand the challenge that is in front of us did not happen overnight. Unfortunately, there was a previous government, many of which are sitting on that side of that side of the House, who failed to take any meaningful measures to address staffing in our health-care system. They turned their backs on it almost entirely, Honourable Speaker.

Our government is taking a different approach. I meet with health-care leaders and front-line staff on this every single day and will continue to until we address this issue.

#### **Former Government Fiscal Record**

**MLA JD Devgan (McPhillips):** I'm pleased to rise for my first question in question period, and my first time speaking as an MLA in the House.

Manitobans expect their government to be honest and accountable when it comes to the books. Our government was shocked to find the previous government failed in its jobs to be responsible stewards of the taxpayer dollars.

We know, for instance, they made promises with no plan in the budget to pay for them. Yesterday, the Leader of the Opposition said, quote, it was all budgeted for. They all went through Treasury Board, and they were all approved. Unquote.

Can the Finance Minister please put some facts on the record?

**Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister of Finance):** I want to thank my colleague for this very important question.

We know there are many important questions that need to be asked about this previous government's fiscal record. Yesterday, the Leader of the Opposition said she, quote, can't recall the specifics of what her government approved at Treasury Board.

Allow me to jog her memory. I have a Treasury Board document here that says, quote, nine new schools not in the budget. And I will table that document for the House.

As Minister of Finance, I can tell you that that is very concerning, indeed. This was a major expenditure—not in the budget. It was a campaign

promise—not in the budget. It was a key talking point—not in the budget.

Manitobans can feel confident that we will clean up the PC's mess. The era of empty promises is over.

**The Speaker:** The honourable member from Midland. *[interjection]* Order. Order.

#### **Cost of Living Increase Assistance for Families**

**Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland):** Honourable Speaker, first I'd like to congratulate the Minister of Families on her election and appointment. The issues under the minister's purview are very important, and I know she has had a lifelong commitment to many of them.

Life is getting increasingly unaffordable, and Manitobans are struggling to make ends meet.

Can the Minister of Families explain why her government's Throne Speech lacked long-term help for struggling and vulnerable Manitobans?

\* (15:00)

**Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Minister of Families):** I want to welcome and congratulate my critic to the Chamber, and I wish her all the well on this new journey and path in her life. I'm sure that we will have many opportunities to work together and to have some chats.

I think that what Manitobans saw yesterday in our Throne Speech is a throne speech of hope. It's changing our province so that everybody is taken care of, that we can work together in the betterment of our province.

And I know that members on our side of the House here receive so many messages just thanking the Premier (Mr. Kinew) and our government for such an amazing, thoughtful, inclusive, comprehensive throne speech that's going to be looking out for all Manitobans.

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

**Mrs. Stone:** Lots of talk, no plan, no action.

Food bank usage is over 30 per cent and on the rise in Manitoba, with over 20,000 recipients being children. Life is increasingly unaffordable and rising inflation, thanks to the NDP-Liberal coalition, is not helping.

What is the Minister of Families doing to address families who are struggling to feed their families and their children?

**MLA Fontaine:** Again, miigwech to my critic for the important question.

I think that everybody in this Chamber and really everybody across every single legislature and Parliament across our country knows that citizens are struggling. I think that folks have seen an increase in folks going to food banks.

And I know that just recently there was some discussions at a meeting and that every jurisdiction is dealing with the increased use of food banks, and I know that there's discussion among different departments and governments on whether or not there is a need to start looking at that model and whether or not there are additional supports.

Until that time, I do want to just acknowledge all of the work and—fundamental work that these food banks do on behalf of citizens here in Manitoba.

**The Speaker:** Minister's time has expired.

The honourable member from Midland, on a final supplementary question.

#### **Food Security Fund Funding Inquiry**

**Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland):** I'll ask a third time: the cost of groceries and other essentials are rising, while food banks and other not-for-profit organizations assisting struggling Manitobans are also grappling with the growing demand.

The PC government created the food security fund: 4 million additional dollars to support these community organizations. The Minister of Families has announced no new programs.

Will she at least commit to maintaining this existing funding?

**Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Minister of Families):** I'm sure that members opposite can appreciate that the mess—the financial mess that they've left all of our departments in—and Manitobans.

And while they're heckling, I think it's really important to put it on the record that each and every one—each and every member of our Cabinet are engaged in a very serious exercise right now to ensure that we are doing what's in the best interest of Manitobans while also trying to clean up the mess that they've left for Manitobans here.

**The Speaker:** The time for oral questions has expired.

Petitions? No petitions.

### **ORDERS OF THE DAY GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

#### **House Business**

**Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Government House Leader):** Honourable Speaker, could you please canvass the House for leave to waive rule 119 for the duration of the 43rd Legislature to allow the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, either by written approval by the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson, or by leave of the committee, to call witnesses it deems appropriate in addition to ministers, deputy ministers or the chief executive officer of a Crown corporation?

**The Speaker:** Is there leave to waive rule 119 for the duration of the 43rd Legislature to allow the Standing Committee on Public Accounts either by written approval from the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson, or by leave of the committee to call witnesses it deems appropriate in addition to ministers, deputy ministers or the chief executive officer of a Crown corporation?

Is there leave?

**Some Honourable Members:** Leave.

**Some Honourable Members:** No.

**The Speaker:** I hear a no.

Leave has been denied.

\* \* \*

**MLA Fontaine:** Today, the House will consider the speech of her Honour, the Lieutenant Governor.

Miigwech.

**The Speaker:** It has been announced by the Government House Leader that the business of the day will be—now I've lost it—the consideration of the Throne Speech; debate on the Throne Speech.

### **THRONE SPEECH (First Day of Debate)**

**MLA Robert Loiselle (St. Boniface):** Merci, M. l'honorable Président. Je, avec l'appui de Madame la députée Cross, propose que soit présentée à la Lieutenant-gouverneure l'adresse suivante : Nous, députés à l'Assemblée législative du Manitoba, vous remercions bien humblement du discours que vous avez prononcé à l'ouverture de la première session de la 43<sup>e</sup> Législature du Manitoba.

Une deuxième fois, donc : Je, avec l'appui de Madame la députée Cross, propose que soit présentée à la Lieutenant-gouverneure l'adresse suivante : Nous, députés de l'Assemblée législative du Manitoba, vous remercions bien humblement du discours que vous avez prononcé à l'ouverture de la première session de la 43<sup>e</sup> Législature du Manitoba.

### **Translation**

*Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by MLA Cross, that the following address be presented to her honour, the Lieutenant Governor: We, the members of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, humbly thank you for your speech at the opening of the first session of the 43rd Legislature of Manitoba.*

*A second time, then: I move, seconded by MLA Cross, that the following address be presented to her honour, the Lieutenant Governor: We, the members of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, humbly thank you for your speech at the opening of the first session of the 43rd Legislature of Manitoba.*

**The Speaker:** It has been moved by the member from St. Boniface, seconded by the member from Seine River that the following address be it presented to her honour, the Lieutenant Governor. We, the members of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, thank her honour for the gracious speech addressed to us in this first session of the 43rd Legislature of Manitoba.

**MLA Loiselle:** Merci, M. l'honorable Président. J'aimerais commencer par diriger votre attention par la présence de mon père, Lucien Loiselle, qui est avec nous, et mon frère, Richard Loiselle, qui est dans la galerie.

J'aimerais aussi reconnaître l'important appui que j'ai reçu au cours de cette période de mon épouse, Katherine, de ma fille Nastassja et de ma fille Axelle, qui ont été extrêmement patientes avec moi, non seulement pendant la campagne électorale, mais évidemment pendant tout ce que ça a pris pour se préparer envers cette grande aventure.

J'aimerais aussi remercier les citoyens de Saint-Boniface, qui m'ont appuyé en grand nombre. Et c'est un honneur d'être ici aujourd'hui, capable de représenter Saint-Boniface.

M. l'honorable Président, c'est un honneur en tant que député de Saint-Boniface d'adresser la Chambre aujourd'hui, armé de mes pensées et de mes paroles, non seulement dans la langue de Molière, mais aussi dans la langue natale de Louis Riel, le père du Manitoba. C'est aussi un grand honneur en tant que

député de Saint-Boniface d'être le premier à avoir la chance de partager son discours inaugural, à la suite du discours du trône et à l'aube de cette nouvelle session.

\* (15:10)

Épaulé de notre nouveau Premier ministre (M. Kinew), le très honorable Wab Kinew, et de mes nouveaux collègues députés, j'aimerais prendre un moment pour marquer jusqu'à quel point que je suis fier de faire partie d'un gouvernement historiquement inclusif et divers. L'inclusion, et la diversité, M. l'honorable Président, est au cœur de l'histoire de notre belle province — même si elle n'a pas toujours été au premier plan ou même valorisée, comme on le voit aujourd'hui. De plus, il est aussi important de noter non seulement la diversité culturelle, mais surtout la diversité de compétences qui règne au sein de notre gouvernement. D'après moi, c'est cette diversité de compétences, M. l'honorable Président, et les outils à notre disposition qui permettront à notre gouvernement d'être à la hauteur des défis qui nous font face présentement en tant que province.

En tant que Métis francophone né et élevé au nord de Saint-Boniface, non loin de la petite fourche de la rivière Rouge et de la rivière Seine, où Louis Riel est né, les paroles de Louis Riel me reviennent à l'esprit, M. l'honorable Président, quand il avait dit : « Mon peuple dormira pendant cent ans. Lorsqu'il s'éveillera, ce seront les artistes qui lui rendront son âme ».

C'est donc avec le cœur ouvert aujourd'hui, M. l'honorable Président, que je vous adresse en tant que Métis francophone, à la fois raconteur, chanteur, parfois farceur, artisan-forgeron et 'fabriqueur' de bonhommes 'gigueurs', et que je reconnais que la nation métisse est bel et bien en plein éveil, et que jusqu'à quel point il est toujours important dans la vie de savoir qui on est, d'où on vient et où on s'en va.

De mon côté, je suis né, il y a belle lurette, à l'hôpital de Saint-Boniface, à un temps où la Ville de Saint-Boniface était encore une ville à son propre titre, et non un quartier de la Ville de Winnipeg.

À ma naissance, mes parents, Lucien Loiselle et Lucienne Loiselle (née Beaudry), décidèrent d'acheter une maison sur la rue La Vérendrye, nommée après le grand explorateur Pierre Gauthier de Varennes, Sieur de La Vérendrye, qui arriva avec le fait français à la grande Fourche ici à Winnipeg en 1738.

Comme vous pouvez le comprendre, M. l'honorable Président, notre famille avait maintenant besoin de plus de place pour une famille grandissante. Étant le

plus jeune de trois garçons, j'ai grandi dans le luxe de voir mes plus vieux frères, Michel et Richard, toujours frayer le chemin et prendre maints risques — les premiers — avant de me lancer dans mes propres aventures.

Nos parents nous ont appris, dès un jeune âge, l'importance de bien faire les choses. Étant tous les deux pédagogues, notre foyer était une extension de l'école — qui explique probablement pourquoi j'ai appris de lire bien avant de me rendre à la maternelle. Grâce à leur amour du plein air et de la nature, nos parents nous ont appris l'importance du respect de l'environnement. C'est grâce à nos fins de semaines et nos étés en nature à notre chalet au Lac Beresford que j'ai eu la chance d'apprendre et vraiment me connaître et de perfectionner mes techniques de plein air, comme le canotage, la nage, la pêche, la cuisson à feu ouvert, la construction d'abris et l'identification de plantes et d'animaux.

Malheureusement, au début de septembre 1983, notre beau chalet en rondins est passé aux flammes, à cause d'un feu de forêt, et nous en avons le cœur brisé. Mais c'est justement à ce moment que mes parents m'ont appris une des plus grandes leçons de la vie, en lien avec le courage et la résilience. Ce que j'ai appris, M. l'honorable Président, c'est que le courage est l'antidote de la peur, et que même un peu de courage est toujours suffisant.

