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Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-Third Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALTOMARE, Nello, Hon.	Transcona	NDP
ASAGWARA, Uzoma, Hon.	Union Station	NDP
BALCAEN, Wayne	Brandon West	PC
BEREZA, Jeff	Portage la Prairie	PC
BLASHKO, Tyler	Lagimodière	NDP
BRAR, Diljeet	Burrows	NDP
BUSHIE, Ian, Hon.	Keewatinook	NDP
BYRAM, Jodie	Agassiz	PC
CABLE, Renée, Hon.	Southdale	NDP
CHEN, Jennifer	Fort Richmond	NDP
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
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PANKRATZ, David	Waverley	NDP
PERCHOTTE, Richard	Selkirk	PC
PIWNIUK, Doyle	Turtle Mountain	PC
REDHEAD, Eric	Thompson	NDP
SALA, Adrien, Hon.	St. James	NDP
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SCHOTT, Rachelle	Kildonan-River East	NDP
SCHULER, Ron	Springfield-Ritchot	PC
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STONE, Lauren	Midland	PC
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WHARTON, Jeff	Red River North	PC
WIEBE, Matt, Hon.	Concordia	NDP
WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, March 21, 2024

The House met at 10 a.m.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Mr. Grant Jackson (Deputy Official Opposition House Leader): Honourable Speaker, would you please call Bill 202, The Community Foundation Day Act (Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Act Amended), for second reading.

The Speaker: It has been announced that we will have Bill 202, The Community Foundation Day Act (Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Act Amended), for second reading.

SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

**Bill 202—The Community Foundation Day Act
(Commemoration of Days, Weeks
and Months Act Amended)**

Mr. Grant Jackson (Spruce Woods): I move, seconded by the member for Lakeside (Mr. King), that Bill 202, The Community Foundation Day Act (Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Act

Amended), be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Jackson: It's my great pleasure to rise today to give second reading to The Community Foundation Day Act, my very first piece of legislation as the new MLA for Spruce Woods.

It's certainly an honour to serve the great constituency of Spruce Woods, and I think all of us here would agree that we got elected because it's about people. This job that we do is certainly about the people that we serve and the people of this great province, and, you know, in no small measure recognizing their efforts in the work that they do to make our communities a better place. And nowhere is that more true than the volunteers and staff and contributors to—who support our local community foundations.

And so, this bill is about recognizing those volunteers and the donors who contribute to this foundation as the gift that keeps on giving and who see a vision for the future and, you know, want to make a meaningful and lasting contribution to their communities in that way. And these folks deserve, I believe, and I think many in this Chamber will agree that these folks deserve to be recognized for the work that they do in making our communities just a little bit more sustainable and a little bit more vibrant.

The story of community foundations is deeply rooted in Manitoba. In many ways, it is a Manitoba story. The Winnipeg Foundation, as many will know, is the first of its kind in Canada. This is a model that has spread across the country because it was a Manitoba idea that's been recognized as something that works to build communities and expand on the ability for donors and folks who want to contribute back to make a meaningful impact in their communities. And so, you know, recognition where it's due.

It was formed here in Winnipeg in 1921 by the Alloway family. That's a legacy that they certainly deserve to be recognized for, and it works. It's spread across the country, and there are now 57 across the province of Manitoba, in many of our communities. That's the highest per capita number of community foundations in all of North America, not just in the country of Canada.

So that speaks to Manitoba's willingness to adopt this model and the benefits that Manitobans see it bringing to their communities. I have eight in my constituency alone. The Brandon and area community foundation, Souris and Glenwood foundation, Rivers and Area Community Foundation, Holland community foundation, Cypress River community foundation, Glenboro community foundation, Wawanessa and area community foundation and the Oak Lake and area community foundation. So, I know that Spruce Woods residents are passionate about their community foundations and the work that they do, and I'm very pleased to bring this piece of legislation forward.

As we know, Manitobans, year over year, are recognized as the most generous people in this country. That's recognized by the Fraser Institute's generosity index, and it's based on two predominant factors: the highest percentage of tax filers in each province having donated to charity and the highest percentage of the province's aggregate income going to charity amongst all provinces. Both those two indicators, Manitoba is No. 1. That's something to be proud of, and that's in no small measure due to the work of the staff and volunteers at community foundations in recruiting donors to make sure that we're giving back to our communities. And this, to me anyway, speaks to the soul of, you know, who we are as Manitobans and the pride that we have in giving back to this province and making sure that, you know, our communities continue to thrive into the future.

As a sustainable financial model, these really are, and I've said it before, the gift that keeps on giving. It's the perfect way to support your community well into the future as these funds continue to mature and be—give back returns to notable projects in the community including, you know, you name it, Honourable Speaker: recreation initiatives and programming, capital campaigns, social services that enhance the quality of life and student bursaries, just to name a few of the topics that my local community foundations give their funds out to on an annual basis. The impact to students and young people alone is significant and worth supporting.

And so, there has been previous recognition for community foundations. The previous member for Lagimodière, Andrew Smith, as minister of 'municipal' relations proclaimed this day in April or May of 2023.

So I think this bill just takes this the next step further, and makes sure that this day will be recognized every year regardless of who the minister is or what the party in power is, to make sure that these

Manitobans, who volunteer their time and give of their funds to make sure that the community is benefiting, are recognized every year as they deserve to be.

And it's important to recognize the leadership of people like the Alloway family, The Winnipeg Foundation or people like Dr. Ben Sutter from my home community, who had the founding drive to start the Souris and Glenwood foundation back in the early '90s.

* (10:10)

And so I sincerely hope, as we move through this morning, that there is unanimous support from all MLAs in this House for this bill. Good ideas are good ideas, and I know since forming opposition, we have supported my colleague from Waverley's bill on fire-fighters day and my colleague from Assiniboia's bill on Islamic heritage month, because they're good ideas and they're causes that are worthwhile supporting, worthy of recognition, as are the dedicated volunteers who keep these community foundations alive across our province, thereby helping in no small measure to keep our communities themselves alive.

And so I look to my colleagues across the way, and I ask them to support this bill so that the continuous generosity of Manitobans, which I would argue is one of the reasons why—one of the many reasons why the rest of Canada should envy Manitoba. I would argue that, you know, my colleagues across the way should support this bill so that that generosity can be recognized, appreciated and celebrated.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Questions

The Speaker: A question period of up to 10 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed to the sponsoring member by any member in the following sequence: first question to be asked by a member from another party; this is followed by a rotation between the parties; each independent member may ask one question. And no questions or answers may exceed 45 seconds.

The floor is now open.

MLA David Pankratz (Waverley): Thank you to the member from Spruce Woods for bringing this important bill forward.

You know, it is—it's really important, and I appreciate that he said this, that we have fulsome conversation about these bills. You know, good ideas are good

ideas, but we just need to make sure we discuss them here in the House, right?

So, you've mentioned that community foundation day will recognize the incredible contributions and impact of foundations across Manitoba.

Can you just sort of expand and explain on how you imagine Manitobans might celebrate a day such as this?

Mr. Grant Jackson (Spruce Woods): Yes, thanks to my honourable colleague from Waverley for the question.

I would hope that Endow Manitoba, as the network representing community foundations across the province—I've been in conversations with them, and I would hope that they would use this day as an annual celebration and set up events, whether those events move across the province or always located here in Winnipeg.

I also know, with conversations with our colleague from St. Boniface, we're discussing doing some type of a recognition event here at the Legislative Building. That would, I hope, and I would certainly be willing to sponsor that as an annual event to bring awareness and recognition to this day as well.

The Speaker: No other questions?

Mr. Trevor King (Lakeside): I want to thank my colleague from Spruce Woods for bringing this very important and exciting piece of legislation to the House to recognize and acknowledge our volunteers and—for our community foundations.

I, personally—in Lakeside, we have our Interlake Community Foundation and—a great organization that contributes to our community many, many, many dollars over the years. I think they're celebrating their 30th anniversary come this fall, so—and, on a personal note, a memorial bursary for my grandparents have been there since 2007. So each year, \$3,000—three \$1,000 bursaries are given to any student graduate of Warren Collegiate every year, so—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired. *[interjection]*
The member's time has expired.

Mr. Jackson: As you can tell, Honourable Speaker, I got my colleague from Lakeside to second the motion this morning because he's very passionate about community foundations.

So anyway, I appreciate his comments, and I know that there's many in this Chamber that are very

passionate about community foundations and the good work that they do.

And I'd like to carry on to questions so that he can have another opportunity to ask his.

MLA Robert Loiselle (St. Boniface): The member for Spruce Woods spoke about how many foundations can be found in his area.

Certainly there are an impressive number of foundations in Manitoba, such as the Jewish foundation, The Winnipeg Foundation and Francofonds.

Could the member for Spruce Woods share with the House who he had the chance to consult with in respects to this bill?

Mr. Jackson: Sure, thank you Honourable Speaker, and I thank my colleague from St. Boniface for that question.

I received a letter at first being elected—I think most MLAs, if not all, did as well—signed by The Winnipeg Foundation and the Endow Manitoba, as well as a couple of local community foundations from my constituency, asking for this bill to be done, to be undertaken. And so those are the main organizations that I had consultation and contact with in the development of this piece of legislation.

