

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

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

**Vol. LXXVIII No. 38 - 10 a.m., Friday, April 5, 2024**

ISSN 0542-5492

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

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

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, April 5, 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 and Nehethowuk nations. We acknowledge Manitoba is located on the Homeland of the Red River Métis. We acknowledge northern Manitoba includes lands that were and are the ancestral lands of the Inuit. We respect the spirit and intent of treaties and treaty making and remain committed to working in partnership with First Nations, Inuit and Métis people in the spirit of truth, reconciliation and collaboration.

Please be seated.

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS  
INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

**Bill 29—The Body Armour and  
Fortified Vehicle Control Amendment Act**

**Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** I move, seconded by Minister of Finance (MLA Sala), that Bill 29, The Body Armour and Fortified Vehicle Control Amendment Act, be now read a first time.

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Wiebe:** Honourable Speaker, I am pleased to introduce this Bill 29, the body armour and forfeiture—fortified vehicle control amendment act. This bill prohibits after-market hidden compartments in vehicles, which are used to conceal illicit drugs, criminal proceeds, firearms and other contraband.

This bill will allow law enforcement to seize a vehicle with a prohibited after-market hidden compartment. The vehicle is fortified if the owner or person with a prior registered interest in the vehicle does not

pay the cost to seize the vehicle and remove the compartment before a specified date.

I am pleased to present this bill to the House for its consideration.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? [*Agreed*]

**Bill 30—The Unexplained Wealth Act  
(Criminal Property Forfeiture Act  
and Corporations Act Amended)**

**Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance, that Bill 30, The Unexplained Wealth Act (Criminal Property Forfeiture Act and Corporations Act Amended), be now read a first time.

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Wiebe:** Honourable Speaker, I am pleased to introduce Bill 30, The Unexplained Wealth Act (Criminal Property Forfeiture Act and Corporations Act Amended).

This bill amends The Criminal Property Forfeiture Act to establish unexplained wealth orders in Manitoba. If granted by the court, these orders require suspected drug traffickers and other criminals to disclose documents and submit to examinations about their assets and wealth, or risk forfeiture proceedings initiated by the director of Criminal Property Forfeiture.

Bill 30 also amends The Corporations Act to require Manitoba companies to disclose their beneficial owners to the police, regulatory agencies and the director of Criminal Property Forfeiture. This will give law enforcement more power to investigate suspected criminals.

The bill also makes several minor amendments to The Criminal Property Forfeiture Act, including designated crypto assets as property for the purposes of forfeiture.

Honourable Speaker, I am pleased to present this bill to the House for its consideration.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Is it the will of the House to adopt the motion? [*Agreed*]

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

### Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs Third Report

**MLA Mintu Sandhu (Chairperson):** Honourable Speaker, I wish to present the third report of the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs.

**Clerk (Mr. Rick Yarish):** Your Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs presents the following as its third report.

**Some Honourable Members:** Dispense.

**The Speaker:** Dispense.

*Your Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs presents the following as its Third Report.*

#### Meetings:

*Your Committee met on April 4, 2024, at 10:00 a.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building.*

#### Matters under Consideration:

- *Report and Recommendations of the Judicial Compensation Committee dated November 21, 2023*

#### Committee Membership:

- *Mr. BALCAEN*
- *Mr. GOERTZEN*
- *MLA MALOWAY*
- *MLA SANDHU*
- *Mrs. SCHOTT*
- *Hon. Mr. WIEBE*

*Your Committee elected MLA SANDHU as the Chairperson*

*Your Committee elected Mrs. SCHOTT as the Vice-Chairperson*

*Substitutions received during Committee proceedings:*

- *MLA MOROZ for MLA MALOWAY*

#### Public Presentations:

*By leave, your Committee heard one presentation on the Report and Recommendations of the Judicial Compensation Committee dated November 21, 2023, from:*

*Kristen Worbanski, Provincial Judges Association of Manitoba*

#### Motions:

*Your Committee agreed to the following motion:*

- *THAT the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs:*

*accept the recommendations in Schedule A; and recommend the same to the Legislative Assembly.*

### SCHEDULE A

#### Recommendations of the Judicial Compensation Committee accepted by the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs

1. *That the annual salaries for puisne Judges of the Provincial Court of Manitoba are:*
  - a. *April 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024, is \$327,000;*
  - b. *April 1, 2024, to March 31, 2025 – a cumulative adjustment equal to the annual percentage change in the average weekly earnings for Manitoba on April 1, 2024;*
  - c. *April 1, 2025, to March 31, 2026 – a cumulative adjustment equal to the annual percentage change in the average weekly earnings for Manitoba on April 1, 2025.*

*The percentage change in the average weekly earnings shall be calculated based on the percentage change over the preceding calendar year.*

*This recommendation should apply to all who were judges as of April 1, 2023, including those who retire or otherwise leave the Bench prior to implementation.*

2. *That the salary differentials for the Chief Judge and the Associate Chief Judges remain in place as of April 1, 2023. This will mean a salary of \$353,160 for the Chief Judge and \$343,350 for the Associate Chief Judges for the 2023 fiscal year.*

*This recommendation shall apply to all judges who were either a Chief Judge or an Associate Chief Judge as of April 1, 2023, including those who retire or otherwise leave the bench prior to implementation.*

3. *Simple interest shall be paid from April 1, 2023, to the date of retroactive payment of salary increase(s) including the differentials for the administrative judges and related per diems for senior judges, in accordance with the relevant prejudgment and post-judgment interest rates as set out in The Court of King's Bench Act;*

4. *Pre-judgment interest shall be payable from April 1, 2023, to the date the recommendations are implemented (whether by vote of the Legislature or by virtue of s. 11.1 (29) of the Act), and post-judgement interest should be payable from that date to the date that judges are paid the resulting retroactive adjustments.*
5. *Interest shall be paid within 60 days of the date that judges are paid the resulting retroactive adjustments.*
6. *The Province shall pay 75% of the Association's reasonable legal costs to a maximum aggregate of \$55,000.*
7. *The Province shall pay 100% of the Association's disbursements, including the costs of experts to a maximum of \$30,000.*

**Report Considered and Concluded:**

*Your Committee has completed consideration of the Report and Recommendations of the Judicial Compensation Committee dated November 21, 2023.*

**MLA Sandhu:** Honourable Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for the Kildonan-River East (Mrs. Schott), that the report of the committee be received.

**Motion agreed to.**

**The Speaker:** Tabling of reports? Ministerial statements?

**MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**

**Youville Community Health Centre**

**MLA Mike Moyes (Riel):** Today, I rise in recognition of the Youville Community Health Centre and its incredible staff, who work to promote safe and accessible community health care. Located in Riel, Youville provides health-care services to Manitobans of all ages.

Weekly classes are held for expecting parents alongside a Teen Clinic where youth can receive confidential health care, counselling and pregnancy and parental classes in a judgment-free environment. Youville also provides comprehensive seniors' programming for older Manitobans.

Youville strives to build healthy-living practices into all their health-care programs, responding to needs before they become more urgent. Specialized nutrition services and cooking programs that help folks incorporate realistic and healthy patterns into

daily life are just some of the many ways Youville promotes preventative health care.

I recently had the opportunity to tour the Youville Community Health Centre with some of my southeast Winnipeg colleagues. We learned about their community food bank, which helps feed families and reduce food waste. The food bank is run in collaboration with the Co-op grocery store across the street who provides regular donations. Over the years, the centre and its partners have demonstrated a keen understanding of the community's needs.

By working collaboratively with participants to find individual, effective and appropriate health-care plans, Youville models an effective approach to community leadership.

I am humbled to have such exemplary neighbours in my constituency of Riel. The Youville team are true change makers who show us that all change begins one person at a time.

Honourable Speaker, I ask that everyone would please join me in thanking the incredible Youville team, many of whom are seated in the gallery today, for their dedication to the people of Riel and Manitoba.

\* (10:10)

**Lon Schwartz**

**Mr. Grant Jackson (Spruce Woods):** I rise today to pay tribute to a remarkable Spruce Woods constituent, Lon Schwartz.

Lon Schwartz began his policing career in 2004 with the RCMP, graduating in Regina and serving in various positions in Saskatchewan, including the integrated intelligence and organized crime, major crimes and homicide and the federal Integrated Border Enforcement Team.

In 2018, Lon joined the Dakota Ojibway police force, now the Manitoba First Nations Police Service, working as a detective and allowing him to settle down with his family in Brandon. In 2021, Lon became the chief of the Rivers Police Service, where he has led his team in implementing various initiatives, including youth restorative justice programming, interagency collaboration, the reintroduction of the auxiliary constable program and the Rivers police cadets, to name just a few.

Earlier this year, Lon announced that he would be stepping back as Rivers police chief in order to rejoin the Manitoba First Nations Police Service in a new

position overseeing a multidiscipline criminal investigations unit.

I want to take this opportunity to thank Lon for his time as chief of police in Rivers and for his many years of 'dedicated'—dedicated service in uniform.