J'ai aussi appris avec le courage qu'on peut aussi faire appel à la résilience, et c'est grâce à la résilience que nous avons décidé en famille de rebâtir notre beau chalet au courant de l'été 1984. C'est pendant cet été passé en famille à rebâtir notre beau chalet pièce par pièce en rondins d'épinette, que j'ai vraiment appris à apprécier mes parents, non seulement comme mes héros, mais aussi pour l'amour qu'ils partageaient entre l'un l'autre, et par conséquent avec moi et mes frères.

C'est cette abondance d'amour, M. l'honorable Président, qui a toujours été le fil conducteur au sein de la famille Loïselle et Beaudry. Notre joie de vivre, nos soupers de famille suivis de musique et de chansons à répondre, nos grands projets, nos soirées près du feu au chalet, les histoires de mon grand-père, Victor Beaudry, sont la fondation même de qui je suis aujourd'hui — Métis francophone fier, engagé, toujours prêt à servir sa communauté et prendre soin de sa famille.

Naturellement au courant des années, notre famille s'est agrandie. J'ai rencontré mon épouse Katherine en 1989 en travaillant pour Parcs Canada comme forgeron au Lower Fort Garry, et en 2003

nous avons accueilli au monde nos filles jumelles, Axelle et Nastassja, qui aujourd'hui sont déjà aux études universitaires. La vie, M. l'honorable Président, a toujours une façon de bien s'écouler quand, peu importe le foyer, l'amour est au rendez-vous.

Avec l'amour, M. l'honorable Président, on retrouve aussi la compassion, et la communauté de Saint-Boniface a une longue historique d'entraide et de compassion. Arrivées sur les rives de la rivière Rouge en 1844, les Sœurs Grises fondent le premier hôpital de l'Ouest canadien en 1871. Avec seulement quatre lits, l'hôpital de Saint-Boniface était un espace de bonté et de soins pour une communauté métisse francophone.

J'aimerais aussi noter que je suis né à l'Hôpital de Saint-Boniface, mais non en 1871.

L'Hôpital de Saint-Boniface demeure encore la preuve physique de notre longue histoire de résilience et de compassion envers nos familles, nos amis, nos voisins — comme nous nous efforçons aussi de faire preuve de résilience en moments de perte, de changement et de crise. Tout au long de l'histoire de Saint-Boniface, notre détermination a été mise à l'épreuve et notre résilience a été éprouvée, comme pendant la grande inondation de 1950 — mais nous en sommes toujours sortis vainqueurs.

Malheureusement, avec l'épidémie de COVID-19, Saint-Boniface a encore une fois été mise à l'épreuve. L'Hôpital de Saint-Boniface a été submergé par de multiples épidémies de COVID. Les unités de l'hôpital manquaient de personnel, les lits critiques étaient surchargés, et des opérations chirurgicales vitales ont été annulées. Cette pandémie a été un des catalyseurs de mon engagement en politique. Témoin des nouveaux défis devant nous et d'une méfiance croissante de certains Manitobains à l'égard du gouvernement, j'ai commencé à m'inquiéter pour nos enfants, nos familles, nos écoles, nos soins de santé et nos communautés.

Voir de plus en plus de Manitobains et Manitobaines éprouver des grandes difficultés m'a beaucoup bouleversé tout au courant de la pandémie. J'ai aussi éprouvé beaucoup de difficultés en tant qu'enseignant et père de famille à essayer de comprendre comment, et pourquoi, le gouvernement provincial de l'époque semblait incapable de répondre aux besoins des Manitobains, surtout en soins de santé.

La pandémie fut une période sombre de notre histoire qui a su mettre à l'épreuve plusieurs d'entre

nous. Néanmoins, les habitants de Saint-Boniface ont pu persévérer malgré l'absence d'aide gouvernementale dans plusieurs domaines. Évidemment, maintes communautés ont aussi été confrontées à des défis pendant la pandémie, et c'est dans ces moments d'obscurité que nous nous rappelons que nous sommes, en fin de compte, plus les uns comme les autres que nous pensons.

Au cours de ma campagne, j'ai eu le plaisir de rencontrer plusieurs citoyens de Saint-Boniface en faisant beaucoup de porte à porte et lors de maints événements communautaires. Ce n'est pas surprenant, M. l'honorable Président, que l'un des plus grands défis identifiés par les électeurs de Saint-Boniface était l'accès aux soins de santé. Notre système de santé — et par conséquent les Manitobains — souffre depuis déjà trop longtemps. Bien que la pandémie ait aggravé notre système de santé en mettant notre système à l'épreuve, ce sont les sept dernières années de coupures en santé qui ont aggravé la crise.

\* (15:20)

*Mr. Tyler Blashko, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair*

Il est évident que les soins de santé préoccupent beaucoup les citoyens de Saint-Boniface et qu'ils en ont assez de voir notre système continuer à se détériorer. Pour être une communauté vibrante et en pleine santé, nous avons besoin de soins fiables en santé pour nos familles, nos enfants et nos aînés.

C'est mon intention, M. l'honorable Président, en tant que député de Saint-Boniface, de continuer à prendre soin de ma communauté. Cela signifie plus de travail en soins de santé, l'expansion de programmes et l'amélioration à l'accès aux services de santé — tant en anglais qu'en français.

Je suis à l'écoute des citoyens et des citoyennes de Saint-Boniface, et le message de notre gouvernement est clair : nous sommes prêts à retrousser nos manches et se mettre au travail envers la réparation et l'amélioration de notre système de santé, comme nous avons mis en évidence pendant le discours du trône.

Pour y arriver, M. l'honorable Président, les Manitobains seront appelés à travailler ensemble de façon à aller au-delà de nos différences.

Je suis de l'avis que, trop souvent, nous sommes énormément capables de varier dans nos opinions, nos origines culturelles ou nos points de vue politiques. Cependant, en tant qu'éducateur, je sais aussi que, quand nous sommes appelés à faire mieux pour le

meilleur de notre province, nous devons souvent faire appel à notre système d'éducation.

Je viens d'une grande famille d'éducateurs et de pédagogues, et j'ai toujours été impressionné par le pouvoir transformateur de l'éducation. Ayant enseigné pendant 28 ans, j'ai eu le plaisir et l'honneur d'enseigner au niveau intermédiaire, secondaire et au niveau adulte, tant en anglais qu'en français.

Des adolescents aux jeunes adultes, j'ai eu la chance d'être témoin du changement transformateur de l'éducation que l'éducation a joué dans la vie de mes élèves.

Pendant 16 ans, j'ai été coordonnateur du programme YouthBuild, ici à Winnipeg, qui visait à donner la chance à nos élèves autochtones du centre-ville d'acquérir de nouvelles connaissances dans différents métiers. C'est grâce à une approche culturelle et innovatrice en éducation que le programme YouthBuild appuie ses participants de façon à les aider à entrer sur le marché du travail.

Entre 1999 et juin 2023, le programme YouthBuild avait créé une voie vers le changement et la réussite pour plusieurs jeunes autochtones de Thompson, Portage-la-Prairie et de Winnipeg. Encore aujourd'hui, le programme sert d'exemple de comment nous pouvons, en tant que province, innover pour aller chercher la main-d'œuvre dont nous avons besoin ici même au Manitoba chez la jeunesse autochtone.

En revenant, M. l'honorable Président, à ma communauté de Saint-Boniface, je suis fière qu'elle abrite une des plus grandes concentrations de francophones de l'Ouest canadien. La prochaine génération de fiers francophones, comme celle de mes enfants, veut voir la langue française reflétée dans leur éducation, leurs services municipal, provincial et fédéral, leurs services sociaux, et leurs soins de santé. Il est important de soutenir la communauté francophone — la langue française au Manitoba. La communauté francophone du Manitoba est un engin économique puissant qui permet à notre province de faire affaire à travers la planète avec d'autres marchés émergents, comme avec les pays du continent africain.

C'est pourquoi nous avons été ravis d'entendre dans le discours du trône l'intention de notre gouvernement d'investir davantage dans l'apprentissage du français et de créer plus d'espaces réservés aux francophones. C'est également la raison pour laquelle le rétablissement d'un poste de sous-ministre au Bureau de l'éducation française est essentiel à la préservation et à la croissance du français au Manitoba. Le

Manitoba est unique en son genre au niveau du Bureau de l'éducation française, qui dessert à la fois les écoles françaises du Manitoba de la DSFM ainsi que les écoles d'immersion en langue française. Cette approche doit être valorisée dans les années à venir, et notre gouvernement en fera une priorité comme nous l'avons déjà laissé savoir.

Cela dit, M. l'honorable Président, nos établissements d'enseignement ont aussi besoin d'aide. Les parents s'inquiètent de la taille des classes et du manque de matériel pédagogique en français. Les éducateurs se sentent débordés et épuisés parce qu'ils sont constamment sollicités au-delà de leurs capacités. Nos élèves ressentent les effets de la diminution du temps passé à faire du un-à-un avec leurs éducateurs. Les élèves qui rencontrent les difficultés en classe ou des défis d'apprentissage ont besoin de plus de chances de recevoir l'aide individuelle dont ils ont besoin. C'est pourquoi, M. l'honorable président, il me fait grand plaisir de voir notre gouvernement prendre une direction qui est à l'écoute des Manitobains et des Manitobaines des quatre coins de notre belle province.

Je suis fier — je suis très fier — que le Manitoba ait élu un nouveau gouvernement autant divers que le nôtre, qui a marqué notre histoire à bien des égards. Ce qui me rend encore plus fier, c'est aussi notre diversité de compétences. Mes collègues viennent d'horizons différents : nous sommes des éducateurs, des premiers intervenants, des agents de changement, des agriculteurs, des avocats, et des fondateurs d'organisations communautaires.

Nous disposons des outils nécessaires pour relever les défis auxquels le Manitoba est confronté. C'est pourquoi je suis confiant que cette équipe sera bel et bien capable de s'attaquer de façon efficace aux grands défis de notre province de façon à améliorer la vie des Manitobains.

Si nous croyons sincèrement à une plus grande réconciliation avec nos peuples autochtones, je n'ai aucun doute que notre équipe sera en mesure de réaliser cet objectif.

D'ailleurs, M. l'honorable Président, il me fait grand plaisir que notre gouvernement présentera une loi reconnaissant, de façon honorifique, Louis Riel en tant que premier Premier ministre du Manitoba. En tant que Métis, cette loi me rend extrêmement fier et nous rappelle que nous devons continuer à travailler envers la réalisation du rêve de Louis Riel.

Un rêve, M. l'honorable Président, que Louis Riel a payé de sa vie, le 16 novembre 1885. Et ce rêve était

d'établir une société autochtone et multiculturelle au sein de laquelle tous les Canadiens auraient la chance de vivre en harmonie.

Néanmoins, M. l'honorable Président, la question se pose : avons-nous atteint le rêve de Louis Riel ? Vivons-nous en harmonie avec l'un l'autre au Manitoba ? Avons-nous tout fait pour s'assurer que chaque manitobain et manitobaine soit inclus dans le rêve de Louis Riel ? La pauvreté, le racisme, les inégalités sociales et économiques existent-ils encore au Manitoba ?

Si nous nous retrouvons encore, M. l'honorable Président, avec autant de défis, alors à qui revient la responsabilité d'agir ? Les gouvernements ? Les sociétés à but non lucratif ? Nos acteurs communautaires ? Nos chefs d'industrie ? Nos multiples communautés culturelles ? Chaque député ici présent ?

D'après moi, la réponse devrait être simple, M. l'honorable Président : la responsabilité appartient à chacun d'entre nous.

En conclusion, M. l'honorable Président, j'ai toujours été actif dans ma communauté, et constamment aux aguets de comment et quand elle a besoin de soutien. Ma priorité est de continuer à écouter et à servir les citoyens de Saint-Boniface et d'améliorer la qualité de vie des gens dans ma circonscription.

Notre Manitoba devrait répondre au rêve de Louis Riel et être une province où il fait bon de vivre avec respect et dignité, et où chaque Manitobain a sa place.

Notre gouvernement travaillera avec les Manitobains de façon à répondre aux besoins de nos familles, de nos enfants, de nos aînés et de chaque citoyen.