The Speaker: No further questions?

Mrs. Carrie Hiebert (Morden-Winkler): I, too, have had a lot—many of experiences in my community and my constituency with foundations, as well, and they do a lot of great work.

My question would be to the member from Spruce Woods: Can you tell us about the different things that your—foundations do in your area?

Mr. Jackson: Sure. Thanks to my colleague from Morden-Winkler for that question.

I think, like most areas, our community foundations undertake a variety of work. I know they have a regular program in my home town of Souris, for example, where they support the breakfast club, which is a before-school program where kids can go and get breakfast for free, sponsored by the community foundation, and also be taught how to skate at no cost to the parents or families or the school division. And so that's an example of something the community foundation supports.

They also regularly support other capital projects, including the building of a dog park, I believe the first in Souris. And as well, as my colleague from Lakeside

mentioned, a number of bursaries and memorial scholarships that are managed by the community foundation but, you know, are given out to—under varying different—

The Speaker: The time has expired.

MLA Pankratz: I would like to thank the member from Spruce Woods for bringing forward some of the work that foundations are doing in his home area.

And, you know, as our government has been listening so carefully to Manitobans since we were elected, we love hearing about things that are happening in Spruce Woods. So I'd also love to hear about some of the work that foundations are doing, from your research, across Manitoba and other areas as well.

Mr. Jackson: Sure. Thank you, Honourable Speaker. And I think The Winnipeg Foundation's reputation speaks for itself. It's had a number of significant initiatives that it manages, both for personal donations that have been contributed, as well as funds that government has deposited there, including managing a heritage grant that will help to redevelop the heritage façade of the Hudson's Bay building as it undergoes its redevelopment with SCO and its new partners.

The conservation trust, GROW Trust and conservation and climate trusts are managed by The Winnipeg Foundation. These are trust funds that are made available to watershed districts and other community organizations, non-profits, who are doing non-profit work to protect and enhance natural grasslands—

The Speaker: The time has expired.

Mr. King: I'll try not to get quite so passionate in my question this time, but I just want to ask the—my colleague here from Spruce Woods if he can tell the members of the Chamber here why he brought this bill forward and maybe name a number of other community foundations throughout the province.

Mr. Jackson: Thanks to my colleague for that question.

I mean, I'm very passionate about community foundations. I, myself, was a recipient of a community foundation scholarship when I graduated high school. I have parents and been involved with them myself. Lots of family involvement with community foundations.

So I'm very passionate about the work they do across western Manitoba and across all of Manitoba. So I—when I got this letter, I don't know, I thought it

was a quick win, I think, you know, for all community foundations to get this bill in here, get it on the record and get it—get them recognized for the good work that they do, so that's why I brought this piece of legislation forward.

And, I mean, I don't have enough time left, but I—there's lots of good work that these community foundations are doing in many, many communities across the province.

MLA Pankratz: I'm just wondering, through the consultative process that you went through, if anything came about in terms of specific, sort of, traditions around this day or things that we could celebrate year after year—if that came up with any of the foundations or if you could speak to that.

Mr. Jackson: Thanks to my colleague for the question.

I—this is a relatively new idea, day, concept. As I said, it's only been proclaimed once before by a government minister. Prior to 2023, that had never happened before. And so I think what we're trying to do here is make it permanent so that then we could start to build some of those traditions that we're talking about, about what does this day mean every year.

As we saw yesterday, the Francophonie has a regular tradition of that day and what happens that day every year. I would like the same thing to be done for community foundations going forward.

* (10:20)

Mrs. Hiebert: A question would be, for you, from—member from—sorry, from Spruce Woods, what is unique about the foundation landscape in Manitoba, specifically?

Mr. Jackson: Yes, I think, you know, Manitoba is the home of community foundations. And there's no question, when we have statistics like the highest per capita number of community foundations in all of North America, that speaks to this being the home of this model of community sustainability and financial support, charitable giving. And so I think that, in that kind of environment, recognizing that and celebrating that good work on behalf of many, many volunteers and generous contributors and donors is the most important part of why we're here discussing this bill today and why I hope it's supported by all sides.

MLA Pankratz: I'm just wondering if the member from Spruce Woods could speak to, maybe, personal inspiration or why, specifically, he felt—because of his

own experiences, perhaps—that this was an important day to bring forward.

Mr. Jackson: Yes, thanks to my colleague from Waverley for that question.

I believe I mentioned I was the recipient of a community foundation bursary graduating high school and heading off to post secondary. You know, I have family who are involved with community foundations in several different communities across southwestern Manitoba. And I've grown up in a small community; you can see the hands-on impact of these foundations every day, everywhere you go—every donor board or fundraising billboard for every event or project underway, Souris Glenwood Community Foundation, Rivers and Area Community Foundation—these foundations are on all of them. Hockey rink, curling rink, golf course, you name it, local museum. And so I see the impact every day growing up and every day since, and so I think it's important to recognize—

The Speaker: Time has expired.

And the time for questions has expired.

Debate

The Speaker: The floor is open for debate.

No one wishing to debate the motion?

MLA Robert Loiselle (St. Boniface): Thank you, honourable president—Honourable Speaker, I should say. It's—honoured to be here this morning to speak about foundations.

And, in fact, foundations are important to how our communities work together in times of need. Often community foundations were founded by certain communities when governments weren't there to move certain ideas forward in a community.

And one foundation that I had a pleasure to work with over the years, actually, was Francofonds. We've heard about the Jewish foundation, The Winnipeg Foundation and all the number of foundations we have in Manitoba. But Francophone is actually the only provincial community foundation of la Francophonie.

And yesterday, we celebrated the international day of la Francophonie. And Francofonds was actually created by the Francophonie for the Francophonie, and it enables the implementation of initiatives that facilitate the development of French life in Manitoba immediately and in perpetuity.

Francofonds is an incorporated company registered as a charitable organization. It was launched,

actually, in November 16, 1978, by francophones here in Manitoba who dreamed of being able to support francophone communities and projects without government support.

Thanks to this vision and community engagement, the foundation has now more than 6,000 donors since its beginning, and is approaching \$15 million in capital. So that's actually \$15 million in capital with over 220 donation funds.

What's interesting is that over the last eight years and while I was on the board, Francofonds actually went from \$8 million to close to \$15 million. And what's interesting and what needs to be understood about foundations and why we need to support them is that, as we know, baby boomers have a lot of funds and wish to donate a lot. And there's—actually, what's happening now, Mr. Speaker, is that the largest transfer of wealth in the history of humankind is happening between baby boomers and the next generation, and funds like Francofonds, The Winnipeg Foundation and the Jewish foundation, their funds are going up incredibly thanks to this transfer of funds.

An Honourable Member: Honourable Speaker, not Mister.

MLA Loiselle: Honourable Speaker, yes.

So I'd like to just share with the House that Francofonds, actually established in 1973, thanks to a merge with the Radio Saint-Boniface foundation, and each year the sums generated by Francofonds are redistributed to French Manitoba.

Over the years, grants have contributed to the realization of multiple community and cultural events, with scholarships which have enabled hundreds of young people to pursue their post-secondary education.

I'd like to actually add, that as the honourable speaker for Spruce Woods received a grant for his studies a few years ago, so did my daughter this year.

In all of our communities, thousands of people have benefited in one way or another from Francofonds' contributions. We owe this success in large part to the strength of the Francophonie, which reflects the ongoing commitment of individuals, families and entire communities who want to preserve their Franco-Manitoban culture.

So I'd like to speak a little bit about how foundations work. They actually encourage individuals, families, organizations and businesses to give generously in order to ensure financial support that

supports initiatives for the development of the Manitoba Francophonie today and forever.

Francofonds is accountable to donors and the community through community representation with its administration, transparency of its actions, of a sound trust that includes competent management, efficient administration of expenses, responsible investment of funds and equitable distribution of interest.

Francofonds also values the contribution of all 'sectors,' regions, stakeholders, organizations and people committed to the Francophonie and ensure active collaboration with them in order to maximize its impact within the community and to properly manage the allocation of its resources.

Through these partnerships and active fundraising, Francofonds continually increases its capital fund and distribution capacity so that it can continue to meet the dynamic needs of the francophone community in Manitoba.

In fact, I'd like to share a particular instance where the Jewish foundation actually had the opportunity to work with the Francophonie. We have an organization called Les Amis du carré civique de Saint-Boniface. They were set up as a charitable organization and we set up, actually, a website in French, which we wanted to translate in English, and the Jewish foundation actually donated to Les Amis du carré civique de Saint-Boniface in order to make that happen.

So that's a concrete example of how foundations can work together to strengthen the ties in our community and support different community priorities.

The vision of Francofonds is to promote our vibrant, diverse, inclusive and proud Francophonie, where everyone can live in French in all aspects of their lives. Francofonds is recognized for its leadership in developing philanthropic awareness and by the francophone community in Manitoba.