Thank you, Lon, for the work that you have done and will continue to do to keep Manitobans safe.

I'd also like to thank his family for sharing their husband and father with our communities.

On behalf of all Manitobans, Lon, I wish you all the best in the—this next stage of your career. Congratulations.

### **RCAF 100th Anniversary**

**MLA David Pankratz (Waverley):** Today, I rise to honour the 100th anniversary of the Royal Canadian Air Force.

Last Monday, service members and Manitobans from across the province paid tribute to the RCAF for its incredible 100 years of service. From disaster relief efforts during floods and wildfires to community engagement programs that foster unity and resilience, the RCAF's presence in Manitoba has been a consistent source of hope and support.

Their work promoting STEM education among our youth, engaging in environmental conservation projects and providing critical search-and-rescue operations illustrates an unwavering commitment to not only our safety, but our prosperity as well.

As we celebrate this centennial, I commend the RCAF's role in shaping a better future for Manitoba through their dedication to service and excellence. Their legacy is not just one of aerial achievements, but of meaningful ground-level impact that touches the lives of all Manitobans.

As military envoy, I have witnessed first-hand the significant contributions of the RCAF to the well-being of our province. Beyond their duty of protecting our skies, the RCAF has been an integral part of our community, involved in countless initiatives that improve our daily lives.

Here's to 100 years of the RCAF's achievements and their significant contributions to the well-being of Manitoba and its communities. I know they'll continue to support our province and country for many decades to come.

And to all the hard-working people of the RCAF, thank you for your commitment to Canada's defence and peacekeeping efforts around the world.

*Sic itur ad astra:* such is the pathway to the stars.

Thank you.

### **Pitura Seeds STARS Fundraiser**

**Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland):** Honourable Speaker, I am thrilled to rise in the House today to recognize two important organizations that have worked together for all Manitobans.

I am pleased in the gallery we are joined by the team from Pitura Seeds and Tracy Dowdy [*phonetic*] from STARS ambulance.

Pitura Seeds is a family-run, family-operated seed business from the small 80-person town of Domain, south of Winnipeg.

On March 22, Pitura Seeds hosted a polar plunge to raise money for STARS at their farm. Over 18 jumpers from across Manitoba joined the Pitura Seeds crew, along with the Macdonald Fire Department and the Hutterian Emergency Aquatic Response Team, to partake in the polar plunge. And with an initial fundraising goal of \$50,000, the participants raised over \$72,000 for STARS ambulance.

In the 10 years that I have had the pleasure and opportunity to get to know the folks at Pitura Seeds, I've witnessed their incredible commitment to their community. When I first reached out to Pitura Seeds about this member's statement, the first thing they said is this was truly a rural community effort from across Manitoba.

This is what rural Manitoba is all about, supporting each other and raising each other up, and this exemplifies the folks from Pitura Seeds. So, I want to say thank you to STARS for providing this vital service to Manitobans, and a big thank you to Pitura Seeds for hosting this successful event to raise money for STARS ambulance.

And to thank you for the many things that you do for Domain, the surrounding communities and all across Manitoba.

Thank you.

### **Harry Schellenberg**

**Hon. Tracy Schmidt (Minister of Environment and Climate Change):** Honourable Speaker, today I rise to honour and to sincerely thank my friend, Harry Schellenberg, a proud educator, active community

member, father, grandfather and former member of the Manitoba Legislative Assembly for Rossmere from 1993 to 1995 and again from 1999 'til 2007.

Throughout his time in this Chamber, Harry was a fierce advocate for students, educators, health-care workers, farmers, poverty activists and everyday Manitobans. Having lived all over Manitoba, he came to this place with a deep understanding of the challenges that faced both rural and urban communities, and pushed our province to build an equitable, fair and prosperous economy for every Manitoban.

Harry worked closely with educators across this province to ensure every kid had access to quality multilingual education, as a founding member of Manitoba Parents for German Education. Harry taught for more than 30 years, including at River East Collegiate for more than 20 years, engaging young minds in current issues related to workers' rights, public health care and public welfare. He also taught at Stony Mountain penitentiary where he empowered folks to find a second chance in life through education. Throughout his time in office, Harry worked tirelessly to strengthen Manitoba's public institutions.

Harry is a cherished friend to many in this Chamber. He walked alongside us in our recent campaigns, and we've walked alongside him as he's battled cancer in recent years. Recently, Harry's fight has gotten more difficult and he has surrounded himself with friends and family. And I know that him and his wife, Irene, are tuning in with us today from their home.

I invite all members to join me in honouring Harry Schellenberg for his extraordinary service to the people of Manitoba.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### Price of Provincial Carbon Tax Request for Government Plan

**Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Leader of the Official Opposition):** I'd like to start today's question period off with saying congratulations to the Winnipeg Jets for clinching a playoff berth in this year's Stanley Cup Playoffs.

Honourable Speaker, the Premier avoided answering my question yesterday when I asked him about his plans to bring in the Manitoba carbon tax. He didn't want to speak out of turn because his boss was in town. The Prime Minister on the other hand has been clear, saying, and I quote, it cannot be free to pollute anywhere around the country, end quote.

Does the Premier agree or disagree with the Prime Minister?

**Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier):** My boss is the people of Manitoba.

I want to also congratulate the Winnipeg Jets. I look forward to sharing that message in person with the ownership group in a short time.

I also want to take this opportunity to add our commentary to what the Minister of Environment and Climate Change (MLA Schmidt) has said about a very sweet man, Harry Schellenberg. Harry, we love you. Thank you so much for your service to our province and country.

When it comes to a carbon tax, we've stood against the PC efforts to bring in a carbon tax here in Manitoba. We're working with the federal government to find a way to lift the federal backstop here, and the whole while we brought the provincial fuel tax to zero to save you and your family money.

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

**Mr. Ewasko:** Once again, Premier stands in his place and talks about temporary tax relief to Manitobans, whereas we put in long-standing tax relief to Manitobans.

\* (10:20)

The Prime Minister said to local media on Wednesday that he looks forward to working with the Premier on a Manitoba carbon tax since it cannot be free to pollute here.

Meanwhile, the Premier, who claims he wants to work with the federal government, then went behind the Prime Minister's back and announced he won't propose a Manitoba carbon tax, a little bit more of a flip-flop.

So here's the choice the Premier actually has: he can create a carbon tax higher than the federal carbon tax, institute a cap and trade tax like Quebec or institute a carbon tax plus output-based pricing, like his friends in BC.

Can the Premier share with Manitobans what the price of pollution would be now and how high it will go, Honourable Speaker? Just answer the question.

**Mr. Kinew:** We don't need a federal backstop in Manitoba. I said this at the podium in front of the Prime Minister yesterday. I said this in response to media questions yesterday, the day before, the week

before, the month before, the year before, during the same time that the PCs were trying to bring in a carbon tax of their own. And all the while, each and every day, we've made life more affordable for you, the people of Manitoba, by bringing the provincial fuel tax to zero.

The thing that the PCs don't understand is that two people can disagree and forge a consensus by showing up at the table to agree on common values for this country that we know and love so much and to be committed to working through difficult conversations together.

They always took the easy way. They always took the path of division, the path of lawsuits and the path that led them to the opposition benches.

We're going to do much better for you, the people of Manitoba.

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

**Mr. Ewasko:** Honourable Speaker, I'm not quite sure. Maybe we need to take a little bit of a time out here, and the Premier can go back and ask, you know, Mr. Doer, Mr. Blaikie, for the answer because it just really seems that the Premier doesn't have the answer, nor wants to. He's down the path of, again, misleading Manitobans.

Again, more importantly, can the Premier tell Manitobans today—and I can't be any more clear; the Prime Minister's been clear to him; I can't be any more clear in this question. I want him to stand up today and answer the question to all Manitobans, because Manitobans know that they're going to be paying more under this NDP government.

What will be the price of his new Manitoba NDP carbon tax?

**Mr. Kinew:** Look at the budget book this year. Look at the tax measures page. The provincial fuel tax under our administration right now is zero. It used to be 14 cents per litre when the PCs were in power. And now you know what the result has been? Gas prices are 14 cents lower in Manitoba than they are in Saskatchewan or Ontario. We have the lowest price of gasoline in the entire country, and we're doing that to save you and your family money.

Now here's the thing: our team believes in our powers of persuasion. We may not be starting from the same place as the federal government, but we believe that showing the hard investments Manitobans have made into Manitoba Hydro, the good steps we're

taking on the climate in our budget this year that we'll be able to forge a consensus to save Manitobans money and bring our partners along to that way of thinking.

### **CFS and Social Services Agencies Funding Concerns in Budget 2024**

**Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland):** Over the past number of months this NDP government has shown us they're not willing to make the time to discuss a serious matter of children in care. And now we have seen proof in the budget that they're not prioritizing funding for them either.

Winnipeg Child and Family Services funding has been cut under this minister's watch. Rural and northern Child and Family Services has been cut under this minister's watch. In case the minister has been too busy to read her own government's budget cuts to her department, I table these documents for her to read today.