Les défis sont multiples, M. l'honorable Président, et la route est longue. Mais je peux vous promettre que le parcours devant nous en vaut la peine.

Merci. Thank you. Miigwech.

#### **Translation**

*Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to begin by drawing your attention to the presence of my father, Lucien Loiselle, who is with us today, and of my brother, Richard Loiselle, who is in the gallery.*

*I would also like to acknowledge the tremendous support I have received over time from my wife, Katherine, my daughter Nastassja and my daughter*

*Axelle, who have all been extremely patient with me, not only during the election campaign, but obviously throughout all the preparation period for this great adventure.*

*I would also like to thank the citizens of Saint-Boniface, who supported me in great numbers—and it is an honour to be here today, representing Saint-Boniface.*

*Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to address the House today as the member for Saint-Boniface, armed with my thoughts and words, not only in the language of Molière, but also in the native tongue of Louis Riel, the father of Manitoba. It is also a great honour for me, as the member for Saint-Boniface, to be the first to share in an inaugural address following the Speech from the Throne, and at the dawn of this new session.*

\* (15:10)

*Along with our new Premier (Mr. Kinew), the Honourable Wab Kinew, and my new fellow MLAs, I would like to take a moment to state how proud I am to be part of a historically inclusive and diverse government. Inclusion, and diversity, Mr. Speaker, are at the heart of our beautiful province's history—even if they have not always been at the forefront—or even valued, as we see today. Additionally, what is noteworthy is not only the diversity of cultures, but also the diversity of skills that prevails within our government. In my opinion, it is this diversity of skills, Mr. Speaker, and the tools at our disposal that will enable our government to rise to the challenges we are currently facing as a province.*

*As a French-speaking Métis born and raised north of St. Boniface, not far from the little fork of the Red and Seine rivers where Louis Riel himself was born, I am reminded of Louis Riel's words, Mr. Speaker, when he said: "My people will sleep for a hundred years. When they awaken, artists will be the ones who will give our population back its soul."*

*Thus Mr. Speaker, it is with a full heart that I address you today as a French-speaking Métis—storyteller, singer, joker at times, blacksmith and jig doll maker—recognizing that the Métis nation is indeed awakening, and that it is so important in life to know who you are, where you come from and where you are going.*

*For my part, I was born a very long time ago at the St. Boniface Hospital, at a time when the City of St. Boniface was still a city in its own right, and not a district of the City of Winnipeg.*

*When I was born, my parents, Lucien Loiselle and Lucienne Loiselle (née Beaudry), decided to buy a house on La Vérendrye Street, a street named after the great explorer Pierre Gauthier de Varennes, Sieur de La Vérendrye, who arrived with the French contingent at the larger Forks here in Winnipeg in 1738.*

*As you can appreciate, Mr. Speaker, our family now needed more room for a growing brood. As the youngest of three boys, I grew up with the luxury of watching my older brothers, Michel and Richard, being the first ones to blaze trails and take many risks, before embarking on my own adventures.*

*From an early age, our parents taught us the importance of doing things right. Both being educators made our home an extension of school—which probably explains why I learned to read long before I started kindergarten. Because of their love of the outdoors and nature, our parents taught us the importance of respecting the environment. It was thanks to our weekends and summers outdoors at our Beresford Lake cottage that I had the chance to learn, really get to know myself and perfect my outdoor skills, such as canoeing, swimming, fishing, open-fire cooking, shelter-building and plants and animals identification.*

*Sadly, in early September 1983, our beautiful log cabin went up in flames due to a forest fire, and we were heartbroken. But it was then that my parents taught me one of life's greatest lessons about courage and resilience. What I learned, Mr. Speaker, is that courage is the antidote to fear, and that even a little courage is always enough.*

*I also learned that, with courage, you can summon resilience, and it was thanks to resilience that we decided as a family to rebuild our beautiful cottage in the summer of 1984. It was during that summer spent as a family, rebuilding our beautiful spruce log cottage piece by piece, that I truly learned to appreciate my parents, not only as my heroes, but also for the love they shared with each other, and consequently with me and my brothers.*

*It is this abundance of love, Mr. Speaker, that has always been the common thread running through the Loiselle and Beaudry family. Our 'joie de vivre,' our family dinners followed by music and call-and-response, our grand plans, our evenings by the fire at the cottage, and the stories of my grandfather, Victor Beaudry, are the very foundation of who I am today—a proud, committed, French-speaking Métis, always ready to serve his community and take care of his family.*

*Naturally, our family has grown over the years. I met my wife Katherine in 1989 while working for Parks Canada as a blacksmith in Lower Fort Garry, and in 2003 we welcomed into the world our twin daughters, Axelle and Nastassja, who today are already university students. Life, Mr. Speaker, always goes well when love is there, no matter where home is.*

*Mr. Speaker, with love comes compassion, and the community of St. Boniface has a long history of caring and compassion. Arriving on the banks of the Red River in 1844, the Grey Nuns founded Western Canada's first hospital in 1871. With just four beds, the St. Boniface hospital was a place of kindness and care for the French-speaking Métis community.*

*I would also like to note here that I was born at the St. Boniface Hospital—but not in 1871.*

*St. Boniface Hospital remains concrete evidence of our long history of resilience and compassion for our families, our friends, our neighbours—just as we also strive to be resilient in times of loss, change and crisis. Throughout St. Boniface's history, our resolve and our resilience have been tested, as during the great flood of 1950. But we have always emerged victorious.*

*Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic once again put St. Boniface to the test. The St. Boniface Hospital was overwhelmed by multiple outbreaks of COVID. Hospital units were understaffed, critical beds were overcrowded, and vital surgeries were cancelled. This pandemic was one of the catalysts for my involvement in politics. Witnessing the new challenges before us and a growing distrust of government by some Manitobans, I began to worry about our children, our families, our schools, our health care, and our communities.*

*Seeing more and more Manitobans experiencing great hardship was very upsetting to me during the pandemic. I also struggled as a teacher and father trying to understand how, and why, the provincial government of the day seemed unable to respond to Manitobans' needs, especially in health care.*

*The pandemic was a dark period in our history, and it tested many of us. Nevertheless, the people of St. Boniface were able to persevere, despite the absence of government assistance in many areas. Of course, many communities also faced challenges during the pandemic, and it is in these moments of darkness that we are reminded that we are ultimately more alike than we think.*

\* (15:20)

*During my campaign, I had the pleasure of meeting many St. Boniface citizens through door-to-door canvassing and a number of community events. It is no surprise, Mr. Speaker, that one of the biggest issues identified by St. Boniface voters was access to health care. Our health care system—and therefore Manitobans—has been suffering for far too long. While the pandemic worsened our health care system by putting it to the test, the past seven years of health care cuts are what has exacerbated this crisis.*

*It is clear that the citizens of St. Boniface are very concerned about health care, and they are tired of seeing our system continuously deteriorating. To be a vibrant and healthy community, we need reliable health care for our families, our children, and our seniors.*

*Mr. Speaker, as the MLA for St. Boniface, it is my intention to continue to take care of my community. This means more work in health care, expanding programs and improving access to health services—in both English and French.*

*I am listening to the people of St. Boniface, and our government's message is clear: we are ready to roll up our sleeves and get to work fixing and improving our health care system, as we highlighted during the Speech from the Throne.*

*To achieve this, Mr. Speaker, Manitobans will be called upon to work together to overcome our differences.*

*I think that, all too often, we give in to our profound capacity to differ in opinions, cultural backgrounds or political views. However, as an educator, I also know that, when called upon to do better for the best of our province, we must often call upon our education system.*

*I come from a large family of educators and pedagogues, and I have always been impressed by the transformative power of education. Having taught for 28 years, I have had the pleasure and honour of teaching at the intermediate, secondary and adult levels, in both English and French.*

*From teenagers to young adults, I have been fortunate to witness the transformative change education has played in the lives of my students.*

*For 16 years, I was coordinator of the YouthBuild program here in Winnipeg—a program designed to give our inner-city indigenous students the chance to learn new skills in a variety of trades. Through an innovative and culturally appropriate approach to*

education, the YouthBuild program supports its participants in entering the workforce.

Between 1999 and June 2023, the YouthBuild program created a path to change and success for many indigenous youths in Thompson, Portage la Prairie and Winnipeg. To this day, the program serves as an example of how we, as a province, can innovate to find the workforce we need right here in Manitoba, among indigenous youth.

Mr. Speaker, circling back to my community of St. Boniface, I am proud that it is home to one of the largest concentrations of Francophones in Western Canada. The next generation of proud Francophones, like my children, wants to see the French language reflected in their education, the municipal, provincial and federal services they use, as well as in social services and health care. It is important to support the Francophone community and the French language in Manitoba. Manitoba's Francophone community is a powerful economic engine that enables our province to do business across the globe with other emerging markets, such as the countries of the African continent.

That is why we were delighted to hear in the Speech from the Throne of our government's intention to invest more in French education and to create more spaces reserved for Francophones. This is also why the re-establishment of a Deputy Minister position in the Bureau de l'éducation française is essential to the preservation and growth of French in Manitoba. Manitoba is unique in terms of the Bureau de l'éducation française, which serves both the DSFM's French schools and French immersion schools in Manitoba. This approach must be valued in the years to come, and our government will make it a priority, as we have already indicated.

That said, Mr. Speaker, our educational institutions also need help. Parents are worried about class sizes and the lack of French-language teaching materials. Educators feel overwhelmed and exhausted because they are constantly stretched beyond capacity. Our students are feeling the effects of reduced one-on-one time with their educators. Students with school-related difficulties or learning challenges need more opportunities to receive the one-on-one help they need. That is why, Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to see our government taking a direction that listens to Manitobans from every corner of our beautiful province.

I am proud—very proud—that Manitoba has elected a new government as diverse as ours—a government that

made history in so many ways. What makes me even prouder is our diversity of skills. My colleagues come from different backgrounds: we are educators, first responders, change agents, farmers, lawyers, and founders of community organizations.

We have the tools to meet the challenges facing Manitoba. That is why I am confident that this team will be able to effectively tackle our province's major challenges in a way that will improve the lives of Manitobans.

If we sincerely believe in true reconciliation with our indigenous peoples, I have no doubt that our team will be able to achieve this goal.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, I am delighted that our government will be introducing legislation to honour Louis Riel as Manitoba's first Premier. As a Métis, this legislation makes me extremely proud, and it reminds us that we must continue to work towards the realization of Louis Riel's dream.

A dream, Mr. Speaker, that Louis Riel paid for with his life on November 16, 1885. And that dream was to establish an indigenous and multicultural society in which all Canadians would have the opportunity to live in harmony.

Nevertheless, Mr. Speaker, the question remains: have we achieved Louis Riel's dream? Are we living in harmony with each other in Manitoba? Have we done everything to ensure that every Manitoban is included in Louis Riel's dream? Do poverty, racism, social and economic inequalities still exist in Manitoba?

Mr. Speaker, if we still face so many challenges, then whose responsibility is it to act? Governments? Non-profit corporations? Our community leaders? Our industry leaders? Our many cultural communities? Every single MLA in this room?

To me, the answer should be simple, Mr. Speaker: it is up to each and every one of us.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I have always been active in my community, and constantly checking how and when it needs support. My priority is to continue to listen to and serve the citizens of St. Boniface, and to improve the quality of life in my riding.

Our Manitoba should live up to Louis Riel's dream and be a province where one can live with respect and dignity, and where every Manitoban has a place.

*Our government will work with Manitobans to meet the needs of our families, our children, our seniors, and every citizen.*

*The challenges are many, Mr. Speaker, and the road ahead is long. But I can promise you that the journey ahead will be well worth it.*

*Thank you. Merci. Miigwech.*

**MLA Billie Cross (Seine River):** Good afternoon, Honourable Deputy Speaker, I want to congratulate you on your new role in the House.

It feels amazing to be here with you all today, and I'm so grateful to have a place in the Legislature to represent the beautiful community that is the Seine River constituency. I want to take a moment to thank the Lieutenant-Governor for her words yesterday. I'm excited for the essential work we will achieve as the new government of Manitoba.