This manifests itself by a sense of responsibility and a concrete commitment to the development of the community, an understanding of the extent of the specific needs of their minority environment, an expansion of the foundation's network and collaborators, increased participation of the French-speaking community in the foundation's activities, a sense of community which is demonstrated by the commitment of several generations of donors.

Community foundations is all about philanthropy and it's our way, and our communities' way, to give

back to our communities, to make sure that when governments can't help, we have foundations that can help, and they fill that gap, Mr. Speaker—Honourable Speaker.

So professional advisers and consultants add value to the services you already offer by talking to your clients about charitable giving. So it's important that we speak to our kids about philanthropy, it's important that we speak as a community to our members about philanthropy, and Francofonds is Manitoba's only francophone community foundation, as I previously said, and is here to help provide clients with resources and advice on charitable giving.

Often, sometimes, I believe, Honourable Speaker, that people want to get involved, either in community activities or fundraising or volunteering, and they don't know how. And foundations serve the role of helping people not only give for today but also give in perpetuity, and that's very important because we need to understand that when we give to a foundation, the money stays in the foundation and the interest is then used to help our communities on an ongoing basis.

So help in perpetuity means it is sometimes advantageous to make a donation through donations of shares, mutual funds, life insurance policies, bequests or others. Through planned donations to Francofonds, you ensure that our francophone community can build its future on a solid financial foundation. Planned and in-kind donation, donation by will, donation of a life insurance policy, or donation of RRSP or RIFs and other ways to contribute to the foundation.

* (10:30)

I think what I'd like to say in conclusion is that when we speak about bills like this one, it brings awareness to foundations in Manitoba. And certainly foundations, as I said before, fill that gap sometimes when governments, you know, can't help. They can then help sometimes at partnership with foundations.

I've been a donor to Francofonds for many, many years. Francofonds, with all of its funds, helps our—sorry—our community centres, helps our schools, helps with grants, helps in all kinds of ways. And I think that celebrating foundations is a good way to talk about who we are as Manitobans. It doesn't matter if we live in southern Manitoba, northern Manitoba, west or east. Foundations bring us together as one Manitoba.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

MLA Jelynn Dela Cruz (Radisson): I would like to take the opportunity to congratulate my colleague, the MLA for Spruce Woods on bringing forward his first bill.

This is also the first time I've risen in the House to speak this week, and so I'd like to also take the opportunity to welcome back our Clerk, Rick Yarish, as well as extend a great thanks to his Deputy Clerk, Tim Abbott, for filling in. So, this Assembly can get quite rowdy, though; I thank them and their entire team for their patience and support.

I rise today to speak highly of this bill, brought forward by the MLA for Spruce Woods. The amendment of the commemoration of days, weeks and months act to proclaim April 26 as community foundation day.

So what exactly is a community foundation? Community foundations are exactly what they sound like: the foundation of our communities. They address local needs, support charitable initiatives and foster community development through grants, scholarships and partnerships. They create meaningful jobs, contribute to around 2 per cent of our province's GDP and foster social awareness. In Manitoba, we have 57 community foundations, coincidentally, the same number of elected seats in this Chamber.

While each of our province's foundations had small beginnings, they have now grown to be irreplaceable. They grew out of concern for our neighbours and loved ones who received the short end of the stick. They grew out of shared struggle. They grew out of collective action. They grew out of collective responsibility. They grew out of what makes Manitoba.

The spirit of this bill is more than a symbolic gesture to the incredible work done by community foundations across Manitoba. It's an opportunity for the next generation to learn about Manitoban values of generosity and benevolence.

As the honourable member for Spruce Woods (Mr. Jackson) and I can both appreciate, young people are capable, cunning and deserving of every opportunity to make a real difference and lead. A great part of many community foundations in Manitoba are their investments in the future generation, a mission that must be celebrated.

A community foundation day could serve as another of many reasons to organize events such as volunteer drives, fundraising campaigns or public forums to showcase local impact. Locally, community

foundations champion many issues, including youth engagement, gender equality, local entrepreneurship, social innovation, environmental stewardship, among many others. No matter the cause that a young person may find themselves passionate about, there are ways to give and a community foundation day would be a strong reminder.

I was lucky to have grown up surrounded by giving. My family comes from the humblest of beginnings. My aunts and uncles grew up in a village that had very little. When my mother, father, aunts and uncles immigrated to Manitoba from the Philippines, they took up jobs on the front lines in health care, in education and the non-profit sector. They earned and they gave, no matter how little or how much they would earn. They sent a good amount of their earnings to loved ones back home. They also ensured that we never took our privileges and blessings for granted, that we used every opportunity to stretch these privileges as widely across our communities as we could.

Perhaps the best illustration that I could paint for the House would be the balikbayan box, something that most first- and second-generation Filipinos will know well. Every so often growing up, I would accompany my parents to the money transfer office where they'd send money to our loved ones back home, and one day on one of those visits, my mom—my mother—brought a big, brown folded box back into the car with us.

The entire drive home, I'd be wondering what it was for. To my child self's disappointment, it wasn't for a fort, it was never for an art project. It was a box we'd soon fill with goodies to send back home, a box we would carefully weigh, a box we would seal with an entire roll of packing tape, that was questionably sustainable, and ship off to the Philippines.

I have vivid memories of my mother bringing me around Sears or Payless shoe store, scavenging for deals, a shirt that could fit my cousin, a pair of shoes that could possibly be made use of by a small child we'd never met in the Philippines, comics, gadgets and ball caps, not because things were any cheaper in Canada than in the Philippines, but because we were in Canada and not in the Philippines. It became a tradition of ours to sweep our homes for any clothes, toys and other lightly loved items that we could share.

My family instilled humility in me, humility that caused me to believe to my core that no matter how far you get in life, you are only as far as those that you leave behind. I see this belief shared and embodied

proudly by the many people who make up our diverse socio-cultural tapestry here in Manitoba. I see this belief manifested in community foundations that fill the gaps in our society.

Community foundations often go under the radar, while those they support remain front and centre. We ought to be proud to have The Winnipeg Foundation in Manitoba, as my colleagues before me so eloquently said. The Winnipeg Foundation became the first ever community foundation in Canada in the year 1921 because of a gift of \$100,000 and a second anonymous gift of \$15. From these gifts grew a foundation that has supported Manitobans for over a century.

During my time fundraising, volunteering and working in the non-profit sector, community foundations have supported my work along the way. From endowment projects at the University of Manitoba that would provide scholarships, sponsor programming, sponsor, you know, youth leadership initiatives in the community, to the fund development at L'Arche Winnipeg and the reality that non-profit organizations in our province are faced with when it comes to fundraising. Over the past several years, it's been very difficult, but community foundations were there to ensure that non-profit organizations were held above water.

I can attest to the difference that our community foundations can make when government gaps need to be filled and good work that can get done with their support. No matter where you find yourself in Manitoba, your life has more likely than not been touched by a community foundation.

Again, community foundations are exactly what they sound like: the foundation of our communities. Their operations in Manitoba serve as a prime example of what is possible when you prioritize the collective good. For these reasons, among an infinite number more, I thank the member for Spruce Woods (Mr. Jackson) for bringing this bill forward and urge the House to offer their support.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

The Speaker: Are there no other speakers?

Hon. Jamie Moses (Minister of Economic Development, Investment, Trade and Natural Resources): I'm very pleased and happy to have the opportunity to put a few words on the record with respect to Bill 202, The Community Foundation Day Act, and I'm pleased that we're debating this. I'm pleased that it is being brought forward by one of our

newest members in the Chamber here today, and I think that it's a good chance for all of us to highlight some of the really good work that community foundations do right across our province in terms of uplifting local communities and helping people who might otherwise not have had the chance to get the support they needed.

And I think some of that work was eloquently articulated by my colleague, the member for Radisson (MLA Dela Cruz), so I thank her for those wise words. And I think, you know, talking about the unique perspective that foundations can have in uplifting new communities, I think, was also highlighted by my colleague, the member for St. Boniface (MLA Loiselle). And so I thank him for bringing that perspective into the Legislature today.

* (10:40)

For my remarks, I also want to talk about Bill 202, but as I do so, I want to also state that today being March 21, the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, is a very significant day. And so I want to take a moment here in the Legislature to put on the record my thanks and gratitude for all of those community members who are working every day to combat racism.

As someone who has faced racial discrimination myself in my life, it's important to uplift those people who make our communities better. And, in doing so, I want to make it very clear to Manitobans that, no matter the places, the spaces that we're in, doing the work to build equity, to build inclusion, to build diversity, is always worthwhile. It always makes a difference, even though it might seem very hard. And so I want to uplift those folks who are doing that work, thank them and ask all Manitobans to do their part to make sure that we put an end to racism for now and always.

As we continue to talk about Bill 202, community foundation act, I want to just say that in my local community of St. Vital, I've also seen the impacts that community foundations have had throughout my neighbourhood. I can think of many small organizations that receive funding from, for example, large organizations like The Winnipeg Foundation. And I can see the groundwork impact that has had.

I can think particularly around one organization called the Marlene Street Community Resource Centre, who provide service for a region in a small neighbourhood in St. Vital right along Marlene Street,

which is tucked in behind Lavallee School and the René Deleurme Centre just off St. Anne's Road.