Will the Minister of Families (MLA Fontaine) explain how she plans to ensure the safety of Manitoba children if she's cutting CFS funding at a time when children need it most?

**Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier):** Our government takes the responsibility to do better by young people in care in our province very seriously. This is a sacred trust and it is one that many of us have been committed to for years prior to entering public service, and it's one that we're going to continue here today.

In the budget documents, there is a quarter-of-a-billion-dollar investment into supporting the families who are working with young people in care. This is a significant amount of resources. It's not going to be enough on its own because the status quo is not working.

That's why we are committed to overhauling the child-welfare system to ensure that there's jurisdiction for Indigenous nations, to ensure that families are adequately supported and, most importantly, to ensure that young people are safe.

This is what we're committed to. This is what we're delivering on.

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

**Mrs. Stone:** This question was directed at the Minister of Families, and it's really disappointing that the Premier has to stand up and speak on her behalf. It seems like that's happening a lot with the female ministers this week.



It isn't just vulnerable youth that she is cutting supports from. Regional social services are also cut in Budget 2024. I table that today as well. *[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mrs. Stone:** It must be difficult for the Minister of Families (MLA Fontaine)—*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mrs. Stone:**—to sit idly by while her Cabinet slashes funding to her department. If this minister is too busy—*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

The honourable member for Midland.

**Mrs. Stone:**—too busy to deal with—if this minister is too busy to deal with the serious situations happening with children in care in our province, does she at least have the courtesy to explain to Manitobans why she is sitting idly—

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

**Mr. Kinew:** I would never presume to speak for my colleague from St. Johns. I only rise to speak in support of the important work that she is doing to overhaul the child-welfare system.

The budget documents we have brought forward here see a quarter-of-a-billion-dollar investment into the families who are working with young people in the child-welfare system. But let me say unequivocally, money alone is not going to solve the problems. We need a fundamentally improved approach to supporting young people who are dealing with the intergenerational legacy of trauma that spreads back through generations of failed government policies at provincial, at federal, at international levels.

In bringing forward an intergenerational healing, that is how we are going to find a path forward that makes life safer for people in our province and helps to ensure that we all live up to that phrase, every—

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

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

**Mrs. Stone:** Or maybe the Premier is speaking because the minister's just been too busy.

At a time when vulnerable Manitobans need the support the most, the NDP is cutting those services that they rely on. Commissioner for adults living with an 'intenectual' disability office, cuts; Social Services

Appeal Board, cuts; Manitoba Accessibility Office, cuts; Women and Gender Equity Manitoba, cuts.

Why does the minister claim to support vulnerable Manitobans when she is cutting the very social services supports that they rely on?

**Mr. Kinew:** During the PC time in office, they tried to legislate away the Social Services Appeal Board's ability to help vulnerable Manitobans. We're here on this side of the House doing the hard work of repairing not only the damage that the PCs caused during their time in office but actually to build a positive future.

If we're going to get partisan, let me point out the following. I realize that they put on a big show here in question period, but when the members opposite go out and speak to the media, they're much more complimentary about our government's agenda.

We shared yesterday about how the Leader of the Opposition said he was thrilled at, quote, the great news, end quote, in our government's budget.

But I also want to say that another member opposite was in the PembinaValleyOnline saying it was nice to see the NDP's investments aimed at improving health care. You know who that was, Mr.—Honourable Speaker? It was the MLA for Midland. *[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order. Order. Order. Order.

### Archives of Manitoba Staffing Budget

**Mr. Obby Khan (Fort Whyte):** Honourable Speaker, this budget fails to meet the needs of Manitobans in many ways. Not only are they selling out Manitobans' futures with tax hikes to the tunes—to the Jack pine's tunes of \$148 million, but they're also abandoning our history.

In February, the Auditor General outlined needed action at Archives of Manitoba to safeguard our historical records, and this government chose not to reflect that in this budget.

\* (10:30)

Can the Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage explain why he is ignoring these recommendations and in fact cutting their staffing budget?

**Hon. Glen Simard (Minister of Sport, Culture, Heritage and Tourism):** I'd just like to take this opportunity to thank the Department of Sport, Culture, Heritage and Tourism, and just want to underline the great work that they're doing.

When we're talking about what we are doing as this government, we are making sure that life is more affordable for Manitobans. We are making sure that people can get the health care that they need. And when we look back at the history—*[interjection]*

Well, it's simple. The other side is asking for the truth. And the problem is—*[interjection]* Guess what? Hey. And the truth is, they can't handle the truth.

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

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

**The Speaker:** Order.

The member's time has expired.

### **Interlake-Gimli Constituency Highway and Road Repairs**

**Mr. Derek Johnson (Interlake-Gimli):** Yesterday the Infrastructure Minister suggested that all potholes in Brandon were filled. I table pictures of PTH No. 6 north of Hilbre that is rapidly deteriorated with the spring weather.

Can the minister inform the constituents of Interlake-Gimli and the municipalities that are watching today, when will they expect to see their potholes filled?

**Hon. Lisa Naylor (Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure):** Yes, I just want to thank the member for the question and remind all Manitobans how important it is to our government for road safety. We are doing our best now that we're in the spring season to send our teams out to do the roadwork that's required on Manitoba highways.

### **Bird Flu Outbreaks Request for Prevention Plan**

**MLA Jeff Bereza (Portage la Prairie):** Bird flu variants have been discovered in American livestock. While H5N1 hasn't appeared yet in Canadian livestock, according to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, scientists on both sides of the border are worrying it's just a matter of time, it—swift action is—swift action isn't taken to contain the outbreak and heighten the surveillance.

Can the minister explain what he has done to ensure there are no viral outbreaks among Manitoba farms?

**Hon. Ron Kostyshyn (Minister of Agriculture):** Yes, I would love to inform member opposite—a news bulletin we received in our department, the US dairy industry has been well informed about the latest detection of the bird flu in the States.

But let's be realistic. We have Canadian Food Inspection Agency, we have our provincial veterinarians, our animal health people working. We have constant communication.

Not like members opposite; they choose to do their own communication within their own party. We are a party that communicate with everybody for the betterment of agriculture in the province of Manitoba.

### **Provincial Nominee Program Applicants Apology Request for Minister's Comments**

**Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz):** Yesterday, I met with MPNP nominees that were angry with this government for how they've been treated. Some joined us here in the gallery. And it is telling that this government's response was to attempt to tone police, because they know they are in the wrong.

The minister spoke of bringing people to Manitoba, ignoring the Manitobans in the gallery who are just looking for help to stay.

I call on the Minister of Advanced Education and Training to retract her divisive words and apologize to those Manitobans for ignoring them yesterday.

**Hon. Renée Cable (Acting Minister of Labour and Immigration):** It was an honour to meet with the folks yesterday after they joined us in the gallery. We had a great conversation. We heard their concerns. By the end of the meeting, we had made a good agreement, and—*[interjection]*

Fast track what? *[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

The honourable member for Agassiz, on a supplementary question.

### **Application Processing Time**

**Ms. Byram:** —time the Minister of Labour and Immigration (MLA Marcelino) will ask a question of the immigration status of Manitoba workers.

We saw many MPNP nominees gather and ask for basic consideration from this government. Instead, they saw hostile partisan attacks, especially from this Premier (Mr. Kinew). All rhetoric, no solutions.

These Manitobans have lives here, and they want this government to process their paperwork so they can stay.

Why is this minister insisting on ignoring their pleas to be treated like people—*[interjection]* I'm hearing members opposite try to shout me down—

treated like people instead of just numbers on the application file?

**MLA Cable:** I thank the honourable member for the question.

We take all of these issues very seriously. We know that in late January, the federal government abruptly announced that those with post-graduate work permits would not receive extensions. This was a surprise to us. We are working through the issue.

They cancelled the program without thinking of how it would impact people on the ground—

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

**The Speaker:** Order. Order. Order.

#### **Mental Health and Addiction Treatment Services Funding Concerns in Budget 2024**

**MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** Mental health resources are a growing concern here in our province, and Manitoba continues to struggle to keep up with the needs of so many.

Can the Minister of Housing, Addictions, Mental Health and Homelessness (Ms. Smith) explain why the mental health and addictions treatment and recovery was cut by \$33,000? This can be found on page 114 of the budget.

**Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Acting Minister of Housing, Addictions and Homelessness):** Miigwech to the member opposite for the question. And certainly, questions on mental health are important for this Chamber, and it's something that our government takes very, very seriously.

And I want to just take a quick minute to acknowledge and appreciate and show appreciation for the Minister for Housing, Addictions and Homelessness who has single-handedly transformed the work that our government is doing in respect of supporting for-supports for mental health, addictions and for our unsheltered relatives.

She's working so incredibly hard for all Manitobans, something that members opposite didn't do in the seven and a half years of their failed government.