I want to congratulate all the newly elected and re-elected members of the Legislature. I am so fortunate to be supported by so many amazing people, from so many places. I want to begin by thanking my parents, Bill and Lorna Mirka; my sister, Jeannie Penney; brother-in-law, Matthew Penney; and nephew, Nolan. I'm grateful for the love and support of my husband, Stephen Cross, and our children: Morgan Sullivan, Preslie Cross and Steven Cross, and my grandson Hendrix Reimer.

\* (15:30)

I need to thank the many volunteers who worked tirelessly to help me secure this seat. I would like to acknowledge Matt McLean, Kalen Leib, Nathan [phonetic] White, Ashley McKague, Joanne and Peter Bjornson, Kyle McLean, Michael Prokipchuk, Michael Honer, Brian Gilchrest, Keith Dyck, Steve Gajerski, Mariah Meilleur, Rachel and Shelley Kowalchuk, April and Jeremy Peterson, Rowen Keagan and the many other volunteers who helped in our success.

I'm also thankful to my friends from the MMF women's secretariat who are here with me today up in the gallery, especially minister Anita Campbell and Adrienne Carriere.

The Seine River constituency includes both St. Norbert and River Park South. Some may know that South St. Vital and St. Norbert were Métis settlements from as early as 1822. In fact, Louis Riel's Red River resistance is strongly connected to my constituency. In mid-October of 1869, the Métis used St. Norbert as one of their meeting spots to discuss the

future of Manitoba. Here they created the national Métis council and began discussions for the provisional government.

A few weeks later, a group of about 40 men created a three-foot barrier at the north side of the La Salle River crossing on the Pembina Trail into St. Norbert, blocking the road. This successfully prevented the Lieutenant Governor McDougall and his land surveyors from entering our territory.

As a Métis woman, this history is an essential point of pride to me and to many others who feel deeply connected to our shared history. Not only is my Métis identity very important to me, but Métis history is deeply linked to the cultural roots of Seine River. This history comes to mind as we celebrate the election of the first First Nation Premier in Manitoba. Much of my work as an Indigenous education teacher was to advocate for the truth to be taught in every classroom I visited. The truth is essential for reconciliation efforts to be meaningful, impactful and transformative.

In my role as the newly elected member for Seine River, I want to be a truth-teller in this Legislature. Many Métis families share a common story: we were made to feel ashamed and afraid to be Métis, because many Canadians considered our hero, and Manitoba's founding father, Louis Riel, an outlaw. It is poignant that one of the first actions of this government will be to recognize Louis Riel as the first premier of Manitoba.

Without truth, there is no reconciliation. Premier Kinew is acknowledging what Métis people have always known. On the Métis side of my family, my maternal grandmother, Mary Peterson, never felt like she could openly share her Métis heritage. She instructed us to keep that part of our identity a secret. She was concerned that we would experience the racism and marginalization that she had been exposed to her entire life. It saddens me that she never felt a sense of pride in her Métis identity and that her voice was silenced.

She believed the Métis were the forgotten people that no one cared about, and I wish she was here today to see how much things have changed. She was always with me in my heart and in my words as I educated teachers and students about the true history of Canada. She will be with me on this journey, and I intend to always be the voice that she didn't have.

This is why I'm so passionate about the truth being spoken today, so that all Manitobans, young and

old, feel a sense of belonging and pride in their identities. My Ukrainian identity from my father's side is also important to me. My paternal grandfather and great-grandfather were Ukrainian immigrants who settled in Winnipeg, and like my Métis family, they also experienced discrimination and exclusion. Today, I'm fortunate to proudly and openly declare my Métis-Ukrainian identity, both being essential in my advocacy work for inclusion and belonging.

In my childhood I struggled with exclusion. I experienced, and continue to experience, people making me feel as though I don't belong. Even now, as far as I am removed from schoolyard bullies, I find that there are still bullies out there who want to exclude or shame others. Women in every field, particularly in leadership roles in the political spectrum, are always held to a different standard. The first line of attack is always centred around appearance or clothing. Why not discuss and challenge our policies and our ideas?

As often taught in the classroom, one's appearance or identity should never determine someone's personal worth.

I once thought of people's exclusion of me determined my ability to lead. So I am proud to say, I rose above that. I am humbled to serve the Seine River constituency under an NDP government that emphasizes belonging and togetherness. I want to encourage all the women in this Chamber, and those that aspire to be here, to never let others' perceptions and judgments stop you from doing what you want to do.

I also found belonging through sport and sports leadership. I was lucky to be mentored by amazing teachers and coaches who encouraged me to pay it forward by coaching, refereeing and organizing youth sports. I began coaching at 15 years old and continued to volunteer up until a few years ago, when my own children started playing at a higher level. By then, I preferred to be their biggest fan in the stands.

Volunteering in my kids' sports taught me a lot about representing communities and about the importance of working together as a team, regardless of your role as a coach, player or organizer. It's not unlike the team I am a part of in this new arena. I think we can all play well on a team that is accepting, welcoming and celebratory of differences as our NDP team is.

As an educator, I'm very passionate about access to education and removing barriers that hinder student success. My journey to my career as an Indigenous education teacher began as a lunch supervisor and a

PAC volunteer. This led to my employment as an educational assistant. I was encouraged to apply to an access program at the University of Winnipeg for Indigenous educational assistants to pursue a degree in education. The CATEP program, I should add, was developed under the NDP government at the time.

Being the first person in my family to go to university, I attended classes in the evenings and on Saturdays during the fall and winter months, and full time during the spring and summer months for five years. I did this while raising three children, working full time as an EA, running a small side business to pay for my degree and coaching, watching and organizing my kids' sports.

Entering that program was difficult. But it quickly became a place of belonging and a place where I could truly embrace my identity.

As an Indigenous educator, a large part of my work each September centred around Orange Shirt Day. It is amazing to see how far we have come and how educators have incorporated this day into their curriculum. However, this work must go beyond what educators can do in a classroom for one day. These truths must be taught to everyone in Canada, children and adults alike.

It's a historical moment for reconciliation when the Throne Speech recognizes September 30th as a provincial statutory holiday and the appointment of an assistant deputy minister for Indigenous excellence. This will ensure there is leadership advocating for the truth to be taught in every classroom. These measures will be the beginning of our journey towards truth and reconciliation.

As an Indigenous education teacher for the Louis Riel School Division, I focused on bringing a feeling of inclusion into each school I worked with. I wanted Indigenous students to see themselves represented at the front of the classroom and in the curriculum being taught. My work was, and continues to be, about speaking the truth and building communities based on this fundamental principle.

What has guided me for so long will now inform my approach to governance. I intend to lead with truth and conviction within myself and in this place.

While I was hard-working and determined from a young age, at 19, I aspired to be a politician. But I didn't think I was fit for politics. I assumed I had to have an extensive education from a prestigious institution or that I needed to attend law school, both of which are inaccessible paths for many of us.

I'm thankful to the educators who stepped up before me, that showed me that there is a vast experience and skills needed to represent a community. Witnessing both the honourable minister for Point Douglas and the honourable minister for Transcona pursue political careers inspired me to follow in their footsteps.

\* (15:40)

I recall speaking with the honourable minister for Point Douglas after she was elected to ask what it was like to pursue a political career as an educator.

Shortly after, with her encouragement, I threw my hat in the ring and worked to be nominated as the candidate, and eventually elected as the member for Seine River.

I am grateful for the support I've had from my parents to get where I am today. My family always encouraged hard work and dedication. My mother instilled a sense of confidence and independence in us by always encouraging my sister and I to chase our dreams.

She continues to frequently remind us that we can do anything we put our minds to, and I take that to heart in thanking my constituency for trusting me to represent them.

My father went to school at 19 to become a Red Seal bricklayer while supporting a young family. His dedication to my family demonstrated an unwavering work ethic and integrity that I bring with me to this office.

Another pursuit of mine is our small family business. At the beginning of the pandemic, we opened our online butcher shop. I understand what business owners have gone through the past few years and the pandemic's effect on all of us.

I want to represent the small business owners' perspective from across Manitoba as the member for Seine River. We must value small business owners in Manitoba rather than support out-of-province billionaires. Small businesses are essential to Manitoba's economy and our overall sense of community wellness.

By now, you've probably picked up on the key theme of belonging in my speech today, an essential principle moving forward as we pave a new path for Manitoba. It's what's guided me during my days with the Louis Riel School Division where one of the strategic priorities was belonging.

For the schools, educators and staff in LRSD, it meant ensuring every person in the school division and community was cared for, felt loved and understood.

For the government, belonging means that every Manitoban feels heard, seen, and well-represented in the Legislature.

In stark contrast, the Opposition ran a campaign emphasizing division and exclusion. Their campaign was harmful to members of the Indigenous and 2SLGBTQIA+ communities, and instilled fear and heartache into the lives of Manitobans.

They were an anti-worker government that benefited out-of-province billionaires, and they counted on Manitobans being afraid of change and believing that when you lift one group up, then it must be at the expense of another.

I am grateful that Manitobans proved the opposition wrong; that Manitoba is in fact a province of belonging, not exclusion, and that together we are better.

We will be a government of belonging for all Manitobans. I intend to be a strong voice for Seine River constituents in the Legislature, ensuring their needs are heard and met.

Under the former PC government, Seine River constituents suffered the loss of the Victoria hospital ER in 2017. The PCs cut ICU beds, causing hallway medicine to surge in the province.

They also attacked workers like nurses. Many were forced to choose between a job with mandated overtime and being a parent. This was in addition to the staffing issues and burnt-out–burnout felt by all medical professionals.

I know Premier Kinew and the Manitoba NDP government will do better.

When I discuss truth telling and education in government, I am talking about speaking the truth about residential schools, missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and two-spirit persons, and the history and intent of colonization in this country.

The previous government created division among Manitobans with inaccuracies surrounding our province's and country's history. The NDP government will be one of truth telling and ensure that reconciliation efforts are actionable, relevant and timely.

As I have said–

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. Order. Members should refer to other members by their portfolio or constituency, and not by their name, including the Premier.

**MLA Cross:** Thank you.

As I have said, I am an educator, and our education system is the key to building a better Manitoba.

The previous government was bent on underfunding education, meaning fewer teachers and educational assistants, larger class sizes and less student support.

We saw school divisions forced to cut programs and reduce staff to operate within budget constraints.

As a newly elected government, I know the NDP will do better to value our education systems, including students, EAs, staff and educators.

We have much work ahead of us, but implementing programs like a K-to-12 nutrition program is the first of many steps to ensure kids can get ahead in their education.

We've heard from parents and educators that they want smaller class sizes and more support. Hiring more teachers and EAs is one of our top priorities to ensure that children across Manitoba can reach their full potential.

In conclusion, I want to re-emphasize the theme of belonging. I remember that young girl, who was bullied in elementary school, being passionate about politics but thinking I didn't fit the bill when it came to being a politician.

I now have the skills, passion and drive to represent the Seine River constituency in the Legislature. As my favourite musician, Elvis Presley, sang: there's no job too immense when you got confidence.

I will be a truth teller, an advocate for inclusion in the Legislature. We must become a society where we don't leave anyone behind.

And that's who we are and will continue to be as Manitoba's government.

Many voices have been silenced or were made to feel like they don't belong. Oftentimes, those voices belong to the truth tellers. The truth is a difficult thing to decipher these days and is not always received positively. But that is exactly why it is so important to always speak sincerely, accurately and genuinely.

Our team has inspired so many people with inclusiveness and diversity in our campaign and within our caucus.

I want to emphasize that true reconciliation and systemic change comes when those in leadership positions strive to uplift front-line voices.

I hope everyone in this House will demonstrate leadership that uplifts the voices that have been silenced or ignored and welcomes those who have felt like they never belonged.

Miigwech, merci, thank you.

### Introduction of Guests

**The Deputy Speaker:** I would like to draw members' attention to the loge to my left where we have today Nancy Allan, the former member for St. Vital.

On behalf of all the members, we welcome you back to the Legislative Assembly.

### House Business

**Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Government House Leader):** Honourable acting–Deputy Speaker, let's try this again.