It's one of these neighbourhoods that, if you're driving through St. Vital, you might not even know existed. It's off, tucked in way behind. It's right in behind the St. Anne's Road and the Seine River. Beautiful river. I know colleagues of mine have talked about doing a canoe trip along the Seine River, which is lovely and is—that area is often maintained by the Seine River—Save Our Seine community association.

But this area, Marlene Street resource centre, which gets funding from The Winnipeg Foundation, does an amazing job within their community. What they do is to help uplift and connect and build up capacity within this neighbourhood, and that service is very much needed. They've seen what is happening in the local school, Lavallee School, and they have seen what's going on in their community and they find, and consistently find every day that they work, find the gaps and they work to address them.

They work in partnership with other community organizations in the region through the René Deleurme Centre, which houses child-care facilities, which works to address nutrition issues and food scarcity, which works to help employment issues through the adult education centre, which is nearby.

And there's the three organizations which are kind of in a triangle of this one neighbourhood in St. Vital, the Marlene Street resource centre; René Deleurme Centre, which often houses child-care facilities, educational opportunities, nutrition programs; and then the Teen Stop Jeunesse building, which holds—is a youth facility for community youth to have activities and programming, as well as an adult education centre above it and other workforce training programs, specifically EDGE Skills Centre. And then, right beside that, is another Morrow Avenue child-care facility.

So these centres all work in tandem, and it's because they have the freedom, the ability to look at their community as a whole and see where and identify where the gaps are and work to address them. So even though, particularly, they might have a mandate to simply educate, well, they realize that the—might be—a barrier to education might be food, so they work to address that nutrition problem.

And that's really the whole, in my mind, the whole essence of having community foundations: that they don't work in silos; that they don't work on just one project; they don't work as individual organizations; that really, they take that community focus into work

that they do and work to build up the community as a whole. And that's what I see directly on display in my community, in St. Vital.

So I want to thank the director there, Angela Konik [*phonetic*] who has been, you know, just a passionate advocate for the community and for the neighbourhood—who puts to good use the work that she receives, the donations through the foundations, the community foundations, and would be honoured to know that we're debating, you know, this bill here today to lift up those community foundations. And the work that gets supported through those foundations to really put a positive impact on the people—not just in St. Vital—the people in Manitoba who need that help the most.

And that's really one of the reasons why I wanted to get into politics in the first place. I spent a lot of time volunteering at places, specifically at Marlene Street Resource Centre, where I helped with some of the youth programming there, but also at the Morrow Avenue, I know, child-care centre has been there as well. And there's been other areas, such as the Glenwood Community Centre where I volunteered and their parent council where I volunteered—who also receive support from organizations like this for the program that they needed.

And they did so not just to uplift the community, but do it in an equitable-building way. Where they had—we—they said, what do we do with this funding that we have? And they didn't just do it to put into building up a new hockey facility, which, of course, they did and made sure that those athletic opportunities were there, but they also had an eye on how do we make sure that our registration fees are lower, so that these opportunities are not just here for the people who can afford them, but all the people in our community.

And that's the sort of work that I think our community foundations really, really—you know, we want to highlight, because that in my mind is how these organizations build community. Show that we're having a strong focus on including everyone in activities in our community, not leaving anyone to the side.

I'm so very happy and proud that we have this chance through the bill that's being—Bill 202 that's being debated today, to highlight that work, to say that we value and think it's important work. And that we want to find ways to ensure that these types of foundations can do more of this in our community. This bill is one way that we can encourage Manitobans to shine a spotlight on these foundations,

to do—to support these organizations more. So that more of this good work can happen in my constituency, the member's opposite constituency and constituencies right across Manitoba.

And that's some of the things that I'm very proud about, one of the reasons why I wanted to get into politics and support these type of efforts. But more broadly, I think it's really what Manitobans are looking to see. They're looking to see people come together. They're looking to see community organizations work together. They're looking to see Manitobans put their divisions aside, talk about what we have in common, and find ways to push forward.

I see that work being done in community foundations and in community organizations. I want to thank them for doing that work. It is very valued. I want to know that our government wants to be here to support the really important work.

So with those words, Honourable Speaker, I want to thank the member opposite for bringing forward the bill. I want to thank all community organizations who do the hard work every day to uplift communities. And once again, thank you very much for the opportunity to speak towards this bill.

MLA Nellie Kennedy (Assiniboia): Good morning, Honourable Speaker. It pleases me to rise and speak to the community foundation act, Bill 202. I would like to thank the member from Spruce Woods for bringing this very important bill forward.

I certainly have been involved with many organizations who have received funding from community foundations. I think they play an integral and very important role within Manitoba. I, myself, having worked in social services for a number of years have worked alongside many organizations who've received funding from community foundations, such as The Winnipeg Foundation.

*(10:50)

And so, for example, the Sunshine House. Recently I was looking up the organizations who've received grants and funds from The Winnipeg Foundation. Sunshine House received \$85,000 for a peer support co-ordinator position who—certainly that will go a really long way in supporting the folks who access the services there.

The Native Clan Organization received funds for a low-barrier support group which is, I think, really important within our province to be able to provide these types of supports.

Also, way founder—Wayfinders Manitoba has received funding from The Winnipeg Foundation in the amount of \$75,000 to be able to go to youth-led anti-racist mentorship and leadership program, which is pretty incredible.

Furthermore, there is also Kidthink Children's Mental Health Centre, which is an incredible organization, and they also have received over \$30,000 from The Winnipeg Foundation.

Women's Health Clinic, that I have done a lot of work with, with my volunteer group that I co-founded, the Postpartum Depression Association of Manitoba, has worked really closely with the Women's Health Clinic. And they have received just recently within this past year \$35,000.

All of these funds go towards really improving the services and supports that these really incredibly important agencies and organizations provide within our province. Mood Disorders Association of Manitoba, an incredibly important association to do with mental health services and peer support, they received \$35,000. This—incredibly important.

The Winnipeg Foundation actually, which is pretty incredible, received a—the largest donation—charitable donation from Miriam Bergman [*phonetic*], who's really incredible, within Canada's history the largest charitable donation made: \$500 million to The Winnipeg Foundation. Can we imagine the impact that is going to make? That is a game changer for our province. It's life-changing for so many people who are going to receive services and supports from these incredible organizations who are going to benefit from this incredibly generous charitable donation. It's pretty remarkable.

An agency I'd like to speak to, that I've done a lot of work with. I am—previous to my role here as an MLA, I worked for the civil service for the Department of Families for a number of years, supporting people in the Community Living disABILITY Services program. And I worked with a number of non-profit agencies who provided support to some of our most vulnerable people in Manitoba, people who live with intellectual disabilities, people who live with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, who are, you know, needing a lot of support in the community.

An agency such as Turning Leaf Community Support Services, a remarkable agency that provides services to people whole live with intellectual disabilities, who live with mental illness. They provide incredible support and have received funding from The

Winnipeg Foundation. They provide services for people, they know the—like, really culturally sensitive and appropriate programming for people who access their services who are Indigenous, which I think is really integral and important. Putting people back in touch with their culture or extending that relationship is something that they've done a great job with.

Also, you know, having people finding work or finding a place to live, transitioning out of child welfare. They've—provide a lot of services to people. And I think this is really an incredible agency that has really benefited from The Winnipeg Foundation and the generosity of people. Philanthropists who have donated, such as Miriam Bergman [*phonetic*], to the, you know, foundations such as The Winnipeg Foundation.

And I think it's really important to recognize the donors, you know, and these foundations that really fill gaps in communities where, you know, it may seem like a small amount of funding, but these funds go—stretch a long way. I mean, non-profits, boy, do they know how to make a dollar stretch and to utilize services and funds that they get to really be impactful and change people's lives.

I just recently toured the Salvation Army Centre of Hope, and I've had a lot of dealings with the salvation for a lot of clients that I have served in the past. And, I mean, they just received from The Winnipeg Foundation \$100,000 to go towards their renovations, which are sorely needed.

And they provide just a remarkable array of services to people within, you know, the core community and, you know, they provide shelter to people who are experiencing homelessness or don't have a place to sleep overnight. They have an amazing kitchen that they serve meals to folks who are in need.

They have, you know, whole floors of the Salvation Army that are dedicated to keeping our most vulnerable people safe—women and children who are leaving, you know, domestic violence scenarios within their lives. Just incredibly important work that agencies and organizations throughout Manitoba provide to Manitobans.

Also I would say RaY, which is an incredible organization, received \$100,000 from The Winnipeg Foundation, and it was for their street outreach project. I mean, these are agencies and organizations that are providing services to our most vulnerable, whether they be youth and people who are falling through the cracks.

And so places like, you know, foundations such as The Winnipeg Foundation really provide that stop-gap measure to provide these services and supports and funding to these agencies.

I would like to also just state for the record the—my colleagues who spoke before me wanting to just really celebrate the act of generosity, the act of charity. I know, certainly, that was the way that I was raised within my family, similarly to our member from Radisson sharing stories of, you know, her family sending money to family that they had back home in the Philippines.