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

#### **Mental Health and Harm Reduction Branch Salary Reduction Concerns in Budget 2024**

**MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** We know we need more professionals in our mental health-care system.

Can the minister explain why salaries for those working in the mental health promotion and harm reduction branch was cut by \$112,000? Again, this can be found on one-page 114 of the government's budget.

**Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Acting Minister of Housing, Addictions and Homelessness):** Again, once again, I thank the member opposite for that question.

I want to assure Manitobans that this minister and this department take these issues very seriously. So much so, Honourable Speaker, that the department is putting \$3.9 million towards Manitoba's first consumption site, which will have addiction treatment beds and harm reduction services. We are committed, on this side of the House, of supporting folks that are struggling and battling the rise of drug-related crimes and incidents and deaths.

I want to just assure Manitobans that we take this seriously and again, once again, I want to point out something—

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

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

#### **Youth Mental Health Strategy Funding Concerns in Budget 2024**

**MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** Can the minister explain why a youth mental health strategy, which has been called for numerous times by the Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth, was nowhere to be found in the budget?

**Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Acting Minister of Housing, Addictions and Homelessness):** You know, for years, folks on this side of the House would get up, week after week, day after day, trying to encourage members opposite and their failed government to take seriously the issue of the addictions crisis that we have. To take serious the issue of mental health issues that we have here in respect of many of the most marginalized and vulnerable Manitobans.

They didn't want to hear it. They didn't want to hear it; they didn't want to put any resources or concern or dedication or commitment to tackling that.

\* (10:40)

We are. This minister is investing \$4 million to hire mental-health-care workers to work alongside the WPS, the first 25 workers towards our goal—

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

### **Universal School Nutrition Program Government Announcement**

**MLA Mike Moroz (River Heights):** Honourable Speaker, our government is committed to tackling child poverty, and Budget 2024 introduced by the Minister of Finance (MLA Sala), includes several measures to do exactly that.

One of these measures is the first universal school nutrition program. Our government knows students can't learn when they're hungry.

Would the Minister of Education please tell us more about how the school nutrition program will help students succeed?

**Hon. Nello Altomare (Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning):** I want to thank the member for River Heights for this important question. It's an important question because this is an historic, historic investment in Manitoba families and Manitoba schoolchildren.

Children cannot learn if they are hungry, and we know that. That's why we are taking historic action to create a universal school nutrition program for every child in Manitoba, no matter where they go to school in our public schools. This will help families who struggle to find money to pay for groceries and make sure that forgetting to pack a lunch isn't going to result in a hungry child at school.

Budget 2024 also doubles the prenatal benefit, making it the highest in Canada. Because we know—

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

### **Riding Mountain Constituency Highway and Roads Budget**

**Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain):** Originally, I thought I would ask the Minister of Infrastructure to dispatch to my constituency her crack commando squad of 20 highway workers she is keeping in reserve to send out at her whim.

If 18th Street in Brandon is a completed project under her watch, I think my constituents are better off driving on the shoulder.

Why is this minister cutting the highways budget when projects she claims are completed already need patching?

**Hon. Lisa Naylor (Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure):** I will remind members on the other side of the House there's been no cuts to the highway budget. We're—there has been no cuts to the highway budget.

And I will also remind members on the other side of the House that they lapsed over \$400 million in their infrastructure budget over three years.

We will not lapse. We will spend the dollars we budget.

### **Skilled Trades Workforce Changes to Apprenticeship Ratios**

**Mr. Richard Perchotte (Selkirk):** Honourable Speaker, yesterday the Premier (Mr. Kinew) ignored a question about safe and responsible ways to grow our skilled trades workforce.

He asked me to send a letter to Doug Ford. If the Premier needs a permission slip signed by Doug Ford, I suggest he gets it himself. On this side of the House, it's Manitobans that matter.

He may forget what job he has—in fact, his first budget press release, he calls himself Prime Minister. I table that today.

Will the Premier get back in touch with reality and cancel the policy change that will harm Manitoba workers and the province?

**Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister of Finance):** Honourable Speaker, here's what we know: For many years under the last government, they failed to actually work to build up our economy in Manitoba.

But things have changed. This team is focused on creating opportunities for Manitobans, building up our economy, creating every opportunity we can to help Manitobans get ahead. That's what Manitobans can expect from our team, and that's the great work we're bringing forward with Budget 2024.

### **Unexplained Wealth Act Legislation to Combat Organized Crime**

**Mr. Logan Oxenham (Kirkfield Park):** Honourable Speaker, the Minister of Justice is tirelessly working towards improving public safety and cracking down on organized crime. I know he will continue being tough on crime and tough on the causes of crime.

I understand this legislation will give law enforcement better tools to deal with organized crime.

Would the Minister of Justice tell us about The Unexplained Wealth Act and the impact it will have going after the proceeds of organized crime?

**Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Our government is cracking down on drug traffickers and organized criminals by making it easier for police to proactively investigate their assets, seize the proceeds of crime and strike a financial blow against their organizations.

We're giving police more tools to go after those people who'll get rich off the drug crisis and make it easier to launch investigations into criminal organizations.

The action we're taking today is direct response to our commitment to Manitobans to get tough on crime and tough on the causes of crime. Unlike the members opposite, we're getting to work. Where they just beaked off, we're getting to work, we're getting it done.

#### **School Expansions in Brandon Request for Government Support**

**Mr. Grant Jackson (Spruce Woods):** The NDP cut nine new schools in Tuesday's budget, two of which were in Brandon. Now we know the minister is cutting badly needed school expansions as well, starting with the Maryland Park expansion in Brandon.

What has this minister got against school expansion in Brandon and why hasn't the member for Brandon East (Mr. Simard) stood up for these projects at the Cabinet table?

**Hon. Nello Altomare (Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning):** Again, I'd love—I'd like to thank the member for that question. It's an important question.

People really care about their public schools. They care about them so much that when we actually plan for schools, they expect the finances to be in place to get them done. What did they do? They went out there during the campaign, said they were going to do all this stuff. Did they have any plan to pay for it? No.

What we're going to do, Honourable Speaker, is ensure that when we make announcements, we'll have the financial backing in place so that we will build and not play on people's emotions.

#### **University of Winnipeg Cyber Attack Request for Government Assistance**

**Mrs. Kathleen Cook (Roblin):** As an alumnus of the University of Winnipeg, the recent news of the cyber attacks is extremely concerning to me and thousands of other Winnipeggers. Decades worth of personal and financial information from students and faculty members is now for sale on the dark web.

Budget 2024 cut funding for staffing in advanced education. Universities in need of help will now have fewer options thanks to this NDP government. These leaks impact thousands of Manitobans.

Will this government do their jobs and step in to support them during this crisis?

**Hon. Renée Cable (Minister of Advanced Education and Training):** I thank the honourable member for the question.

This is a really serious question and my greatest concern always is with students and student safety, and in this particular case, with former students and with staff and previous staff.

The University of Winnipeg has worked really hard. They let us know right away. It is an incredibly serious question and I look forward to continuing my response.

#### **Brandon Manitoba Road Repair Concerns**

**Mr. Wayne Balcaen (Brandon West):** Honourable Speaker, yesterday, the Minister of Infrastructure claimed that all the potholes had been filled on that stretch of their highway going through Brandon.

I don't know what Brandon she's talking about, but it certainly isn't the one that I live in. I table her error-filled quote from Hansard, as well as a photo my CA took just yesterday afternoon. I guess the minister rolled out the asphalt carpet for her colleagues and took it away with her when she left town.

Is this a sign of things to come if this minister calls this mission accomplished?

**Hon. Lisa Naylor (Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure):** I'm glad to have the opportunity to stand again to speak about that section of 18th Street where the work was done, because I really want to take the opportunity to thank the workers in this department.

Folks worked so hard before the snow was gone to clear the snow, to dry the area and to fill the

potholes for everyone coming to Brandon to celebrate the Royal Winter Fair.

We will continue the work, as it is spring. And as anyone who has ever lived in Manitoba for any length of time understands, there will be potholes that need to be filled. And we look—I'm so grateful to the hard work of the staff in our department and across the regions for the work they do every day.

### **Highways and Roads Funding Concerns in Budget 2024**

**Mr. Josh Guenter (Borderland):** The budget that the NDP put forward this week shows \$164 million in cuts to the roads and highways budget, and yet the Minister of Infrastructure seems unaware of this.

\* (10:50)

Why is the Minister of Infrastructure unfamiliar with their own budget?

**Hon. Lisa Naylor (Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure):** Regarding the budget, I will remind the members on the other side of the House that they have lapsed the highway and infrastructure budget year after year after year. In 2022-23 it lapsed by \$164 million.

The problems on our highway were created by this government. We're here to fix them.

### **Highway 227 in Lakeside Timeline for Paving Project**

**Mr. Trevor King (Lakeside):** Rural municipalities can't be expected to foot the entire bill for providing services and infrastructure for their residents. With \$164 million in cuts, with the Building Sustainable Communities and the arts, culture, sport and community funds being cut, their burden just got bigger thanks to this NDP government.