Could you please canvass the House for leave to waive rule 119 for the duration of the 43rd Legislature to allow the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, either by written approval from the chairperson and vice-chairperson, or by leave of the committee, to call witnesses it deems appropriate, in addition to ministers, deputy ministers, or the chief executive officer of a Crown Corporation.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is there leave to waive rule 119 for the duration of the 43rd Legislature to allow the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, either by written approval from the chairperson and vice-chairperson, or by leave of the committee, to call witnesses it deems appropriate in addition to ministers, deputy ministers, or the chief executive officer of a Crown Corporation? *[Agreed]*

\* \* \*

**Ms. Heather Stefanson (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, welcome to your role and welcome to the Manitoba Legislature.

It's a great honour to rise as a leader of the—as the Leader of the Official Opposition to provide my response to the Throne Speech.

I can tell you that it is always an honour to stand in this House and discuss matters of importance to Manitobans.

I want to first of all start by thanking Myrna Driedger, our outgoing Speaker, who presided over unprecedented legislative sittings during very, very difficult times in the Manitoba Legislature.

\* (15:50)

Myrna was first elected Speaker of the Legislative Assembly by her peers in this Chamber on May 16th, 2016, and, again, for a second term on September 30th, 2019. Her approach to the role and grace in her duties will be remembered, and we will thank her for her service to Manitobans.

I also want to welcome the new Speaker to his role and trust he will serve dutifully with wisdom and prudence in the non-partisan spirit in which he was elected. I wish him congratulations on his new role.

I also want to thank the people of Tuxedo. I thank them for entrusting me—in me once again with the honour and responsibility of representing them here in the Manitoba Legislature.

Our primary role in this Chamber as an MLA is to—representing the people who elect us to come here and to represent them. I know we all take that role very seriously in this Chamber and on this side of the House, I'm joined by 10 new MLAs full of energy and ideas who have rejuvenated our caucus, as well as the Manitoba Legislature.

Members will notice these new members in important shadow Cabinet positions. They have considerable experience across various sectors, and I have every confidence that they will perform admirably in their new duties.

And opposite, there are more new members, some in Cabinet positions themselves. I want to welcome all new MLAs to the Chamber. Your constituents placed faith in you, and I'm looking forward to working with each and every one of you as colleagues in this Chamber.

And welcome back to returning MLAs, most assuming new roles as well.

Whether on this side of the House or opposite, we all have responsibilities to Manitobans. We will 'apport'—approach important issues from different angles, but there is one thing that I think we all have in common: we all want what is in the best interest for all Manitobans.

Thank you to the outgoing Clerk, Patricia Chaychuk, who we count among the many great women to have blazed a trail in Manitoba's Legislature. Patricia was appointed as the first woman Clerk of the Manitoba Legislative Assembly in January of 2000 and retired this past August. She was part of our own recent group of five women leaders in government, including the Lieutenant Governor; myself at the time as premier; Myrna Driedger, of course, as Speaker; the clerk of Executive Council, Kathy Gerrard [*phonetic*]; as well as Patricia Chaychuk as the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly. It was such an honour to work with each and every one of those outstanding women in our province.

Patricia did great work as Clerk of the Assembly, and outside of the Assembly, she was one of the biggest and most avid fans of the Winnipeg Jets and, of course, the Blue Bombers. And I want to extend my congratulations to Patricia on her well-deserved retirement and thank her on behalf of all Manitobans for leaving an indelible mark on our history and inspiring generations of women to come.

I wish to also welcome and congratulate Rick Yarish in his soon-to-be role, but—officially soon-to-be-role, but I think it's public—in assuming the responsibilities, eventually, as Clerk. I—Rick has served as an assistant 'anvisor' to this Assembly for 23 years. I can remember when I first started; we started around the same time. His experience and leadership will serve members well in their roles.

Rick has also been known to fill in and—in other duties, as well, on occasion playing the piano and guitar and singing for us on special occasions.

So, Rick, thank you for your extended roles, as well, and congratulations on your new role.

I want to also welcome and thank all of the clerks, the Sergeant-at-Arms, the table officers, the pages, the interns and the rest of the Assembly—the Legislative Assembly staff for their hard work behind the scenes in ensuring the Assembly runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. On behalf of all of us, we thank you for your service to Manitobans.

Now, the Throne Speech. Our responsibility here in this House is to leave the next generation of Manitobans, and their families and businesses, better off than when we found them. I believe we all—we have all worked to accomplish this over the last seven years, and I've watched members do their jobs in this House.

But the past four years have been very difficult and challenging years for Manitobans. We faced once-in-a-generation events that has driven up the cost of living, tested the limits of our health-care system and made our streets, in many cases, less safe.

On this side of the House, we have a profound sense of duty and responsibility to stand up, united as an opposition, and hold this new government accountable for their decisions and the way they intend to leave things for our next generation.

What we saw from the NDP in the election, and what we heard yesterday in the Throne Speech, is the usual NDP spending plan. No consideration of the big picture. No consideration of the average family and business. And no consideration of how to pay for their \$3 billion worth of promises.

The NDP laid out a very aggressive, very expensive agenda in the election. Again, more than \$3 billion in promises and commitments to Manitobans. Whose pockets do they think that money comes from? Where does that money come from? There is going to be very difficult decisions that this government is going to have to make over the course of the next four years, and we, in opposition, will make sure that we hold them to account in each and every one of those decisions.

We see a government that plans to follow storied NDP tradition of taking a reckless approach to Manitoba's economy and our finances and, ultimately, our stability for the future of our province.

It's easy to call everything a crisis when you're in opposition, but when you're Premier, and you're in government, it's a challenge and it's part of the job that you are responsible for. This new government will learn very quickly that it's easy to make big promises but another matter to deliver on those very promises. We'll be watching to see how they deliver on those promises.

Over the coming months, we will—we intend to hold this government to account, not just for what they do today, not just for what they do tomorrow, but for what they did in the past and what they have said in the past.

And we're going to remind Manitobans of what the government did because we know this NDP Premier (Mr. Kinew) is going to take credit for things we as Progressive Conservatives implemented. And, in fact, they have already started to do that, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

It's important Manitobans know this as the things come up over the course of the next few years. It's important, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that they know every single time that the NDP take credit for something that all of them voted against.

In fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they did that just last week when they made an announcement about surgeries at Concordia Hospital. The week before that, they made an announcement about 24-7 shelters. It's important for Manitobans to know that it was a PC government that put forward the funding for these initiatives, and that it was the NDP opposition that voted against them all.

\* (16:00)

Manitobans across the province work hard every single day to make ends meet. They want a stable economy where the cost of living is affordable and saving for the future is possible. No party in the history of Manitoba has put more money back in the pockets of Manitoba families than Progressive Conservatives.

We got the job done for Manitobans with \$1.8 billion in tax savings. That's \$5,500 per Manitoba family during our mandates. We reduced the PST back down to 7 per cent, saving Manitoba families more than \$500 per year after the previous NDP government jacked up the PST on the backs of hard-working Manitobans.

We indexed the basic personal amount to inflation, increased the exemption for income taxes to \$15,000, taking more than 75,000 low-income Manitobans off the tax roll.

#### *The Speaker in the Chair*

The real question for this new NDP government is: will they continue this or will they make life less affordable for Manitobans?

We need only look to the past to know what to expect in a future of an NDP government: billions of dollars in budget deficits and \$23 billion in Hydro debt increases, raising the PST to 8 per cent after promising they wouldn't, taking \$325 million out of the pockets of Manitobans. That was on top of expanding the PST, Honourable Speaker, to more goods and services like insurance and wills and haircuts.

And that was, in fact, on top of the—of expanding the PST on death taxes and probate fees and widows grieving and grieving families, and that's what they did to those families. That was on top of freezing EIA

rates for 17 years. Manitobans saw \$1 billion in new taxes under the last NDP government. That's their record. And given all the campaign promises—the more than 3 billion promises to Manitobans—we know that they will increase taxes on the backs of Manitobans, making life less affordable. Shame on them.

So when we came to—when we came into government, we were focused on fixing the NDP's mess, balance the budget and restore Manitoba's credit rating. It was tough, but it was necessary work. We balanced the budget twice, first in 2019 and then again in 2022 and posted a \$270-million surplus in the province of Manitoba in 2022.

We built an A-plus credit rating to show the world that Manitoba was a safe place and a great place to invest, a stable place to create jobs and opportunities for the future of their families in this beautiful province of ours. We turned Manitoba into the third-fastest growing economy in Canada. Today, more Manitobans are working than ever before. Labour income is up, exports are up, our manufacturing and retail sales are up, and the government is seeing record revenues.

Our protein strategy was put to work, attracting \$1.5 billion in new ag investments and creating 1,550 new jobs. Our critical minerals strategy brought record levels of exploration, spending \$170 million last year alone, Honourable Speaker.

We opened Manitoba's first-ever potash mine near Russell, a proud moment in our province's history, and we jumped 18 spots in global mining rankings after years of NDP neglect chased away investments and doomed our mines in northern Manitoba to closure.

Our life sciences strategy is supported by Manitoba's fourth largest industry, producing \$5.2 billion in GDP and exports, and employing 14,000 Manitobans.

We established the economic development board, which laid the groundwork to attract over \$24 billion in new capital investments, generate \$3 billion in new tax revenues, create thousands of new jobs and put Manitoba on a steady path towards finally becoming a have province.

And we put \$100 million into a new Manitoba first venture capital fund to help Manitoba businesses access capital at stages of growth.

And we signed historic partnerships with seven First Nations to share the wealth from our forests and

improve the economic and social well-being of Indigenous communities.

It was our PC government that has put Manitoba back on the road to economic prosperity. We have left the government in sound financial shape, a far cry from how we inherit it from the previous NDP government—almost \$1 billion in deficit when we inherited that from the NDP.

We will make sure, as an official opposition, that we hold this NDP government to account for every decision that they make, and that Manitobans are aware of the consequences of NDP mismanagement. Because nobody wants to go back to the fiscal mess left behind by an NDP government.

So I say all this today, Honourable Speaker, because it's important that Manitobans know what we have left for this government. And I can tell you that we have left them a sound—in a sound fiscal position, unlike what we inherited from them. And we don't want to go back to ballooning billion-dollar deficits and billion-dollar new taxes; Manitoba's first credit rating downgrade in 30 years, which drove up costs that Manitobans had to service—pay to service the debt; raising PST without holding a referendum that was required by law.

That was the previous government, and this is all indicative of what we can expect from this NDP government this time. This is what they did in the past. They said they wouldn't raise taxes; now we know what they did, and we know what to expect in the future.

But we will continue to hold them to account, because we want to make sure that there isn't the highest unemployment rate in the country, and especially for northern Manitoba. When we took over, a 35 per cent unemployment rate in northern Manitoba. For 17 years the NDP broke promise after promise and failed to deliver result after result before the PCs were elected to clean up their mess and get the province back on track.

After putting Manitoba on steady footing, what was the first order of business of this new NDP government? Shutting down the work of the economic development board. On one hand, the NDP says they're going to create jobs; on the other, they're shutting out the very businesses wanting to invest in our province and create those jobs.

Investors and partners are sitting on the sidelines, wondering if it's a smart idea to invest in a province that just closed the door on business. Investment

creates jobs, but NDP action sent a signal to investments—to investors: sorry, all your good ideas, all your capital, they aren't welcome here in Manitoba.

When investors have no confidence in this NDP government, no certainty from this government, they will take their money elsewhere. They'll take it to Alberta—and someone I know just mentioned Saskatchewan, too—and, in fact, they'll go south of the border as well, because we saw it happen before, and we know that we'll see it again.

\* (16:10)

NDP actions risk Manitoba losing its competitive advantage and very quickly. And if this is what, again, they've done to Manitoba in two months, imagine the damage they will do in four years. Our opposition PC team will be here to hold them to account every step of the way.

Most members will agree Manitobans want to see more investments in priority areas, none more important than health care. Over the last seven dear—seven years, we did just that. Health-care funding was increased by 23 per cent since 2016, and this year's budget took a big leap forward with historic \$7.9 billion in health investments.