It was very similar in my home with, you know, me accompanying my mom and ensuring, you know, that we found a way to get money to family back home in Lebanon. Our tradition was sending cash in a letter to anyone who was travelling to Lebanon.

It was always who's going next? Which family member or any person we know—who's going? Okay, we need to go visit them. We need to take a letter saying hello to everybody and then putting some funds in the letter for whichever family member we were doing that for.

With regards to Ramadan that's happening right now, you know, within the Islamic faith there is zakat, and that means that you need to be charitable and this is something that I grew up with.

Mrs. Rachelle Schott, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

You know, every year during the month of fasting, you know, we do the same thing; I send money to family that I've never actually even met before. But it's important, because things aren't the same for our family in Lebanon as they are here in Canada. And ensuring that we are able to support them and be charitable and recognize that people within our family may need more support.

And so, you know, it's something that we're proud of in our family. I think it's important that, as human beings, we take care of each other. And I think that the, you know, foundations within Manitoba do a really great job of taking care of community.

Thank you, Deputy Honourable Speaker.

MLA Mike Moyes (Riel): I'd like to congratulate the member from Spruce Woods for bringing forward his first bill and for bringing forward a bill about the great work that community foundations do, and the positive impact that community foundations have across Manitoba.

I know the member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Khan) wants to heckle me right now, but I think that this is a really important bill, and so I would like to put a few words on the record and make sure that Manitobans know where we stand on this side of the House.

* (11:00)

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): Order please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Riel (MLA Moyes) will have nine minutes remaining.

The hour now being 11, the time for private members' resolutions is over—oh, sorry. The hour now being 11, the time for private members' resolutions.

RESOLUTIONS

Res. 6—Calling on the Provincial Government to Remove the Federal Carbon Tax on Agriculture

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): The resolution before us this morning is Resolution 6, Calling on the Provincial Government to Remove the Federal Carbon Tax on Agriculture, brought forward by the honourable member from Portage—La Vérendrye—Portage la Prairie, okay.

I recognize the honourable member for Portage la Prairie.

MLA Jeff Bereza (Portage la Prairie): Moved by MLA Bereza, seconded by MLA from Lakeside,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the provincial government to—okay.

I move, seconded by the MLA from Lakeside,

WHEREAS many Manitobans are struggling to make ends meet with the high cost of groceries; and

WHEREAS farmers in Manitoba are struggling to compete in global markets where most grain is traded with the added costs of the Federal Carbon Tax; and

WHEREAS farmers are being unfairly targeted by the Federal Carbon Tax and it is directly hurting their ability to make money; and

WHEREAS the profitability of farmers is impacted by the high cost of grain drying now that it also affected by the Federal Carbon Tax.

WHEREAS livestock producers have no alternative but to heat their barns in the winter with propane or natural gas causing increased costs of production; and

WHEREAS mushroom growers in the province are also forced to heat their production facilities with natural gas or propane driving up the cost of production; and

WHEREAS farmers are unfairly paying higher prices for fertilizer where the Federal Carbon Tax is impacting the yield of their crops, the health of the soil, and the productivity of their land; and

WHEREAS farmers are feeling that their hands are tied, and want this Provincial Government to listen to them.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the provincial government to take measures that would in effect remove the federal carbon tax on all agriculture-related production.

Motion presented.

MLA Bereza: Again, like I said, this carbon tax issue is a very serious issue that all Manitobans are dealing with.

We on this side of the House are asking the provincial government to remove the federal carbon tax on agriculture. This carbon tax is affecting every Manitoban. If you're buying groceries, eating a meal in a restaurant, you're paying carbon tax several times before your food even hits the table.

This tax, which on April 1, will be the worst April Fool's joke anyone has seen, our farmers who contribute almost 10 per cent to the GDP of this province are being unfairly targeted.

What this NDP government is trying to do is fool the citizens of Manitoba—they're giving you a 14-cent tax holiday. Wrong. Absolutely wrong.

Today, gas prices in Portage la Prairie are 139.9 a litre. On December 31, the price was 122.9 a litre. On January 1, they were 115.9. So the gas holiday—tax holiday is over. We are paying 17 cents more than we were on December 31. This gas tax holiday is gone.

But what they're—but wait. There's more. On April 1, we will be paying 23 per cent more carbon tax with the increase to the federal carbon tax. This government supports the Trudeau-Singh alliance in Ottawa and they support taxing Manitobans.

When we talk about buying a loaf of bread, I think about our independent grocers like Food Fare, Portage Supermarket. The bread has to get to the grocery store.

First it will be processed at a bakery, where they'll—bakery will be paying carbon tax on the ovens to bake that bread. Once the bread is baked, it is then shipped to a distribution centre, tax again; stored in a heated warehouse, tax again; truck delivering the bread to the grocery store, tax again; and finally sitting on the shelf, tax again. On a loaf of bread provided by a farmer, between the time the farmer puts that seed in the ground and that hits the table of a consumer, carbon tax could be collected in excess of 20 times. Who's going to be able to afford a loaf of bread?

Let's discuss a hog farmer in Steinbach, Manitoba. Hog operations are part of our ag industry that employ—our ag industry employs almost 40,000 people. We have extremely cold winters, and the only way to heat their barns are with propane or natural gas. Why is the farmer having to pay carbon tax on his barn?

They have numerous input costs, the majority of which are subject to the carbon tax. Those hogs need to be fed. They're usually fed a mixture of canola and soybeans that need to—corn, soybeans and canola that need to be grown, transported and crushed and transported, again, carbon tax—of course, being taxed at every turn. We don't punish other sectors like this, like we punish this sector. Again, the farmer that is growing soybeans or corn, like the farmer that is growing wheat, will be subject to the carbon tax many times over.

There has—there have been 387 applications for grain dryers with natural gas or propane from 2015 to 2020. An electric drying system is just not economically or practically feasible. When we're drying corn, it's in the late fall or early winter; electricity just can't keep up. When it comes to soybeans, another staple in a hog ration, it has to be crushed at a facility, a facility like Ceres Global in Jordan, Manitoba. Again, the source of energy that is used at this time is natural gas or propane. Soybean crushers—listen to this—soybean crushers in Manitoba have spent over \$150,000 a year on carbon tax. These increased costs are pressed—passed down to the farmer who then, in turn, has to try to recoup these increase in prices.

On April 1, that \$150,000 turns into almost \$200,000. Unfortunately, the producer doesn't have the opportunity to up his—up and up his prices. That can't happen as we sell our hogs not only in Canada but the US and Asia, to name a few. Once again, not giving farmers the alternative or options.

A chicken barn should maintain a temperature of 28 to 32°C. Can you imagine the cost of heating a barn at that temperature with propane or natural gas? How

do we pay to convert a chicken barn to electricity? First of all, the electricity has to be available. Or how many months or years does it take with the building inspecting, permitting—oh, and who's going to pay? The consumer is going to pay. Livestock once again has to be processed and sent to distribution sites. Carbon taxes over and over again.

But wait. There is some light at the end of the tunnel. Bill C-234 is making its way through the Parliament right now. This bill will exempt agriculture from carbon tax. It has broad-based support of all parties, including the federal NDP. With the eyes on the federal NDP leadership, I would think it's prudent that this Premier (Mr. Kinew) would follow his marching orders from Mr. Singh and support the removal of this tax.

On November 6, Premier Kinew supported our premiers in calling for the removal of the carbon tax on home heating, subsequent carve out to Atlantic provinces on home heating.

* (11:10)

The name of the Premier was not on the letter signed by the other five premiers. Our Premier wants to deflect. When asked about the carbon tax, it always is reverting to the gas tax holiday.

Here is his opportunity to make a real difference for Manitobans. Agriculture is not a business that you just increase your price of grain or livestock, as we're dealing with worldwide markets. Our neighbours in Saskatchewan and Alberta are fighting to rid farmers of carbon tax. Our government is fighting to rid Manitoba of farmers.

Again, I implore, this government across is trying to get rid of farmers. Again, I implore the NDP government, at least those of you who represent farmers, do the right thing. Support the removal of the carbon tax on agriculture.

I want to also touch base on some of the people that I've had the opportunity to speak with regarding this carbon tax, including Pitura farms. Pitura farms, tomorrow, is holding a fundraiser where they have raised in excess of \$50,000 for STARS, putting money back in. Rutherford Farms, who we got to salute the other day, who has purchased a farm for millions of dollars and is going to do agriculture research while this side of the government wants to put strings around him. Chad Berry, who is doing innovative work with sustainable potato practices; The Little Red Barn, providing farm produce on

No. 1 Highway; Kevin and Iris Yuill, supporting many activities, bike trails.

On this side of the House we like to get our facts straight before we bring things up. This is going to cause a burden from the farm gate to the plate, and it's time that we thought about what this is costing us. This is costing not only the people that it—drive the cars, but the people that are affected the most, the people that have to go to food banks. We can't afford to be cause—to be giving out extra money for no reason.

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): Member's time has expired.