In 2022 one and a half billion was committed as part of a multi-year plan to rebuild highways. Highway 227 was allocated \$70 million for 72 kilometres of paving.

When can I tell my constituents that this project will be started?

**Hon. Lisa Naylor (Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure):** Yes, I apologize because I didn't fully hear the question, but I am thrilled to have the opportunity to stand one more time because there have been so many questions about highways and infrastructure today.

So, once again, it is an opportunity to thank the staff and the department. And I also want to let folks know that the new map of Manitoba is hot off the press today, so when the member for Gimli is trying to find his way back there because he thinks that road 18 in Brandon is somehow in Gimli and he's a little confused, he can look to the new map and I can get one sent over to his office today.

### **New Agriculture Offices Budget and Staffing Concerns**

**Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye):** As a farmer myself, agriculture is something that I'm naturally passionate about. So when I heard this government say that there's something in their budget for agriculture, but not seeing it myself, I knew that I needed to dig deeper. And there it was—\$200,000 for opening two world ag offices.

So I need to ask this minister: Where exactly is he going to open two ag offices for \$200,000, and how is he going to staff it? With volunteers?

**Hon. Ron Kostyshyn (Minister of Agriculture):** Thank you for the member opposite asking their questions.

Well, we're trying to repair the damages that that government created when they closed 18 offices around the province of Manitoba. Not only did they do destruction to the people that work there, but they took away rural economic development in the benefit of the people in the small communities.

By that curation now have eliminated the population, the school population, and businesses in those small communities. But yet, they don't consider the fact that we, as government, raised the lending rate by \$100,000 for young producers. We care—

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

The honourable member for Midland (Mrs. Stone)—sorry, the honourable member for Roblin.

### **Surgical and Diagnostic Service Providers Request for Update on Service Agreements**

**Mrs. Kathleen Cook (Roblin):** Earlier this week, the Minister of Health was left scrambling to explain to doctors and Manitoba patients the fate of many expiring agreements with private and public health-care providers to expand surgical and diagnostic capacity.

They confirmed the extension of one RFSA but refused to be transparent with Manitobans about the rest. Manitobans have a right to transparency from this NDP government.

What is the status of agreements signed with CancerCare Manitoba, with HSC or with western surgical centre?

**Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister of Finance):** Honourable Speaker, we're working with our community partners to make sure that Manitobans can get access to the health-care services that they need.

We know that Budget 2024 puts forward investments that will actually start that important work of fixing the health-care system that the members opposite did incredible damage to.

We've know that instead of building up surgical capacity in Manitoba; they spent their time building up surgical capacity in the United States. That's the opposite of what we should be doing. That's the good work that our Minister of Health is doing, and our team; investing and improving health care right here in Manitoba.

#### **Action on Climate Change Funding Level Concerns**

**Mr. Obby Khan (Fort Whyte):** Even the NDP's loudest supporters feel abandoned by them. Scott Forbes has nothing nice to say about them. I table his article from this morning. To combat climate change in the budget under the previous PC government, \$3.47 million. Under the NDP budget, \$3.47 million. With inflation and adjusted dollars, that is a budget cut.

Will the Minister of Environment and Climate Change please tell Manitobans why she is proclaiming to protect the environment, but in reality she is cutting funding to combat climate change?

**Hon. Tracy Schmidt (Minister of Environment and Climate Change):** I thank the member opposite for a question about the environment, something that folks on this side of the House care very much about.

Before I answer the question, I just want to welcome and thank the young people that have joined us in the gallery. And I want to apologize to them. I want to say sorry for the display that you're seeing here today. On this side of the House, we are interested in working for Manitobans. One people, one Manitoba. We're here to work for you, and so I'm so glad that you're here joining us.

On the issue of the environment, on this side of the House we care about the environment, and our budget shows so. We have electric vehicle rebates that are going to help Manitobans get off of gas, and—

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

#### **Education Property Tax Farmland Increase Inquiry**

**Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland):** Honourable Speaker, this NDP government did little to advance economic growth in this year's budget. In fact, it did exactly the 'opposite.' The government have little to no intention of attracting investment to the Manitoba market, and have no plan to ensure Manitoba is competitive with other jurisdictions.

Manitoba is one of the last jurisdictions in Canada to charge an education property tax on farmland, yet the NDP refuse to come up with a plan to remove it completely.

Will this NDP government stand up today and commit to Manitoba's farmers that they will not see an education property tax on their farmland?

**Hon. Ron Kostyshyn (Minister of Agriculture):** We have made commitments to reduce this year's education to a \$1,500 credit and maintain our 50-odd per cent of the education component to agricultural land.

The members opposite did not think about the destruction they have done to young producers in the Eddystone areas, a Crown land opportunity where they raised the rates 300 per cent. They double billed the producers. Is that fairness in the system to the young generation of farmers of our province of Manitoba? Yet they don't want to admit to the fact that was a serious mistake.

In fact, two agriculture ministers and they landed up with the third minister because the other two chose not to—

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

The time for oral questions has expired. *[interjection]* Order.

Petitions? *[interjection]* Order. Order. Petitions?

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

**Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Government House Leader):** Can you please call to resume debate on the budget.

**The Speaker:** It has been announced that we will resume debate on the budget.

### Introduction of Guests

**The Speaker:** But before we do that, I would like to call the members' attention to the public gallery, where we have 25 students joining us from Niverville High School.

Welcome.

### BUDGET DEBATE (Fourth Day of Debate)

**The Speaker:** We will now resume debate on the budget. Standing in the name of the member for Kirkfield Park, who has nine minutes remaining.

\* (11:00)

**Mr. Logan Oxenham (Kirkfield Park):** I am thrilled to get back up today and talk about the incredible work that our amazing Finance Minister has done with this budget. And I believe last time I touched on the work of the correctional officers and juvenile counsellors that work in this fine province and they do incredible work.

They're dealing with sometimes very violent and—situations, they're working with offenders, trying to get them on a better path. And the ultimate goal, really, is to reduce recidivism. And while I was working for—in corrections—very proud of the work that I did there—I saw the cuts that the previous government made.

For example, at one point the decision was even made to cut milk out of the budget—out of the food budget for the offenders. And so this makes it really hard for staff to work with offenders when they're—of course when they're hungry and they're angry and 'hangry,' it's—it can make for a real tricky situation.

Not to mention, there was wage freezes, which also affected the morale of staff. And so I'm so proud to be part of a government that's actually cares about workers and working families.

There's also been cuts to social programs. So, when I worked as a correctional officer, I tried to get folks on a better path and we would try to build relationships with outside agencies and groups that could really help offenders once they were released from jail. And, unfortunately, we saw cuts there too. We saw—it was either cuts or extraordinary amount of underfunding.

So I just want to pay homage to the good, hard-working correctional staff and juvenile counsellors that work hard every day to keep Manitobans safe.

Manitobans deserve a government that works hard to deliver essential services and programs, and Budget 2024 focuses on improving government services, including implementing plastic health cards, reducing wait times and hiring more staff for vital programs.

Budget 2024 is bringing health care closer to home for First Nations in northern communities. I had the privilege to go up to The Pas this past February and enjoy the Trappers' Festival up there and there's a lot of good, hard-working folks up in The Pas that—it was my first time up there and I really enjoyed my time but it really hit me, just how far they are from some services. And I'm so proud to have a Finance Minister that's aware of that and is working hard to bring those services closer to rural and northern communities.

Budget 2024 is also improving health care in western—the western region, providing essential services and investments in Brandon. I had the privilege of going to Brandon again. Like, I can't believe sometimes that this is the good work that we get to do, is go and visit communities, and Brandon is full of really great, hard-working families and hard-working people. I'm so glad we'll be able to deliver for those folks in Brandon.

We're investing in a minor injury and illness clinics and strengthening relationships with the community through increased funding and support. I have—proud to have a sister-in-law who's a labour and delivery nurse in Brandon. She works at the hospital there and upon learning of the new minor injury clinic, she was very impressed and very, very excited. It's going to mean a lot to the good people in Brandon.

Budget 2024 is investing in rural families by providing better health care and lowering upfront costs. Our NDP government is committed to supporting seniors, expanding health-care services and supporting farmers and producers to grow Manitoba's economy.

An NDP budget is investing in healthier families and safer communities in rural Manitoba, creating job opportunities for youth, supporting public libraries and increasing funding for mental health and addiction services. It's a lot.

Together we can build a brighter future for all Manitobans, Honourable Speaker. I hope that we can work hand in hand to uplift our communities, supporting one another and creating a prosperous and inclusive Manitoba for generations to come.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.



**Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland):** Honourable Speaker, this is my first budget debate as an MLA, and I'm honoured to continue standing here to stand up for my constituents. I am pleased to put some words on the record in support of the amendment our incredible leader made earlier this week.

After the release of the NDP budget, my constituents have questions, and rightfully so. There is no meaningful, long-term affordability measures for Manitobans.