We exceeded our pledge to add 400 nursing seats at schools across the province. We led the provinces in demanding the federal government to pay its fair share on health funding, and we put a \$3-billion capital plan in motion to build state-of-the-art hospitals all across the province. PCs value Manitoba's doctors and nurses. It's important to listen, partner and work together. That's how the Diagnostic and Surgical Recovery Task Force cleared more than 85,000 procedures, significantly reducing and eliminating many of the backlogs.

And that's how we have approved regulation changes, credential—international—credentialing international nurses faster, how we recruited 300 health-care workers from the Philippines, and how we launched a plan to recruit 150 new family doctors to Manitoba. The NDP voted against all of this. And after the PCs inherited the NDP broken system in 2016 with the 'wert'—worst wait times in the country, we put together a capital plan, a strategy, to ensure that we move forward in health care.

Now, these are all the things, of course, the capital plan, so things like the new hospitals in Portage la Prairie and Neepawa; new—a St. Boniface ER redevelopment; 20 new ICU beds at Grace Hospital; hospital expansions at Selkirk and Steinbach,

Interlake, Winkler; and western CancerCare; the OR at Concordia, which they've already started to take credit for.

These are all things, you mark my words, that the NDP are going to try and take credit for when they go to all the ribbon cuttings that will take place in the next four years, and every single one of them, they voted against. We will remind Manitobans that they voted against them.

So, Honourable Speaker, there are massive challenges ahead for Manitoba, and this NDP government has set extraordinary expectations. Balancing the budget, keeping a good credit rating, creating and delivering innovative services to serve Manitobans, that's hard work. This government will be thrown curve balls. Those can come at any time, just as we saw in 2020 with both a global health crisis and a financial crisis. The NDP followed those up with \$3 billion worth of commitments in the election, and we will be holding the government to account to make sure that they follow through on those commitments.

But we still don't see a plan from this government. Manitobans still have few details from this government. How do they plan to pay for each and every one of the \$3 billion worth of commitments that they made? They said they won't raise taxes or make cuts, so it's NDP math again, where it doesn't make sense and no one—and it doesn't add up; that is NDP math.

So this leaves me for a prediction. In four years, Manitoba's credit rating will be in jeopardy. There won't be a \$270-million surplus, I can guarantee that. There won't be a plan to keep taxes low, to attract good investment and grow the economy with good jobs for families in all corners of this beautiful province of ours. In four years the NDP will go back to voters. They'll be blaming others for the—for their failures and refusing to act like a government. They'll be at the doors asking Manitobans for more money and more trust so they can pay twice the cost for half the services.

Manitobans have every reason to doubt the NDP's sincerity and their ability to deliver on their provinces—or on their promises.

Just this month, the Premier (Mr. Kinew) pulled a bait-and-switch after he went on national television demanding Ottawa scrap the carbon tax on home heating for Manitobans. And then he couldn't be bothered to sign a letter to the Prime Minister to follow up and make sure that that happens.

This NDP Premier, it appears, will say one thing to Manitobans when it comes to—when the cameras are rolling, and he will do another when nobody is watching. That will be the NDP's track record, and on this side of the House we will be watching.

And that's why I move, seconded by the member for Midland (Mrs. Stone),

THAT the motion be amended by adding at the end of the following words—by adding at the end the following words:

But this House regrets that the provincial government has:

- (a) failed to outline how the provincial government will make life more affordable in the long term for Manitobans struggling to make ends meet; and
  - (b) omitted to tax relief for small businesses in Manitoba; and
  - (c) committed to making Manitoba a maritime province without committing to fighting for the same carbon tax exemptions afforded to such provinces; and
  - (d) abandoned plans from the previous provincial government to build new schools to accommodate a growing student population in the K-to-12 system; and
  - (e) abandoned plans to deliver 23,000 child-care spaces to Manitoba's child-care system; and
  - (f) neglected to detail the specific measures that will be taken to improve retention and recruitment of educators in Manitoba; and
  - (g) refused to address immigration or Manitoba's population in any substantial manner; and
  - (h) rejected much-needed upgrades to hospital projects across the province, including HSC, due to political ideology at the cost of Manitoba patients; and
  - (i) neglected to detail the specific measures that will be taken to improve retention and recruitment of health-care workers in Manitoba; and
  - (j) disbanded the diagnostic and surgical recovery task force which provided over 85,000 Manitobans with the care they needed with no plan to help Manitobans waiting in pay—pain; and
  - (k) failed to mention how the provincial government will serve Manitobans waiting for surgical and diagnostic procedures in the short term; and
  - (l) abandoned six communities that were due to benefit from the construction of new personal-care homes; and
  - (m) failed to address the need for treatment spaces or recovery-oriented care for people struggling with addictions; and
  - (n) disrespected Manitobans—disrespected Manitoba seniors and those suffering from addictions by disbanding the departments dedicated to seniors, mental health and community wellness; and
  - (o) failed to mention how the provincial government will create new affordable and social housing units that are desperately needed amidst a housing shortage; and
  - (p) failed to commit to any meaningful action or investments in community art, culture and non-profit and heritage projects or groups; and
  - (q) spurned Manitobans who appreciate and enjoy provincial parks and the recreational opportunities and precious ecosystems they hold dear; and
  - (r) neglected to present a plan to maintain the positive momentum of Manitoba's tourism sector, which contributes over \$1 billion to Manitoba's GDP; and
  - (s) signalled a transition away from a positive plan to develop Manitoba's natural resource economy that was attracting record investments in—record investment in the province; and
  - (t) failed to mention the important role that mining and mineral development play in developing Manitoba's provincial economy; and
- \* (16:20)
- (u) failed to denounce the previous position taken by NDP members that policing should be defunded; and
  - (v) neglected to address the revolving door of catch and release through bail reform; and

- (w) disbanded the economic development board and put billions of dollars in investment and thousands of jobs at risk; and
- (x) jeopardized financial sustainability of Manitoba Hydro by committing to freeze hydro rates; and
- (y) ignored agricultural producers and the agriculture industry, which represents nearly 10 per cent of Manitoba's GDP; and
- (z) failed to commit to continuing the five-year, \$500-million annual infrastructure budget.

As a consequence of these and many other failings, the provincial government has thereby lost the trust and confidence of the people of Manitoba and this House.

**The Speaker:** Is there leave to consider the amendment as written? [*Agreed*]

*THAT the motion be amended by adding at the end the following words:*

*But this House regrets that the Provincial Government has:*

- (a) *failed to outline how the Provincial Government will make life more affordable in the long term for Manitobans struggling to make ends meet; and*
- (b) *omitted tax relief for small businesses in Manitoba; and*
- (c) *committed to making Manitoba a Maritime province without committing to fighting for the same carbon tax exemptions afforded to such provinces; and*
- (d) *abandoned plans from the previous Provincial Government to build new schools to accommodate a growing student population in the K-12 system; and*
- (e) *abandoned plans to deliver 23,000 childcare spaces to Manitoba's childcare system; and*
- (f) *neglected to detail the specific measures that will be taken to improve retention and recruitment of educators in Manitoba; and*
- (g) *refused to address immigration or Manitoba's population in any substantial manner; and*
- (h) *rejected much-needed upgrades to hospital projects across the province including HSC due to political ideology at the cost of Manitoba patients; and*
- (i) *neglected to detail the specific measures that will be taken to improve retention and recruitment of health care workers in Manitoba; and*
- (j) *disbanded the Diagnostic and Surgical Recovery Task Force, which provided over 85,000 Manitobans with the care they needed, with no plan to help Manitobans waiting in pain; and*
- (k) *failed to mention how the Provincial Government will serve Manitobans waiting for surgical and diagnostic procedures in the short term; and*
- (l) *abandoned six communities that were due to benefit from the construction of new personal care homes; and*
- (m) *failed to address the need for treatment spaces or recovery-oriented care for people struggling with addictions; and*
- (n) *disrespected Manitoba's seniors and those suffering from addictions by disbanding the departments dedicated to seniors, mental health and community wellness; and*
- (o) *failed to mention how the Provincial Government will create new affordable and social housing units that are desperately needed amidst a housing shortage; and*
- (p) *failed to commit to any meaningful action or investments in community art, culture, or non-profit and heritage projects or groups; and*
- (q) *spurned Manitobans who appreciate and enjoy provincial parks and the recreational opportunities and precious ecosystems they hold dear; and*
- (r) *neglected to present a plan to maintain the positive momentum of Manitoba's tourism sector which contributes over \$1 billion to Manitoba's GDP; and*
- (s) *signalled a transition away from a positive plan to develop Manitoba's natural resource economy*

*that was attracting record investment to the province; and*

- (t) failed to mention the important role that mining and mineral development play in developing Manitoba's provincial economy; and*
- (u) failed to denounce the previous position taken by NDP Members that policing should be defunded; and*
- (v) neglected to address the revolving door of catch and release through bail reform; and*
- (w) disbanded the economic development board and put billions of dollars in investment and thousands of jobs at risk; and*
- (x) jeopardized financial sustainability of Manitoba Hydro by committing to freeze hydro rates; and*
- (y) ignored agricultural producers and the agriculture industry which represents nearly 10% of Manitoba's GDP; and*
- (z) failed to commit to continuing the five-year, \$500 million annual infrastructure budget.*

*As a consequence of these and many other failings, the Provincial Government has thereby lost the trust and confidence of the people of Manitoba and this House.*

**The Speaker:** It has been moved by the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition (Ms. Stefanson), seconded by the member from Midland, that the motion be amended by:

But this House regrets that the provincial government—

**An Honourable Member:** Dispense.

**The Speaker:** Dispense?

**An Honourable Member:** No.

**The Speaker:** But this House regrets that the provincial government has failed—

- (a) failed to outline how the provincial government will make life more affordable in the long term for Manitobans struggling to make ends meet; and
- (b) omitted tax relief for small businesses in Manitoba; and
- (c) committed to making Manitoba a maritime province without committing to fighting for

the same carbon tax exemptions afforded to such provinces; and

- (d) abandoned the plan for the previous provincial government to build new schools to accommodate a growing student population in the K-to-12 system; and
- (e) abandoned plans to deliver 23,000 child-care spaces to Manitobans' child-care system; and
- (f) neglected to detail the specific measures that will be taken to improve retention and recruitment of educators in Manitoba; and
- (g) refused to address immigration or Manitoba's population in any substantial manner; and
- (h) rejected much-needed upgrades to hospital projects across the province, including HSC, due to political ideology, at the cost of Manitoba patients; and
- (i) neglected to detail the specific measures that will be taken to improve retention and recruitment of health-care workers in Manitoba; and
- (j) disbanded the Diagnostic and Surgical Recovery Task Force, which provided over 85,000 Manitobans with the care they needed, with no plan to help Manitobans waiting in pain; and
- (k) failed to mention how the provincial government will serve Manitobans waiting for surgical and diagnostic procedures in the short term; and
- (l) abandoned six communities that were due to benefit from the construction of new personal-care homes; and
- (m) failed to address the need for treatment spaces or recovery-oriented care for people struggling with addictions; and
- (n) disrespected seniors and those suffering from addictions by disbanding the departments dedicated to seniors' mental health and community wellness; and
- (o) failed to mention how the provincial government will create new affordable and social housing units that are desperately needed amidst a housing crisis; and
- (p) failed to commit to any meaningful action or investments in community, art, culture or non-profit and heritage projects or groups; and

- (q) spurned Manitobans who appreciate and enjoy provincial parks and the recreational opportunities and precious ecosystems they hold dear; and
- (r) neglected to present a plan to maintain the positive momentum of Manitoba's tourism sector, which contributes over \$1 billion to the Manitoba GDP; and
- (s) signalled a transition away from a positive plan to develop Manitoba's natural resources economy that was attracting resource-record investment to the province; and
- (t) failed to mention the important role that mining and mineral development play in developing Manitoba's provincial economy; and
- (u) failed to denounce the previous position taken by the NDP members that policing should be de-funded; and
- (v) neglected to address the revolving door of catch and release through bail reform; and
- (w) disbanded the economic development board and put billions of dollars in investment and thousands of jobs at risk; and
- (x) jeopardized financial sustainability of Manitoban-Manitoba Hydro by committing to freeze hydro rates; and
- (y) ignored agricultural producers and agricultural industry, which represents nearly 10 per cent of the Manitoba GDP; and
- (z) failed to commit to continuing the five-year, \$500 million annual infrastructure budget.