Questions

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): A question period of up to 10 minutes will be held, and questions may be addressed in the following sequence: the first question may be asked by a member from another party; any subsequent questions must be—follow a rotation between parties; each independent member may ask only one question. And no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

Hon. Tracy Schmidt (Minister of Environment and Climate Change): You know, every day since we've elected this 43rd Legislature, the members of the opposition stand up and yell about carbon tax; they don't really talk about much else. They don't talk about other issues that are important to Manitobans.

The member opposite is urging our government to make a—he used the worlds: real difference, do the right thing. Well, Honourable Speaker—Deputy Speaker, their party was in government for seven years, and they had ample opportunity to do what they are asking us to do today.

So I would like to ask the member opposite, what about this hypocrisy, and why didn't your government, when they were elected, make this change?

MLA Jeff Bereza (Portage la Prairie): On this side of the House, we want to make sure that food is affordable to people out there. I can tell you that there's trucking companies out there right now that can't afford to stay in business because it is costing them so much because of this federal carbon tax. But guess what? On April 1, we're going to try and take business again and move it out of this province by, again, charging another 23 per cent carbon tax that this government across is in full support of, or are they? Because one day they're not, one day they're are.

I'm not sure what they need to do. But I think we need to think about the 70 per cent of Canadians, the 70 per cent of premiers, that are for this.

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): Order. The member's time has expired.

Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River): I want to thank my colleague from Portage la Prairie—now there is passion for stepping up for Manitobans and for the farmers.

Manitoba prides itself on the strength, history and productivity of its agriculture sector. So much of what we eat is grown, produced and processed here in Manitoba. Yet food prices are climbing at an exponential rate.

How will removing the carbon tax in agriculture use make food more affordable for Manitobans?

MLA Bereza: Thank you so much to my colleague for that question.

Every input from fertilizer to fuel—anything that these farmers do—to chemistry that they put on the crops, in order to heat a barn where these animals are grown, in order—things like mushrooms, again, heated inside of a barn. Every input: processing, transportation and overhead cost that is impacted by this carbon tax, goes down to the consumer.

So, if you just think that this is a carbon tax on agriculture, it is a carbon tax on all—

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): The member's time has expired.

MLA Schmidt: I'll note the member opposite didn't answer my first question. And rather than wasting this House's time by raising a matter of privilege, I'll get on to my second question.

Carbon emissions are the driving force behind climate change, possibly the greatest crisis facing our global planet, and certainly our local economies. Drought and flood affect agriculture producers perhaps more than anybody. Another way to save agriculture producers money, and save our planet, is to help them reduce their carbon emissions.

So, I would like to ask the member opposite what he is planning on doing to help agriculture producers reduce their carbon emissions and save them money.

MLA Bereza: Thank you to my colleague across the way.

Green energy. That's what Manitoba is known for: green energy. One of the cleanest, if not the cleanest, province in Canada.

We cannot fix the world, but we can do our part to fix the world. And that's what our agriculture producers do every day. They do not over-fertilize. They do not over-put over-too much chemical on the crop. They do not try and keep their barns at a certain temperature.

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): The member's time has expired.

Mr. Richard Perchotte (Selkirk): I really want to thank my colleague from Portage la Prairie for bringing an important issue forward.

The other side of the House doesn't seem to get it—doesn't get it at all. Some may think it's as simple as just putting seeds in the soil and coming back in the fall.

Can you explain the impact that this has on all Manitobans?

MLA Bereza: The seed grower that's putting that seed in the ground pays carbon tax when they dry the seed and when they clean the seed. It has to be done.

The trucking company pays carbon tax when you haul the seed to the producer, an extra 23 per cent that this government supports starting on April 1.

The fertilizer that produces uses this—uses—we use has carbon tax. When the producer dries their grain, they're paying carbon tax.

The PAMI organization has done some work on electric drying equipment and they are just not feasible right now for our climate and what we're doing.

* (11:20)

They take longer to dry—

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): Member's time has expired.

MLA Schmidt: Indigenous people of this land have cared for our province since time immemorial. That includes sustainable cultivation practices and agricultural practices.

So my question for the member opposite are, which First Nations, which Indigenous elders, which Indigenous leaders, Indigenous farmers, Indigenous traditional knowledge keepers did he consult with in bringing forward this resolution?

MLA Bereza: Thank you very much, Minister, for the question.

Throughout my 27 years in the agriculture business, I dealt with many Indigenous farmers, saw the way that they practise and do that. So I have talked to many different Indigenous groups on this important topic as well.

The one thing that Canadians are known for, Canadian farmers are known for, is feeding the world. And guess what? Our population continues to grow, and our growers are always looking for options that they can do a better job with our farmers.

But right now taxing them without having specific alternatives is nothing but a tax grab from this government.

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): Member's time has expired.

Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye): As the only member of this Legislative Assembly that runs a fully operational farm, I know first-hand that Manitoban producers are so competent and capable that they grow, raise and produce far more than Manitoba can consume on its own. This productivity allows them to share our bounty on a world stage.

I'd like to ask the member from Portage la Prairie, how is the carbon tax on agriculture reducing Manitoba producers' competitiveness?

MLA Bereza: Thank you so much to my colleague for that important question, because you are feeding the world. You are making a difference here. But it's costing you money.

The value of international agri-food exports was \$8.82 billion. Grains are priced on an international market. Pork and beef are priced on an international market.

Saskatchewan and Alberta have already turned their nose up at the federal carbon tax. Pretty soon those farmers, like the member beside me, that are growing these crops, are not going to be able to be competitive because they are going to have to be competing—

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): Member's time has expired.

MLA Schmidt: Agricultural producers are really the backbone of our province, and I thank the member opposite for his work in that industry.

And agriculture producers really praised our NDP government when we provided them \$2 million in savings when we reduced the Crown land leases.

It took seven years for them. Many Manitobans feel like they're finally being heard.

Can the member opposite explain why his former government jacked up Crown lease—Crown land leases by 300 per cent if you care so much about agricultural producers?

MLA Bereza: That \$2 million you supposedly saved those cattle farmers is gone in an instance with this carbon tax. This carbon tax has made us extremely uncompetitive.

So you may try and deflect about the Crown lands being coming, but it is your government that is costing people to not be able to buy groceries. It has cost our index price on groceries to go up higher than the average of Canada now.

When this government spoke that they were going to look after farmers, no, they aren't. They're costing farmers every day.

This federal carbon tax that this government is backing is doing nothing but costing our province.

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): The member's time has expired.

The time for question period has expired.

Debate

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): The floor is open for debate.

Mr. Diljeet Brar (Burrows): What a passionate morning, what a wonderful discussion, what a wonderful question period. I want to say thank you to the minister for Environment for such wonderful, great questions, and my friends from the other side for good questions.

Carbon, carbon, carbon—that is the problem. Climate change is the problem. We have these problems. That's why we are here discussing this topic. And when we are debating this resolution on this floor, we need to talk about the intent of this resolution.

I want to clearly say this, and I want to clearly ask everybody here in this Chamber: Did the PC government at that time, in 2018, did they vote in favour of putting a price on carbon in Manitoba, yes or no?

I want to remind my friends on the other side that it was your team that voted in favour of carbon tax. And today, you're saying the opposite. I think what you need to do is—well, you did a great job debating; it would create a nice video clip for your constituents. But I want to say this to all Manitobans: whosoever watches that wonderful clip with passion, you should also watch the clips from this side from today's debate. Then you would know the truth.

All this—all these members on the opposite side, are they really in favour of making lives better for the farming community in Manitoba? No, a big no. They are not. It's on record that they have not stood up with the farming community in Manitoba when they were in power. *[interjection]*

Thank you. Let me speak, please. Let me speak, please. You spoke this morning; I didn't say a word. I respectfully listened to what you said and my colleagues on this side of the House respectfully debated that topic. Okay, I think, yes, let's move forward.

I was a critic for four years in this Chamber. I got an opportunity to talk to so many producers during those four years. I have talked to Crown land leaseholders. I have talked to cattle ranchers in Interlake, around Ste. Rose. They were not appreciative of the way the PC government at that time handled ag issues.

My first tour after I got elected in 2019 was to Ste. Rose. It was a meeting organized by Crown land leaseholders, 200 to 300 people in a room. They were talking about the Crown land lease regulation changes brought by the PC government at that time. And one of them was speaking at the podium and said: Who was consulted before making those changes? Raise your hands. None from that group.

And those are the stakeholders, those were the people who were taking care of the land. Those were the people, stewards of the land. Those were the people who were being impacted by those changes.

Is that respectful? Is that how we respect the farmers in Manitoba? Is that how we support the cattle industry?

I am still getting people coming to me talking about how we can make cattle industry better.

* (11:30)

And yes, I want to remind the members opposite that the first failed Ag minister after 2016, what did he say? Let's double the cattle herd in Manitoba. Was there any action after that on that commitment? No. We lost cattle. We lost farmers. Farmers went out of

business. They had to downsize, they had to suffer and they were under pressure. The circumstances in the industry and the government policies under PCs did not favour them.

And, recently, I got a rancher in my office, and he was sharing so many things with me. He said so many producers, especially in Interlake, they are getting out of business due to the failed policies of the PC government at that time.