Affordability is the No. 1 issue Manitobans are dealing with right now; I have said this numerous times in the House. I have tabled polls and documents that show this is the No. 1 issue for Manitobans. Yet the only long-term affordability measure the NDP could come up with was the ones that the PC government have already announced. So we thank you for continuing to advertise our good and important work and we will continue to remind Manitobans of that.

When this government took over, they were handed a quarter-of-a-billion-dollar surplus and a path towards balance. There was plenty of room for the NDP government to implement real tax savings for Manitobans that are desperately needed by Manitobans. But instead, in their six short months of governing, they've gone back to major deficits. With a \$2-billion deficit and \$33.5 billion in net debt, the NDP are spending more and borrowing more in the budget.

I remember, back in 2012, sitting in the gallery as a stakeholder and witnessing the former NDP government deplete the rainy day fund for significant money, go into major deficit, raise the provincial debt and as a result, increase taxes on Manitobans. This new NDP government is much like the former. This budget is a signal of what is to come, and Manitobans will see what the consequences are of NDP fiscal mismanagement.

This budget suggests they plan to run large debt and deficits for many years to come, despite federal transfers growing up significantly. This year's budget showed federal transfers are up \$1 billion, yet the NDP is growing its net summary debt by over \$3 billion. The debt-to-GDP is now 38.5 per cent, an increase of over 4 percentage points in a single year. This is a staggering increase, Honourable Speaker.

Honourable Speaker, during the Interim Supply bill debate, I sounded this alarm regarding the NDP's excessive borrowing, as did my colleagues, the MLA for Fort Whyte and the MLA for Borderland. I also said, when you spend more, you borrow more and somebody has to pay. And, unfortunately, Manitobans will

pay for this NDP government's reckless borrowing. They are placing the debt on the back of Manitoban families, my children, our children, our grandchildren and all future generations.

Honourable Speaker, in the lead-up to the election, this NDP government set—promised they'd be on track to eliminate the deficit, but with a quarter-billion-dollar surplus left by our former PC government, this promise would've been a very easy one to keep. But instead, with just six months of reckless NDP spending and borrowing, this is yet another NDP broken promise. This budget offers proof that they had every intention of breaking their promise to Manitobans.

Our Province needs to focus on growing the economy to bring in revenue. Constant borrowing and deficits is not the answer. Growth-oriented policies is the answer. Unfortunately, the NDP did little to acknowledge the economy in this year's budget. We need the private sector to drive Manitoba's economy.

The Premier (Mr. Kinew) talked his big line during the election of the economic horse pulls the social cart. Where in this budget is that economic horse? Maybe they're struggling to grow the economy because they fired the chair of the board of the economic development who had 30 economic development projects on the go, proof that this NDP government has little intention of 'attracting' investment to this Manitoba market and has no plan to ensure that Manitoba is competitive with other jurisdictions.

My colleague from Roblin spoke at length about the lack of supports for small businesses. We know small businesses are the backbone of Manitoba's economy. Yet this budget just—did not just ignore small businesses like the NDP normally does, they actually targeted them with higher taxes. The NDP budget removed education property tax rebate for commercial properties. Many small businesses own their own property and now will have a much higher tax bill.

\* (11:10)

In addition, the Professional Property Managers Association said, if the government takes away the rebate, landlords will have to raise rent to cover this significant increase. At a time when small businesses are already struggling to recover from the pandemic and pay back their CEBA loans, they cannot afford tax increases by this NDP government.

Now, I'd like to speak to agriculture, an industry that is very close to my heart and one that I have worked in for many years.

Despite the NDP holding the 50 per cent property tax rebate for farmland, there are no plans to increase this to 100 per cent.

The PCs know how important agriculture is to the economy and to Manitoba, and I know that the education property tax on farmland is unfair and uncompetitive tax burden that is unfairly placed on farmers who produce the food that we all eat.

Agriculture is the single largest economic driver for this province. And, honestly, Honourable Speaker, I feel bad for the Minister for Agriculture, who is the only voice around that Cabinet table. It's a good thing that there are many, many of us from this side of the House that come from agriculture to educate the members opposite on how important it is.

Simply put, Honourable Speaker, the economy is going to suffer under this NDP government, and Manitobans are going to suffer under this NDP government.

Now, I want to talk about the residential property tax increases the NDP has announced. Everyone—everyone will pay more this year with the changes made to the property tax structure. This—these changes hurt middle-class Manitobans the most.

The NDP have increased property taxes on my constituents. The increase on mill rates alone that we're seeing across the province, ranging from 6 per cent to a whopping 17 per cent in some constituencies, are going to hurt Manitobans.

I fail to see any true, long-term tax savings for the majority of Manitobans through these property tax changes.

In addition, not only are property taxes going up, but if you're a cottage owner, now they are even higher. I'm sure there are a few ministers sitting over there questioning how could they support such a terrible budget when they have to go back to their spouses and explain to them why they're going to pay more for their own cottages next year.

The NDP are raising taxes, I have spoken about on Manitobans, because they're adding one-point-billion dollars to NDP net debt. These are facts, Honourable Speaker. The numbers speak for themselves.

The areas that the NDP should be investing in to grow our economy to bring in extra revenue than taxing Manitobans are areas that the NDP are leaving out. This makes no sense, Honourable Speaker.

A key economic driver to our economy is well-maintained infrastructure. Those of us on this side of the House recognize this. As someone who lives in rural Manitoba, has worked in the industry for many years, we know that well-maintained infrastructure is key to our economic growth. We need to have well-maintained roads, so we can move our product in and out as efficiently and effectively as possible, so we can get the goods and services to Winnipeggers and Manitobans who need it.

Yet, the NDP budget has cut highways by \$164 million. Much-needed projects like the Perimeter overpass are critical for the movement of these goods and services coming into Winnipeg from many of our PC constituencies. These won't be happening any time soon.

Manitobans are frustrated with the crumbling infrastructure, the current dodge-and-avoid pothole season that we're currently seeing. There's even a pothole as you're leaving the Legislature, as you're approaching Broadway.

But what about the repairs of roads in my Midland constituency, the 305, the 247, the 330? Emergency vehicles are having trouble and difficulty going to these communities. They are having to reroute or go at slower speeds due to degrading infrastructure. This is dangerous.

I've sent the Minister of Infrastructure numerous letters on this, yet she sits idly by while the NDP Finance Minister cuts the infrastructure budget by \$164 million.

As I mentioned earlier in my comments, the budget places an unfair tax burden on future generations. This budget isn't even investing in future generations. Over \$100 million in cuts to education. The NDP has cut seven schools and thousands of daycare spaces. Those daycare spaces are desperately needed by Manitoba parents. As a mom of my three-year-old, I am very reliant on daycare, and I'm so fortunate that, five years ago, we were able to find a space that was created by this PC government. Unfortunately for other parents in Seven Oaks School Division, Brandon, River East Transcona, Neepawa, Ste. Anne and Pembina Trails, this will not be an option, Honourable Speaker.

Parents that were looking forward to those daycare spots will have to find other options, but what

other options? They cut the schools; they cut the spaces. There are no other options. Education our—educating our next generation of future leaders is not even in this NDP's top five priorities. This is deeply, deeply concerning as a mom with kids going into the education system.

In this NDP budget, affordability isn't a priority. The economy isn't a priority. Jobs are not a priority—oh, unless it's forcing people to work for their union bosses. Education isn't a priority. Daycare spaces aren't a priority.

Which leads me to my next point, Honourable Speaker. Families are not a priority for this NDP government. As the critic for Families, I am deeply concerned that the NDP budget does not even have the Department of Families in its top five budget priorities.

On this side of the House, we have spoken at length about the lack of resources and attention paid to children in care and crisis. First the minister refused to do a comprehensive review of the Manitoba for children act—advocate act. Second, she was too busy to discuss children in care in crisis in the House, and my colleague from Tyndall Park said yesterday this is her job.

Then, even more shamefully, a critical incident happened with kids under her care, and she was too busy in New York to respond to the media. She was there on taxpayers' dollars, taxpayers' time. She did not make kids in her care a priority. This NDP government and budget has not made kids their priority.

It is clear, Honourable Speaker—*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mrs. Stone:** —of where this government's priorities lie. The members opposite are heckling me because they know it's true.

It is clear, Honourable Speaker, families—Manitoba families—are not a priority for this NDP government. Families aren't a priority—*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order, please.

I'd kindly ask people to quit hollering back and forth across the Chamber while the member's trying to speak.

**Mrs. Stone:** Clearly, we don't know where these priorities of this NDP government lie. They are not with Manitoba families. They are not with the agriculture industry that is our single largest economic driver for Manitoba. They are not with small businesses that are

the backbone of this province. They are not with the future generation that is reliant on small classroom spaces, as my colleague for Spruce Woods has mentioned.

They are not prioritizing the daycare spaces that, quite frankly, help parents get back into the workforce. Daycare is such a critical component of actually growing the economy and ensuring the economy can flourish.