As a consequence of these and many other failings, the provincial government has thereby lost the trust and confidence of the people of Manitoba and this House.

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**The Speaker:** Order. Order.

The amendment is in order.

The floor is open for debate.

**Mr. Logan Oxenham (Kirkfield Park):** Honourable Speaker, I thank Her Honour, the Lieutenant Governor, for the powerful words spoken just yesterday. They point to a future where no Manitoban is left behind, a Manitoba where we draw on our

collective strength as a province. I hope they continue to echo in this Chamber for years to come.

In this, my inaugural address to the Legislative Assembly, it seems appropriate to talk about the groundbreaking achievements represented in this room. We have Manitoba's first non-binary minister, Manitoba's first Indigenous women appointed to Cabinet and Manitoba's first First Nations Premier.

Representation matters, Honourable Speaker, and I am proud to be a small part of this tradition of firsts as the first trans man elected to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

As a young trans kid, I could never have imagined the possibility of a government with such diverse MLAs, let alone my participation in it. When you don't have the language to express your sense of self or a role model to visualize your future, it's difficult to make either a reality.

My being here is the culmination of decades of work and advocacy by the trans community, which gave me the language to express who I was. The trans community stood by me throughout the campaign, and for that I'm deeply grateful.

The trans community is incredibly resilient. Time and time again they push back against hate, but this campaign was particularly difficult for the trans community, with overwhelming amounts of fear and misinformation weaponized for political ends. The humanity of trans folks should never be up for debate or made into a political issue.

Words matter, especially the ones we speak as elected officials or political candidates. The rhetoric we saw during this past election should never be repeated.

Honourable Speaker, I'll be honest. I'm angry, and I will be for a while. But I also know that fear, misinformation and even disinformation can be overcome. While good intentions cannot excuse harmful consequences, there is still room for collaboration, understanding and transformative relationships. As I begin my time as a legislator, I will focus on hope while remaining attuned to these very real dangers.

\* (16:30)

One connection that continues to give me hope is found in Kirkfield Park, Honourable Speaker. It's my relationship with my next-door neighbours. Our two families have always been incredible friends, especially as I began my transition nearly a decade

ago. The freedom I experienced gave their son the courage to come out to his parents and start his own transition journey. The connection between our families is one I continue to cherish and has driven so much of my work advocating for trans youth across Manitoba.

It's important to continually remind ourselves why we are doing something, especially as legislators, where our many obligations and busy schedules can make us feel like we're just going through the motions. At least, that's what I've experienced over this past month.

One thing that reminds me of those connections and the why of my work is music. For many folks, music is a refuge to safely express who we are and what kind of world we long for. During the campaign, I tried my best to play music with my daughter before bedtime as a reminder about the things in this world that are truly important and worth protecting. We continue the tradition when we can; however, we'd need more time to turn this speech into a song.

When I think of Kirkfield Park, I think of the relationships I've built over the years and the incredible work community advocates do to create safe spaces for everyone. I'm particularly proud of the programming found at our three community centres: Sturgeon Heights, Woodhaven and Kirkfield Westwood Community Centre. These spaces foster deep intercultural, intergenerational and communal connections.

In connecting with families across Kirkfield Park, we heard the call to fix health care loud and clear. Many in our community working in and around the Grace Hospital see how the previous government's cuts and centralization strategy have burdened the system. The Grace Hospital hosts a small emergency room that has been stretched past its breaking point for years. Dedicated staff give everything to ensure care is available to those who need it, but many have hit their breaking points.

Nurses understand the importance of a public health-care system. They want to avoid going to private agencies. However, private agencies can become the only viable option when nurses are undervalued and overworked. Good intentions cannot sustain a system if resources are withheld.

Many of our health-care and justice systems almost seem designed to push people out, and they would be if it were not for the fierce dedication of our front-line workers. In my previous profession as a

juvenile correctional officer, I've seen how the justice system can sometimes undermine people's identities and self-determination. More specifically, I saw injustice for trans folks. From admission into custody to placement within the system, policies and regulations were often misaligned with folks' gender identity. I knew that I needed to act.

I worked with the MGEU and we began pressuring the previous Department of Justice. After a lengthy back and forth, the department finally agreed to draft a policy respecting the rights of trans people in custody. This change was a major advocacy win, Honourable Speaker. Still, we should not have had to put so much pressure on the government to create such a simple and dignifying policy.

That incident launched my campaign and eventually led me to the Legislature. In this Chamber, I will dedicate myself to making this government one that actively listens to marginalized voices and takes pre-emptive action.

First, we must make gender-affirming care a critical component of our standard health-care infrastructure and work to provide care closer to home. During the pandemic, the PC government flew people out of province for knee surgeries and other medical procedures. Still, despite burgeoning backlogs for gender-affirming care, we did not see the same action. Reducing surgical wait times across the board, as we heard in the Throne Speech, is an important first step.

Health care allows us to be ourselves. Knee replacements maintain the dignity of Manitobans, restoring their freedom of movement, so they can participate fully in our society. Trans health care has the same effect. By helping align people's gender expression with their gender identity, we give them the freedom to participate fully in society as themselves. The result is the same. It is about dignity and respect.

Honourable Speaker, this government can come at the issues that matter most to Manitobans, with fresh eyes and renewed hearts, to find actual solutions to chronic homelessness, addictions and declining mental health and to properly tackle the root causes of crime. We will look to those already doing the incredible work in the community to partner with us. Together, we can find unique solutions that fit the specific needs of different and diverse communities.

Honourable Speaker, I would like to thank front-line workers and community non-profit NGOs across the province for their tireless work in meeting the

needs of Manitobans. I want to highlight the incredible work being done by Sunshine House's mobile overdose prevention site, which provides a clean and supervised environment for people to practice harm reduction. It also connects people with the rehabilitation treatment when they are ready.

Despite years of roadblocks thrown up by the previous government, the mobile overdose prevention site celebrated its first anniversary in October. It's refreshing to hear the Throne Speech outline how this government will build on their work, and has already begun repairing relationships with community health organizations across the province.

What we've seen repeatedly is that Manitobans bond together in times of need. Mutual aid groups have sprung up across our province as communities share resources amid increasing instances of anti-trans hate, continued violence against Indigenous women, girls and gender-diverse folks and an affordability crisis that has hit economically marginalized communities the hardest. And it is our job to join alongside these communities, ensuring that our public systems do not leave anyone behind.

Honourable Speaker, I am an inherently optimistic person. I've always tried to see the best in people, especially when they're at their lowest. If we dare to make it, there's always a more hopeful future. I would not have run if I did not seriously believe in this government's mission and values.

There is so much incredible work ahead of us, Honourable Speaker, hard work. Work that will take time to come to fruition. Anyone can make quick bureaucratic changes and appear to be tackling homelessness or the root causes of crime; but often, these shifts will push houseless folks away from the high-income neighbourhoods, or temporarily deter crime by inappropriately applying greater levels of force.

That's different from the type of change we are talking about here. We're talking about a profound change. Change that lifts people up and gives them the tools to lift others up with them. Change that will create a sustainable and affordable future for everyone.

I am so incredibly inspired at this moment, first and foremost by the two-spirit, trans and gender-diverse community, especially the youth. You give me the strength to do what I do every day. The passion and resilience of young trans folks have been astounding as they make changes in their schools, communities and even in their provincial legislature.

My heart was full after hundreds of trans youth led the way in the No Space for Hate rally last month, standing up to anger, fear and confusion with love and acceptance.

Turning to the people in this room, I am so proud to stand alongside the Premier (Mr. Kinew) in this new government. He led with an amazing campaign based on 'utiny', resonating deeply with my optimistic and hopeful nature. I saw the Premier connecting with Manitobans from all walks of life, listening to their concerns and genuinely responding with kindness and dignity.

Post-election, he has continued to forge genuine connections amid the business of becoming Manitoba's new leader. I stand in awe of him.

There are so many friends to thank for the privilege of standing in this space. Alongside the Premier, I'd like to point out to the other new friends that I've made here in the Chamber, who I'm very excited to work with.

\* (16:40)

One specific friend, if I may call them my friend, is the Minister for Health, and MLA for Union Station. Their courage, empathy and wisdom inspired my journey into the Legislature. Watching them blaze a trail as the first Black, non-binary member elected to the Manitoba Legislature gave me the courage to put my name on the ballot. With their election in 2019, the minister opened the door for so many trans and gender-diverse people in this government and our province. Their guidance and grace, coupled with your incredibly positive outlook and authenticity, ignited something in me that continues to inspire and motivate me to be better.

To my team of volunteers, I don't even know how to thank you enough. This seed has been years in the making. And your continued dedication always gave me the strength to keep pushing. Every day, I learned from you and we're thankful for your attention to detail and ability to bring people together in imaginative ways.

My father-in-law, Larry Friesen, who was a farmer, used to say: many hands make light work. And when it comes to election campaigns, no words have ever rang more true. I think about young Evan Underwood. Evan would walk from his apartment to our campaign office every single day to help canvass the community. He became known as my Robin. I'm Batman, of course. Evan walked countless kilometres to the point where he wore a hole in his shoes. Thanks

to other caring volunteers, like Nancy Allan, Evan was taken shopping for a new pair of shoes after the campaign was over.

I think of volunteers like Sharon Jasper, who walked into our office one day stating that she was here to help; that it was the anniversary of her husband's passing and she wanted to do something meaningful to honour him. Sharon baked cookies and muffins and dainties for seniors' coffee parties, and they were such a hit.

I also think of the Krosney family who invested their precious time to help the campaign with raising signs and door knocking. I will continue to press on for the next four years with you folks as my example.

Finally, to my family. To my partner, my confidante, the love of my life, Vanessa: nearly 25 years ago, we chose—we chose to forge a path together through love and compassion. I remember moving to Manitoba in 2003 from Alberta and being in awe of the art scene here. We were so amazed that artists were supported by the provincial government and that we could afford to be artists with a roof over our heads. Through all of our adventures together, our biggest adventure has been raising our daughter, Olivia.

We want a future for her that is rooted in compassion and kindness. Our strength is her strength and we will always fight for a fair, equitable future for all of our children. There is an incredible multitude of folks who stand at my back and without them, I would not be here today.

Manitobans heard our call; a call for investment in our health-care system; a call to tackle chronic homelessness and addictions; a call to tackle the root causes of crime; a call to create an affordable future for our children. And, most importantly, a call for unity.

Now is the time to get to work. Thank you.

**MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** It is not very often in this House that I get applause from both sides, very much appreciated.

I want to just begin by thanking the constituents of Tyndall Park. It truly is the greatest honour for me to be able to serve so many wonderful people and mister—Honourable Speaker, you've heard me say this before, but, Tyndall Park is by far is the best constituency in all of Manitoba. So I'm exceptionally proud to represent such wonderful constituents—such a constituency, filled with schools and community

programs and community centres and cultural centres—and be able to bring so many issues and ideas and concerns here into this beautiful Legislature in the province of Manitoba.

You know, I also want to make reference to my wonderful volunteers from this past election. As all of my caucus—colleagues—all of my colleagues here in the House, Honourable Speaker, can attest to, elections can be very difficult at times. But I find what makes it a joy, what makes the work fun, is having some wonderful volunteers around you, volunteers who knock on doors, to help with phone calls, volunteers that are with you in the pouring rain and stick out the heat with the burning sun sometimes.

And we have a lot of fun on the campaign trail, and I think that's really what makes part of the job worth it. You need to have a good team of people around you at all times, not just during the elections, but you need to keep these volunteers active and engaged.

And I want to thank my volunteers. You've really been my backbone throughout. The last couple of months have been quite the whirlwind. Prior to the election I did not think that I was going to be alone here in the Manitoba Legislature representing the Manitoba Liberal Party.