And how is it impacting the industry? How is it impacting the local economies? I have real examples. My friend shared with me that—see, there are so many producers who are married to people from different professions there.

So once a producer gets out of business, it's not just that producer, it's not just that family. It's the whole community being impacted by that happening, by that stress, by that situation. Many of the spouses could be working in health care in rural Manitoba. Many of them could be schoolteachers, and it's discouraging when those people cannot keep up with their businesses because of lack of support from the government at that time.

So, the cattle industry is in bad shape. We need to be thinking about the succession planning for those retiring farmers. They are worried about their future, their family's future, the future of the land.

I know that the farmers are the best people to tell us how to take care of the land, but that doesn't mean that we know everything. We, as a society, as an industry, we are evolving. There is a lot of research and development needed. I would be happy to see those discussions in this Chamber. If you got that opportunity to bring something to the floor, let's bring something that matters. Let's work together to address the issues that really matter.

How about the training facilities? How about investing in training and education? I want to remind the members opposite that IEAP program, internationally educated agrologists program, was brought forward by the NDP government, and it bridged the gap between what we need and what we have.

So many internationally educated agrologists, starting in 2008, they started getting into that course, which was a quick one-year course, and it helped people to connect to the industry. It helped the employers to get a trained workforce. Why are we not talking about that? Why are we not talking about the people?

Yesterday, I was at the school of agriculture at University of Manitoba, and I got a chance to evaluate some assignments from students. And I have international students studying agriculture here. Those are the future leaders. Let's start talking about how to retain those people, how to create training facilities.

Our government is committed to invest in that field. We are in discussions with various post-secondary educational institutions to make things better.

And we are losing revenue because we do not have enough workforce in agriculture. And I think we would be having every fifth position weakened by 2029 in agriculture in Manitoba. We need to address these things and make farmers' lives better.

Thank you, Honourable Deputy Speaker.

Hon. Ron Kostyshyn (Minister of Agriculture): Thank you, MLA from Burrows. A very well-documented information that resonates with me as a cattle producer, as a rancher for 40 years of my life.

And I did have Crown land when I ranched, and then the reason—one of the many reasons why I had Crown land, because it was economical as a young producer trying to grow a family, trying to sustain family lifestyle, was a reasonable investment in Crown lands, because we knew that it was profitable, cost-saving for young families.

What we've witnessed in the last seven and a half years of this PC government, what they've done to the young ranchers' potential farm families of existence is a shame to today's family lifestyle on agriculture.

We had two ministers—in fact, he landed up on the third minister, because they didn't know what to do. When they started modernizing the agriculture Crown lands, they kept flipping them around because, unfortunately, the minister from members opposite made decisions that had 'radifling' effects to farm families.

And let me share some of the thoughts that I heard from representatives in my area, much to the MLA of Burrows' commentary about—

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): Order.

Point of Order

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): Member for Spruce Woods, on a point of order.

Mr. Grant Jackson (Spruce Woods): We were pretty lenient with the previous speaker.

I'd call a point of order on relevance. We're talking about the carbon tax here, and both the previous

two speakers haven't yet mentioned the words carbon tax yet in their remarks.

So I'd just ask that you urge the members to actually speak about the resolution at hand.

Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): It's a great opportunity to stand up to support members of this side of the House to speak directly to this point of order, which I think falls into the category of so many points of privilege and—matters of privilege and points of order that we've heard over the last number of days.

Seems to me that maybe members opposite, once again, don't want to debate the facts. They simply want to gum up the system, shut down democracy here in the Legislature and prevent our members from debating this particular private member's resolution.

To the specific points raised by the member opposite, I think he should have given the courtesy to his colleague who brought this private member's resolution, the member for Portage la Prairie (MLA Bereza), who spent a good three quarters of his remarks here in the House talking about the impact for the ag industry, and talking about the impact to producers in this province. And that's—I think then would mean that it's fair game to talk about all the ways that producers in this province have been impacted, and specifically, about the inaction of the former government when it comes to affordability for our ag industry.

And so, I think it's well within our—the debate that's already started and well within the parameters of this particular PMR.

If the member opposite is saying that he doesn't want to talk about affordability for producers in this province, he should put that on the record.

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): Any other speakers on the point of order?

* (11:40)

I would rule that there is no point of order. Members are given a degree of flexibility, but I would ask that, moving forward, that the minister bring his comments back to the resolution.

* * *

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): I'll re-recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Mr. Kostyshyn: I was eventually going to get to the point of the subject, but I apologize if they didn't

'suspeculate' that that intent about the Crown lands was one of the most challenging things that producers faced.

And I know that the carbon tax, as the members opposite are talking about, it's quite ironic that they were in government, and what did they choose to do? They sat on their hands and they said, well, it's going to go away. Maybe it'll go away, or maybe we're going to lose government and we'll blame the NDP for their choices moving forward.

But I do want to get back on the subject about affordability that seems to be the topic that the members are bringing forward on a constant basis. And let me remind them that the Crown lands, the cattle operations, continuing to dwindle down population-wise. And I distinctly remember seven years ago, five and a half years ago, the Agriculture minister from that side says, we need to increase the cattle population in the province of Manitoba and make it affordable for the cattle producers to sustain an existence.

Well, somehow that mission statement never even got any ground. It went from a positive to a negative and continues to be a negative. And why, do we ask, why does it continue to be a negative scenario? It's simply because decisions made of affordability, of helping out producers in the cattle industry, really went out the back door and continues to be in the back door.

So why, we as a government, now have made a decision to help out producers—we want to talk about economy and helping out the rural landscape. It takes population base to help out the rural economy, to strive and continue to grow so we can maintain student population in smaller communities, the grocery stores. And we talk about viability and affordability—that's not even talked about.

The carbon tax definitely is a subject of interest and consideration, but I always go back to the same sentence—same question. Why is members opposite chose not to address it when they were in government, remained silent?

So I ask—producers, that were producers on that side of the family, chose not to do it. *[interjection]* I hear the highway minister talking about the importance of highway and sewer construction, helping out producers.

The Speaker in the Chair

The highways minister chooses not to even discuss the subject about improving highway infrastructure when he was in government for seven and a half years and he chooses now to criticize that there's a lack of infrastructure funding. I beg the question to member opposite about the importance of infrastructure development.

They choose to criticize the Manitoba municipalities by phasing infrastructure funding, and where do they find the money? So the municipal governments turn around and have to find additional dollars by raising land taxes because that government chose to freeze infrastructure funding.

And I'm sure members opposite that were with the AMM knows exactly what I'm talking about, member from Lakeside, as we had joint duties on the AMM board. And I was sitting on the AMM board and that was often brought up: What is the PC government doing? Why are they criticizing municipal governments that are part of the rural economic development? They chose—they froze funding for seven and a half years, and then in the last two months, well, let's mail out a bunch of cheques so we can maybe make things look a lot better.

We talk about affordability? Affordability is not raising taxes through the municipal government—what you guys forced municipal governments to do. Unfortunately, that was not the vision that that government, seven and a half years ago, chose not to consider that as a sacrifice of affordable living for producers and families that live out in the rural landscape of opportunity.

So I'm really disappointed that we have some farmers—and members opposite never really had much thought about it. And we talked about—to the previous highway minister—when we talked about the ICIP money that was a pot of money that was with the federal government, but they chose—they chose not to take advantage of 50-cent dollars, and why is that? That's a question I ask members opposite. Where did that money go? Where did it go? No, they chose not to use it.

In fact, it wasn't that long ago members opposite, previous highway minister, was complaining about a highway in his geographic area that was not developed. So I have a thousand and one questions why members opposite choose to chirp rather—when they were—not take responsibility of decisions they made but now chirp about we're at fault of stunts—stuff that never got done because that government chose not to use their dollars wisely.

I do want to say that, unfortunately, we see the young farm families. I was really honoured to 'astend'—attend the Canadian Outstanding Young Farmers', and I know the critic from Portage was in attendance, as well, and the local MLA was in attendance as well, and, you know what, it was a civil conversation that—it thing—with the two MLAs across. Question period's a different topic, mind you, but we talk about the social.

But one of things I want to emphasize, the importance about the two outstanding nominees, and we do have two individuals from Mill Creek organics natural farms in Ste. Agathe—were very, very interesting to listen and talk to them, and the initiative ideas where they talked about moving forward of the new innovative ways of farming in—opportunity. But they also referred to Crown lands as also an important component moving forward in their discussion.

It is really amazing, Honourable Speaker, that members opposite choose to cherry-pick on various subjects of the importance. I'm here. Our government on this side of the House is here to represent all people in rural Manitoba—all of Manitoba. We need to work together, but there is an important component of the opportunity to sustain economic development in rural Manitoba.

I'm very 'ploud'—proud to be here; spent 27 years in municipal government, and they choose not to recognize their choices of the ICIP project to make things—life affordable for producers. That government chose not take advantage of the 50-cent dollar that could have been used, that would save the government a lot of dollars and the taxpayers—we want to talk about affordabilities. We want to talk about 50-cent dollars that your government chose not to use for the benefit of infrastructure development throughout.