However, by cutting those schools and cutting those thousands of daycare spaces, it is putting Manitoba parents at a disadvantage.

And, obviously, affordability is not a priority for this NDP government. As I have mentioned, affordability is the No. 1 concern for Manitobans, yet there are no real long-term affordability measures that have been presented in this budget.

So who is this budget for, Honourable Speaker? This budget is for themselves and for their friends and not for the majority of Manitobans.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker, for letting me put a few words on the record in support of our Leader of the Opposition's amendment this week, and I urge all members to vote against this budget because it hurts Manitobans, Manitoba families and our future generation of Manitobans.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

**Hon. Tracy Schmidt (Minister of Environment and Climate Change):** I very much look forward to putting some words on the record about the NDP government's fantastic Budget 2024.

And I know that we have to keep our comments relevant, but if the House and the Speaker would indulge me just very, very briefly, I just wanted to mention something. Yesterday, when members came into the Chamber, they were—they would have found a sticker that looks like this sitting on their desk.

And these were related to Shoal Lake 40 First Nation and the students at Harvey Redsky Memorial School and their work on the SL 40 Business Youth Leaders launch.

And it's a fundraising campaign. They sold water bottles, they sold stickers. I purchased these stickers for every member in the Legislature, so you can put them on your water bottle. If you scan that QR code, it will take you to the Shoal Lake 40 First Nation website.

\* (11:20)

As we all know, we source our drinking water from Shoal Lake 40 First Nation, and we are very grateful for that. So I just want to shout-out the students. I encourage all members to use the sticker. Put it on their water bottle. All of us here in the Legislature—

**The Speaker:** Order, please.

I'd advise the member to get back on track.

**MLA Schmidt:** My apologies and thank you for your indulgence.

So, again, I am really just overwhelmed with gratitude and pride. Tuesday was really a great day for our team and a great day for all Manitobans because our outstanding team led by our outstanding Premier (Mr. Kinew) and our Finance Minister—perhaps the finest Finance Minister in Manitoba history, I would argue—delivered our first budget, full of support for Manitobans everywhere.

One Future, One People, One Manitoba; what a message, Honourable Speaker. And what a time to be a Manitoban. I couldn't be more proud of this budget. I couldn't be more proud of our fantastic province. And I couldn't be more proud to sit in this Chamber.

And I know how proud all of our team is of this budget and of the incredible work that went into producing it. And I know how deeply proud our team is of our province and of Manitobans.

Just six months ago, we were given a mandate by the great people of this province to fix the chaos in health care caused by years of reckless PC cuts. We were given a mandate to make life more affordable for Manitobans. We were given a mandate to prioritize our kids and our schools, something the former government failed to do.

We were given a mandate to address the housing and the addictions crisis impacting our businesses and our neighbourhoods, something that got out of control under the previous government. I heard that on the doorstep in Rossmere every single day.

We were given a mandate to address skyrocketing crime rates that were impact—oh, I just said that. We were given a mandate to bring respect back to the public service, something I take very seriously and everyone in our team does. We respect public servants on this side of the House and we thank them for their work. And we're going to bring respect back to workers across this province.

We received a mandate from the people of Manitoba on the doorstep. That's how we developed our budget. We also reached out. We had a great outreach process that our Finance Minister did very diligently. But on top of the outreach that the Finance Minister did across the province—communities all across the province—again, all of our team, we spent, you know, some of us a year, some of us more time on the doorstep in the lead-up to the election and we developed our budget based on those discussions, based on what we heard from, from the people of Manitoba.

We are a listening government that is something of pride for our government. We take a balanced approach and that's how we developed our budget. So what you see in this budget, Honourable Speaker, is what Manitobans have asked for, what Manitobans sent us here to do. And I'm so proud of the budget that does just that.

And if the opposition doesn't like it, then they surely weren't listening to their constituents. They weren't listening on the doorstep to Manitobans, because we heard this message loud and clear. And the result of the election certainly proved that, Honourable Speaker, that the PCs have completely lost touch with everyday Manitobans.

The previous speaker, some of her comments were really evidence that they've lost touch with everyday Manitobans. They've forgotten who it is that we work for. And those were some of my comments in question period to the students. We're here to work for Manitobans, not to scream at each other, not to lift our own voices up, but to lift up the voices of Manitobans.

On this side of the House and in this budget, we're here to work for one—for Manitobans, all Manitobans. We're here to work towards one Manitoba. This budget delivers the help that Manitobans have been asking for, have been begging for. And our budget does it in a way that is responsible and prudent and will have Manitoba back on the path to balance after a record deficit left to us by the irresponsible, desperate spending that the PCs did on their way out the door.

Manitobans know this, Honourable Speaker, but it's a new day in Manitoba. Manitobans have a team that is working for them, is listening to Manitobans and is setting our province on a new positive path.

One of the ways we're doing that, Honourable Speaker, is by growing our economy. One of the biggest opportunities that we had to do this, an opportunity overlooked and frankly squandered by the

previous government, is to become a leader in the new green economy. For 50 years, NDP governments have invested in a low-carbon green energy grid, our crown jewel, Manitoba Hydro.

Where the PCs were selling off this incredibly important asset piece by piece, the NDP will keep Hydro public forever, so that Manitobans can see the return on that lucrative investment.

Business and industry are scouring the nation for low-carbon energy options, and they have a partner in our government. Industry knows that, and that's thanks to our green hydroelectricity.

And it's our government that will leverage that energy advantage to attract investments. We've already done so, Honourable Speaker. We're creating good jobs for Manitobans. We're leading our province into the future as a clean energy leader. We're going to support the green economy and create a green supply chain right here in Manitoba.

Something that all Manitobans should be excited about—I know that the member for Transcona (MLA Altomare) is very excited about this, and all the members from northeast Winnipeg are excited about the \$10-million investment in New Flyer Industries' all-Canadian build facility, to help them build even more electric busses for use here in Canada. Those electric busses are going to reduce our emissions, create hundreds of new fair-wage jobs in northeast Winnipeg, and we can't wait to get underway with New Flyer Industries on that incredible project.

We're also investing more than half a billion dollars in capital infrastructure projects across Manitoba, for highways, for water infrastructure desperately needed by Manitoba communities that have had their growth stifled after seven years of municipal funding freezes under the previous government. No investments in infrastructure. Wastewater is crumbling, and we only have to look across the aisle to know why that happened.

Those funding freezes and those infrastructure deficits left to Manitobans by the former PC government have real and major consequences, Honourable Speaker. We saw that in February when Winnipeg's crumbling wastewater infrastructure failed, spilling millions of litres of sewage into the Red River and ultimately into Lake Winnipeg.

I know that all Manitobans are deeply concerned about the health of our waterways, and about the health of Lake Winnipeg. But, Honourable Speaker, those are the consequences of poor planning and of an

utter disregard for our environment and our water and our wastewater infrastructure needs in municipalities across Manitoba, including the City of Winnipeg.

And this budget starts to put us back on the right track by addressing those water and wastewater infrastructure issues. I'm excited to work with the minister responsible for municipal relations on that. We have already committed \$10 million to the Winnipeg wastewater infrastructure needs to help them on the south Winnipeg repair, and we are very proud and excited to do that.

Another really exciting thing in this budget, Honourable Speaker: our electric vehicle rebates. This year alone we have earmarked \$5.4 million in rebates for new and used electric vehicles and plug-in hybrids. And that's something that is really unique to the jurisdiction here in Manitoba. We are not only offering rebates on new electric vehicles, but we are also offering rebates on used electric vehicles, because we represent all Manitobans. We want to make sure that electric vehicles are accessible, we want to make sure they're affordable, and these rebates are going to do just that.

Manitoba, under the previous government, has really lagged behind in electric vehicle uptake. We've seen jurisdictions across Canada that have introduced electric vehicle rebates in a more timely fashion. Really see the uptake in their provinces. And Manitoba, unfortunately, we're a little bit behind, but we are going to get back on track with this budget, and with our super exciting electrical vehicle rebate program.

I was thrilled to work with the Minister of Finance (MLA Sala) on this program. And again, this \$5.4 million is just the initial investment. We are going to see more investments next year in our year three, in our year four, and we're going to see Manitobans adopt this exciting technology. We're going to see them save money at the gas pump and we're going to see them reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. I couldn't be more proud of this program, Honourable Speaker.

Another great thing in this budget: you know, one of the most hopeful things that I've learned as the Minister of Environment and Climate Change is how much incredible work is being done in our province already, outside of government, to address and adapt and mitigate the effects of climate change, and protecting our precious lands, our precious waters.

There is much great work coming out of our department, and there's many fine public servants that I

want to thank for their incredible work. I want to lift them up and lift up their work; work, by the way, that they excel at despite having our department literally slashed and burned by the previous government.

It is quite rich to get—to hear the members opposite get up and talk about our budget when they have failed to invest in environment and climate change year after year after year after year. Some branches in my department have—were cut by a third. Some were cut nearly in half. It's shameful. But with this budget we're getting back on track.