But I don't feel alone. I have exceptional support around me, and I want to thank all the volunteers who have been helping.

I can hear the member from Elmwood over here saying he also supports me, and I appreciate his support, Mr. Honourable Speaker. I had the opportunity earlier today to congratulate our brand-new Premier (Mr. Kinew), and I do think that it is something very worthwhile acknowledging it is our first First Nations Premier in the province of Manitoba. And he really does deserve to be recognized for this.

Mr. Honourable—Honourable Speaker, we also—I want to recognize all of the new ministers and their portfolios. It is a job I am not always envious of. Taking on a portfolio comes with an immense amount of work, and I'm exceptionally grateful for all the departmental staff, who I know are lending hands and ears. They come with all the background knowledge to brief our new ministers, our deputy ministers, everyone who switches over into the new government.

And I've had the opportunity now to meet with a couple of the ministers. The minister responsible for immigration has been very generous with her time,

and I feel very optimistic moving forward. We're going to be having regular meetings.

I just actually met with the Minister of Health (MLA Asagwara), and I feel, again, just very fortunate to be developing a healthy relationship moving forward. We want to be able to work together collaboratively to ensure that the health care happening here in Manitoba improves.

I also want to recognize some of my new opposition colleagues. You know, when I first got elected back in 2016, a piece of advice that was given to me, and I've held very true to my heart, is we need to get along with our colleagues. We need to—we see each other every day when we're here in session, and I think it's important that we form relationships, that we enjoy each other's company.

I think that there is a way to respectfully hold each other to account, and I'm asking that of all of my colleagues here in this House. That is the relationship that I want to form with all of you, and I hope for it to be reciprocated moving onto the next four years. That's a lot of time we have to spend together, but I do feel very, very fortunate to be here with all of you in the House right now.

So, this past weekend, I had my very first town hall since the election and it was great. We had lots of people come out from a wide array of different fields throughout the province. And what is evident so far is we want to recognize it takes time for the government to settle. No matter who the government is, it takes time. We want to let people learn their positions, learn their roles, learn their ministries. But we've yet to see real change happening.

So I want to give the new government the benefit of the doubt. Let's give them some time. But some of the concerns that have been rising so far are the emergency rooms across the province. Wait times have not yet improved. Again, it's only been about five, six weeks, but we need immediate action.

People—the NDP government that is now in government, they were opposition for seven years. They had time to create ideas. They should've been acting five weeks ago. Their feet should've been running the day they formed government.

And so it's a little bit disappointing that we haven't yet seen changes. And this is coming from health-care workers directly this past Saturday at my town hall.

\* (16:50)

When we talk about respect and incentive for health-care professionals, we know that—it became abundantly apparent during the pandemic but we know that the problem came from before then. Health-care professionals in our province are not being treated with respect. Whether that be the way that they are being paid, the way that they are being overworked, the way that they are or are not being acknowledged by government officials at all levels. We need to do better.

Health-care workers—and many others in other fields as well, if we want to talk about educators, we want to talk about truck drivers—but for the—in the case of health, which is by far the biggest issue right now here in Manitoba, they deserve better recognition. They deserve reason to stay here in Manitoba.

And I think one of the things that we could be doing to make health care better here in the province is to ensure that those who are able and capable and trained and educated to work in our health-care field, let's make sure they're being given the opportunity to. We're so desperate for health-care professionals, when we have people—if they pass a standard test, whatever the government wants to implement—they want to work. Let's let them work. We need them to work, desperately.

You know, I met with someone at the town hall, and they talked about how they applied for nursing and it takes four years just to start your nursing program. So, everyone right now who's applying to become a nurse, it takes four years just to begin the program. That's how backtracked the program is. Again, this is a great way—if we—maybe we need to create more nursing programs; we need to bring in more instructors. We need these nurses yesterday, so let's create those opportunities.

There is a lot we can be doing for preventative services. I know—I've been talking about the idea of regulating psychotherapy here in this House for probably about two or three years now, and I'm hoping, maybe with a new government, maybe they will take initiative on this.

And regulating therapy, it is so critical here in the province of Manitoba, all over the world. We say we want to treat mental health the way we treat physical health; well, let's put our mouths where the money is here. We need to do everything that we can.

Regulating psychotherapy would ensure that those who are practicing psychotherapy are trained to

do so. We need to make sure that those who are providing guidance and a safety for people to come and confide in, that they are trained—and properly trained—to address the big issues like trauma, suicidality.

Honourable Speaker, there is a lot we need to do to make sure that there are proper protocols put in place, that when someone is struggling with their mental health, that they are going to a professional. As of right now in Manitoba, you could be—you could have been a high school dropout, make some business cards and call yourself a psychotherapist. A lot of the time, clients don't look into the background of this. We need to make sure psychotherapists are properly trained when dealing with very, very sensitive issues.

The other reason we need to make sure that psychotherapy is regulated is so that people can afford it. It's beginning to be regulated in other parts of Canada. If it becomes regulated here, more and more people will have access to psychotherapy. More and more people will have resources for their mental health.

Right now in Manitoba, we are failing. More and more people—the wait times. If you go talk to a—go check out Klinik, for example, on Sherbrook. The wait times? They're years in some cases, depending on what you're waiting for.

The need is there. We've got people who want to be trained in psychotherapy. We've got people who want to utilize services. Let's make it happen.

Honourable Speaker, I'm disappointed that the Throne Speech didn't say too much about seniors. Especially after the Auditor General's report on the utter failings of the Protection for Persons in Care Office. There's been numerous reports that have indicated that drastic changes are needed.

And I know, personally, I plan to continue to fight for the independent office of the seniors' advocate. This has been a very long journey, Honourable Speaker. I—when I first got elected in 2016—it was just a few months after—I actually went down to Victoria and I met with their seniors' advocate to gain a stronger understanding of what does a seniors' advocate do.

So then I came back here into the Manitoba Legislature, and I'd encourage my colleagues, check it out in Hansard: I've brought forward members' statements, question periods, legislation, everything that you can do here in the Legislature regarding the independent office of a seniors' advocate.

And the reason this is so important—and I am encouraged that, a few years ago—I think it was in 2019, and the NDP can correct me if I'm wrong here, I believe it was in 2019—the NDP actually got on board, and they're like, you know what, we're going to start calling for an independent office for a seniors' advocate. And that's wonderful. We've got two parties in the House now calling for it. We've got our government—a majority government—calling for it. Let's see it happen.

An independent office for a seniors' advocate would be there to represent and to advocate for seniors throughout the province when they don't know what to do.

You know, prior to entering politics, I worked for the Long Term and Continuing Care Association of Manitoba, and it was through this job that I learned a lot about individuals when they're seeking guidance where a—probably a loved one or a parent should go. So, for example, someone would call me and say, hey, look, I think that maybe my dad needs to go into a home soon. And it would be my job to help differentiate between personal-care homes, supportive housing homes, retirement homes, hospices. These are often lost upon people because we only talk about personal-care homes. We need to be talking about long-term-care homes as a whole.

And, Honourable Speaker, an independent office for a seniors' advocate would make sure that seniors are going into facilities that are best suited for their needs. They would make sure that seniors are being placed closer to their home communities, rather than having someone move from up north to here in Winnipeg, where they likely don't have very many family or friends here in Winnipeg. It's important that as individuals age that they are kept close to their loved ones, to their friends.

We know that an independent seniors' advocate could work with home care. Currently the biggest issue with home care, at least that I hear from my constituents, are home-care workers are stretched so thin, they're needing to rush from one area of the city, for example, Tyndall Park, to maybe Charleswood, and they're only given or allotted five, ten minutes at the house.

I've heard horrific stories of accidentally leaving the boiling pot of water on the stove, and my constituent, who struggles with sight, the boiling water boiled over and hit his feet. We need to make sure that home-care workers have adequate time when they're

inside people's homes and that people are feeling safe, that they're feeling taken care of.

You know, it's interesting; I've recently learned that home care used to extend beyond just health, as well. So, right now, our home-care workers, they go in, they will often help bathe people. They will often help with a little bit of the home cooking, things like that. It actually—when home care first came to Manitoba, it included taking the garbage out. It included shovelling walkways. It's really strayed from that and maybe we can be brainstorming, here in this House, of ways—we need more home-care workers, yes—but ways that we can work from a holistic approach.

Honourable Speaker, we can talk about day programs, transportation, keeping people in their homes and affordability. I know—so, I go to the McDonald's every Saturday, just to be accessible to my constituents. And I've got two regulars, and they come by every few weeks and they tell me about some of the concerns, what they're feeling.

Both these regulars are seniors. One of them liked to cut out news articles for me and keeps me updated with everything that maybe I'm missing. And one of the issues that they've recently raised is the affordability, specifically, for seniors. Seniors can't afford cellphone bills and it's more critical than ever that seniors have access to a cellphone for safe reasons. Why don't we talk about adopting some sort of an affordable plan for seniors?

Honourable Speaker, we can talk about dental work. As you age—and I'm sure, maybe, some of my colleagues here in the House can attest to this—health-care concerns tend to get worse. That is the

average. We tend to need more care as we age. Dental concerns are one of these. Seniors do not have coverage for dental concerns and many times they don't have the money to pay out-of-pocket.

We know 10 per cent of seniors here in the province of Manitoba are not taking their prescribed medications due to affordability, never mind going above and beyond on something that I would argue—dental care—you likely should address. Whether it's immediate or not, there needs to be funds put in place to ensure that we're not causing deeper problems for seniors, Mr. Honourable Speaker.

You know, one of the things that I was most concerned about that was not in this Throne Speech: the NDP government has been completely silent on banning replacement workers. And I'm discouraged by it. The NDP, they always claim to support unions, yet they've been silent on this. Anti-scab legislation is important, here in the province of Manitoba. Using replacement workers distracts from the collective bargaining process, it prolongs disputes, it can poison workplaces for years afterwards. And our economy depends on employers and unions staying at the table to reach the best deal possible.

You know, we have it in BC. We have it in Quebec. The feds have now introduced it. Frankly, Manitoba should be taking a lead on it.

**The Speaker:** Order, please. When this matter is next before the House, the member will have four–five minutes remaining.

The hour being 5 o'clock, the House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow.

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, November 22, 2023

## CONTENTS

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

#### Committee Reports

Standing Committee on Public Accounts  
First Report

Maloway 15

Standing Committee on Public Accounts  
Second Report

Maloway 16

Standing Committee on Public Accounts  
Third Report

Maloway 16

#### Tabling of Reports

Altomare 17

Cable 17

Kostyshyn 17

#### Ministerial Statements

Call for Ceasefire in Gaza

Kinew 17

Stefanson 18

Lamoureux 19

#### Tabling of Reports

*(Continued)*

Kostyshyn 19

#### Members' Statements

Transgender Day of Remembrance

Oxenham 19

Springfield's 150th Anniversary

Schuler 20

Kildonan-River East School Division

Schott 20

La Vérendrye Constituency Events

Narh 21

New Session Acknowledgements

Lamoureux 21

#### Speaker's Statements

Lindsey 22

Fontaine 23

Goertzen 24

Lamoureux 24

### Oral Questions

Carbon Tax on Home Heating Bills

Stefanson 25

Kinew 25

Carbon Tax on Home Heating Bills

Khan 26

Kinew 26

Carbon Tax on Home Heating Bills

Jackson 27

Sala 27

Agriculture Industry

Bereza 28

Kostyshyn 28

Diagnostic and Surgical Wait Times

Cook 29

Asagwara 29

Child-Care Spaces

Ewasko 30

Altomare 30

Wait Times at Grace Hospital

Lamoureux 31

Kinew 31

Asagwara 31

Health-Care Workers

Lamoureux 31

Asagwara 31

Former Government

Devgan 32

Sala 32

Cost of Living Increase

Stone 32

Fontaine 32

Food Security Fund

Stone 33

Fontaine 33

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

#### Throne Speech

(First Day of Debate)

Loiselle 33

Cross 41

Stefanson 44

Oxenham 52

Lamoureux 55

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

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