And, you know what, at the end of the day, when we talk about Crown lands, I'm a little concerned that when we talk about agriculture, Crown lands was—what's going to be the next Crown lands opportunity? Were they going to go after the cottage owners of Crown land and treat—like they treated agriculture; 15 years and you're going to have to bid on your property where your cottage sits on? I ask that question. Is that something that that government was thinking about moving forward?

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Kostyshyn: I know it's a very touchy subject. You can hear the excitement starting to roar in the background, but maybe the reality is they notice because

maybe that's what would have happened to the cottage owners, much like they treated the agriculture producers. Every 15 years, you got a cottage and you're—

The Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Doyle Piwniuk (Turtle Mountain): I'd like to put a few words on for the resolution that was brought forward as my—from my colleague from Portage la Prairie. It's so important that we have to talk about this when it comes to the federal tax, Honourable Speaker.

I want to be more calmer than the last speaker and making sure that my message gets out there instead of shouting and—a bunch of—all over the map here. And he doesn't have to realize, too, the member—the agriculture member, when he was in government—and he needs a history lesson for all the new members here, what he did in the past for farmers and basically allowing infrastructure to actually destroy—*[interjection]* Yes, yes. There was a lot of times, Honourable Speaker, when the infrastructure all across our province, they overspent at every other department except for infrastructure. They raid, raid and then parade just before an election. And the member from Dauphin will remember that.

But, again, the importance here is I'm going to talk about carbon tax.

* (11:50)

The carbon tax, you know what, this federal government—the Liberal—and coalition government with the NDP, when it came to carbon tax—you know, one of the things that, in my neck of the woods, is that there is oil and gas. And it's so important, because it does be able to produce a lot of revenue for this province.

And the revenue that was produced in our corner of the province, the member remembers, from Dauphin, that he made sure that all of his constituency was looked after, but when it came to southwestern Manitoba, where the revenue came from, they ignored it. And that was reason why I ran and I'm here today.

Because oil and gas is so important, especially when it came to the energy pipeline that was going to be constructed, making sure that, you know, a place like Moosomin was going to have a pumping station, created a lot of jobs. But this Liberal government—federal Liberal government cancelled it. And the thing is the opportunity cost that we have.

And the ironic thing about carbon tax and carbon footprint is when the oil that on pipelines could have been shipped to Quebec and the Maritimes, but instead,

the Liberal government cancelled it. And now we're shipping oil with ships, with carbon, all the way from Saudi Arabia. We do not need to pay for Saudi Arabia oil here when we have oil in western Canada and here in Manitoba.

And meanwhile, the carbon tax that the federal government has put on to Manitobans here. And the thing is, we, when we were in government, we tried to create our own carbon program, but they refused to listen to us, because, again, they didn't—not stand up for us.

We had Manitoba Hydro, and what was the cleanest energy we were, but we're still penalized.

Here in the Maritimes now, Honourable Speaker, we're able to get exemptions on oil heating, but when it comes to natural gas, which is even cleaner than oil heat, we are not getting the exemption here. And it's affordability. If they're talking about affordability, that is the affordability.

And when it comes to oil and gas in this region, we could have been supplying Quebec. And, you know, instead, a railway line was given to oil—to Quebec, and we actually had a community that was destroyed by an explosion, by the derailment. Lac Mégiti *[phonetic]* was the community—was when the—was destroyed because of a rail derailment. And that was very, very tragically for that community, because the fact is, we could have had a safe pipeline.

Our pipeline creates oil everywhere in this province. And we see this pipeline right now, this gas pipeline, that is going to be impacting the province of Manitoba, the city of Winnipeg, of gas supplies.

This is critical and is so important, but this federal government ignored when it comes to the carbon tax, and our farmers, who supply so much of the grain and supplies and commodities for this province.

You know, when we were in government, we actually had record investment coming into this province right now, when it came to such places like Portage la Prairie, for Roquette. Like, one of the biggest investments in Manitoba history was invested just in that square mile when it came to Simplot. And the thing was, these farmers have to get their commodities shipped to those processing centres. It's providing a lot of jobs in our province right now.

And we need good roads and new—good infrastructure to making sure that—Portage la Prairie was ignored when it came to infrastructure around it. Such highways as Highway 23, that the NDP ignored for so

many years—Highway 2, Highway 3. And so this is a time that we actually got them done.

And so, Honourable Speaker, we are—we actually now are supplying so much grain to the processing centres in Portage la Prairie, and so this is why it's so important that we exempt carbon tax for shipping grains to the processing centres of Portage la Prairie.

So the member for that—member for Justice—the Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe), like, he remembers that the dark days of the NDP too, that the thing is, they made it unaffordable for a lot of the farmers. They actually increased the property tax for education taxes. They actually increased the payroll taxes, Honourable Speaker.

And the thing is, this is why it's so important that we provide so much jobs in the region. The farming industry supplies so many jobs in the area, that we make sure that we are actually making sure that it's—they're sustainable when it comes to operating their farms.

A lot of times, the NDP will look at a farmer and saying, well, they're rich, they're rich farmers. But, you know, yes, they are asset-rich, but when it comes to cash, they're cash poor. When it comes to making sure, like, if we have a bad year, Honourable Speaker, it's really important that it's the—when it comes to pricing our grain, the predictability of costs when it comes to the input costs as a farmer. It is so important that we make gasoline, fuel, diesel so affordable for farmers.

And that's what we are just asking here: to reduce, to eliminate the carbon tax on farmers when it comes to making sure that we feed the world right now. We're feeding the Canadians right now. We're feeding Manitobans.

And we just want to ask the NDP to be part of this resolution to making sure that this pass. So on that, Honourable Speaker, I want—these are the few words I want to put down and I—hopefully that the NDP will be on our side to pass this resolution.

Thank you.

MLA David Pankratz (Waverley): I thank you, Honourable Speaker, for allowing me to stand on this very passionate issue this morning, from both sides. I appreciate the thorough-bust conversation that's being had across the Chamber here.

So, you know, I do have to say that I've got three kids at home, and so sometimes I know that transition and change can be difficult for them. And so, I would

just sort of suggest maybe as we go through some of these changes, as you find yourself on that side of the Chamber, maybe we can just take a deep breath and try to have a conversation. I always tell my kids: Count to ten, relax for a moment, and then we can try to talk about it calmly. So, just some recommendations for all: We could maybe have some more polite discourse here in the Chamber.

So, you know, I want to say there's been sort of this characterization that keeps coming at us as though we know nothing about farmers. We have no history with farmers. What I've seen over the past seven years—I have connections all over this province, by the way, so—my family emigrated here, as I spoke before but got cut off unfortunately, ran out of time, from Russia and were all farmers when they got here. There's some in Boissevain. There were some in Steinbach. They were all over this great province.

And so when I sit here and I hear that over the last seven years you've jacked up Crown lease 300 per cent. You started getting more and more frustrated with our tax—the gas tax holiday that we gave to farmers, too, on dyed gas, too, so they're saving money there—*[interjection]*

An Honourable Member: Our amendment.

MLA Pankratz: Yes—well, no, and now they're heckling. I guess they don't like the idea that we are saving farmers money. That goes against their sort of narrative that they're bringing forward here, right?

So I'm happy to stand up for a moment and sort of defend the work that we are doing on this side to actually communicate with the farmers, right? We're going out to speak with them. Our Ag Minister is out constantly speaking to stakeholders to see what it is that we can actually do to save them money.

This is not myopic focus here, as the opposition has shown, which is carbon tax, carbon tax, carbon tax; the only thing we seem to talk about when we debate this, right?

There're a lot of things, as I know because, you know, you speak often about how you are careful with the fiscal responsibility in the province. You care about finances, right?

So we should also understand that there's more to the province and how this economy runs than the carbon tax. And our Ag Minister has been out actually making those significant changes and having substantive conversations about this.

So I thank the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Kostyshyn), and I'd love for everyone to give him a round of applause for the hard work he's been doing for people across this province.

The other thing is, just to this point, and a little bit of background. I loved, as a kid, driving around in the country with my grandfather. He worked for Federated Co-ops. He sold feed and seed—*[interjection]*—no, that was a different grandfather that you're thinking of.

But I loved that we drove around. We would meet with farmers—and I know that things have changed agriculturally since the '80s, things have shifted—but the one thing that I saw over and over again is their deep need to communicate and be a part of that community.

They fed us, they made sure they took care of us. They were working hard on the land every single day. And I just want to put on the record that the NDP knows for a fact that farmers are a cornerstone of our

economy and we will always support what they have to say—*[interjection]*

An Honourable Member: Let's back them up.

MLA Pankratz: Always. We always back them up. And I know again, getting heckling from the other side on this—I'm not sure why I thought that would be something we could all agree on, but that's fair. I understand; it can be frustrating sometimes.

So, what I will finish on today, because I think I am running out of time, is that as the opposition sort of clings to these last hopeless bits of relevance in the province and they sort of tell us that we don't understand what Manitobans—

The Speaker: Order please.

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

The hour being 12 o'clock, this House is recessed and stands recessed until 1:30.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, March 21, 2024

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