\* (11:30)

The fact that our department and also the organizations and activists and advocates out in the community have been able to still do such fantastic environmental work deserves enormous credit.

We know that government can't do everything when it comes to addressing the impacts of, you know, climate change. So aside from the work going on in our department, it's really heartening to learn, again, of all of the industry, agricultural partners that are doing sustainability work and adaptation work.

There's also incredible organizations and environmental groups that are engaged in strategic greenhouse-gas mitigation and climate-change adaptation programs across all sectors and across the whole province, and unfortunately, under the previous government, their funding was cut, eliminated; organizations that were doing fantastic work to help communities all over Manitoba adapt and mitigate the impacts of climate change.

Honourable Speaker, we committed in our mandate to restore that funding when we were elected, and we've already followed up on that commitment, restoring that funding in order to support the great climate work done to those great organizations. And I want to lift up their work and thank them so much and let them know that they have a partner and a friend in our government.

But there's more, Honourable Speaker. This budget goes even further to significantly advance our government's commitment to achieving net-zero targets by 2050, as we've committed. Another exciting part of our budget is our affordable home energy heat pump program. We're going to start this program by partnering with the federal government to deliver heat pumps to Manitoba homes. It's going to reduce their emissions. It's going to save Manitoba families money.

We're starting with a oil-to-heat-pump program, Honourable Speaker, in a cost-sharing model with the federal government. It's going to save Manitobans money, something that Manitobans were telling us at the doorstep, and most importantly, it's going to reduce Manitoba's carbon footprint significantly. I am so excited about working with, again, the Minister of Finance (MLA Sala) to do that work.

I'm also really excited, and I want to take the—a moment to talk about how we're going to deliver that program, and that's through Efficiency Manitoba. Efficiency Manitoba is a fantastic Crown corporation that is subsidized by—fully funded by Manitoba Hydro. It is designed to reduce our emissions here in Manitoba. It's designed to get Manitobans' electricity usage down. It's designed to get Manitobans off of natural gas and reduce their natural-gas consumption.

Recently our government, after years of Efficiency Manitoba asking the previous government to expand their mandate, Efficiency Manitoba, Honourable Speaker, is doing fantastic work. I am so proud of the folks that work there. They have an incredible CEO, and they've been doing incredible work. But they know and we know that they could do so much more. They were stifled by the previous government. Their request for an expanded mandate fell on deaf ears.

But within our first six months in government, Honourable Speaker, we have done just that. We have expanded their mandate. We have stood up a new board at Efficiency Manitoba. We are so very proud of that board at Efficiency Manitoba.

In fact, just yesterday, Honourable Speaker, we met with several climate leaders, activists, groups, activists here in Manitoba, and one thing that they were really excited about was the board at Efficiency Manitoba. The board is chock full of experts, industry leaders and administrative experts from across the province. We know that they are going to do fantastic work, and I cannot wait to see what Efficiency Manitoba is going to do under this new mandate and with a new renewed board.

There's much more on environmental issues in our budget, Honourable Speaker. The Low Carbon Economy Fund bilateral agreement with the federal government, this year Manitoba has committed \$10 million to support that fund. That fund is designed for Manitoba's emissions reductions commitments under the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change. That fund helps businesses and industry evolve their businesses and get them, again, the—reduce their carbon footprint and become—it's really—

it's positioning Manitoba—become a leader in the green economy.

Furthermore, Honourable Speaker, we've got \$6.4 million for initiatives under Manitoba's plan for climate and sustainability priorities, strategic greenhouse-gas mitigation and climate-change adaptation programs across all sectors. I am very proud of our government's collaborative approach.

As opposed to the approach taken by the previous government, our government is happy to work with municipalities. We have partnered with the federal government, something that the previous government never did. The previous government was more interested in fighting the federal government in court; was more interested in working for their own special interest groups.

Our government is committed to working for all Manitobans, across party lines, across jurisdictional lines, and I am so very proud that our budget shows that.

As Minister of Environment, I'm very proud of our government's prioritization of environmental initiatives, as evidenced by this budget and by some of our great work so far that I'm going to take a moment to brag about. The signing of the Seal River Watershed Alliance MOU, something the previous government pretended they were going to do, they could've done with a stroke of the pen, they didn't do it. We got it done within our first couple of months in government, Honourable Speaker. And that MOU is going to see upwards of 8 per cent of Manitoba's lands and waters conserved and protected, most importantly, under Indigenous leadership.

I could not be prouder of the work of the Seal River Watershed Alliance. I could not be prouder of our government for finally getting this deal done. The work of the four First Nations up in northern Manitoba, the years that they have committed to that project; we are so happy to support that work and to protect and conserve that important biodiversity and that landmass up in northern Manitoba.

Another thing that our government's done already, prior to this budget, is refusing the licence to Sio Silica, a silica sand mine that was intended to drill through—*[interjection]* Yes, a fantastic decision—a project that was designed to drill through the aquifers in Springfield, Manitoba, something that would've put the drinking water of tens of thousands of Manitobans at risk, something that the previous government

clearly didn't care about, something that our government took leadership on.

We said it once, and we'll say it again, Honourable Speaker: We will never, ever put the safety of Manitobans' drinking water at risk for projects such as this.

We will be, and we are, pursuing critical mineral development to grow our economy; I am so proud of that plan. But we are going to do it in a good way, and we're going to do it in a way that is only in the best interests of Manitobans; that's who we—we're for, Manitobans, not our friends, not special interest groups. We work in the best interests of Manitobans, all Manitobans, including First Nations and Indigenous communities, and I'm very proud of that.

As I mentioned earlier, Honourable Speaker, we developed this budget by listening to folks we met on the doorstep over the last year. I have the great privilege of representing the folks in Rossmere community in northeast Winnipeg. It's a very diverse community that's bordered by the northeast Perimeter, a community that has diverse interests and needs. We have properties that are rural, that are still on wells and septic. We have beautiful single-family homes, we have new condos. We also have older housing stock, multi-unit housing units and apartments and also several Manitoban—Manitoba Housing units.

On the doorstep, I met nurses and doctors, pharmacists, health-care aides, teachers, EAs, small-business owners, unionized workers, stay-at-home parents, and I met many seniors, most of whom, quite frankly, felt left down and forgotten by the previous government.

We all know there's been an affordable—affordability crisis here in Manitoba, Honourable Speaker, and the rising inflation hits hardest on those with fixed incomes, which are often our seniors. And I think often about one particular constituent that I visited many times. Her name was Anne. Anne is a senior still living in her home and really feeling the brunt of inflation. Anne shared with me many times, through tears often, that because of rising prices at the grocery store, she was down to only one meal a day. And I would bet that every member in this Chamber heard that same story on the doorstep, and it's heartbreaking and it's wrong.

And that's why in Budget 2024 we're going to put \$1,500 into Anne's hands through our incredible homeowners affordability tax credit, which is designed to help people just like Anne.

Our budget is balanced. It represents the interests of all Manitobans. It's going to give more help to the people who need it most. That makes sense. It's good public policy, and that's what our budget does, Honourable Speaker.

Thank you so much.

**MLA Jeff Bereza (Portage la Prairie):** Honourable Speaker, thank you so much for giving me the opportunity this morning to talk about this Budget 2024. And I'm also wanting to talk to the thousands of people that are watching today about this budget as well, too.

One of the first things I noticed in the budget—and I'm waiting for the clap—is the One Future, One People, One Manitoba, but there was one missing: one taxpayer.

\* (11:40)

We cannot afford what is in this budget.

I also enjoyed over the last few days of hearing all the quotes: from the Laurentian Bank; the TD Bank; the Royal Bank of Canada; all these Bay Street people that couldn't find Portage la Prairie, Gladstone, MacGregor, unless they had a map in front of them. So why—so instead, what I thought I would do, is I thought I would bring some quotes from some Manitobans.

And one of the first Manitobans that I want to quote is the president of AMM: NDP budget fails to address rural crime.

Oh, and here's another one. Headline from the Winnipeg Free Press: Manitoba's surprisingly anti-climate government. And the article goes on and on.

Gage Haubrich, who is the prairie director of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation, and might I quote: The 'vinecar'—vinegar is that, despite planning to take in the record revenue and hiking some taxes, the government is still projecting—just hang on—a deficit of \$796 million this year. That means more debt. And again, that's more debt for that one Manitoban. That one Manitoban that's the taxpayer.

And it means billions of dollars wasted on interest payments to bankers. And remember—who was it that we were quoting the other day? TD Bank, Laurentian Bank and RBC. The buzzards are circling. They're circling, waiting for our debt level to get so high that they can reduce what our value is so they can charge us more interest.

We need to listen to what Manitobans are saying, not what the Bay Street people are saying.

The \$1,500 school tax credit might look real good right now to some, but with the government allowing school divisions to raise taxes, some as high as 17 per cent, many Manitobans will be facing higher taxes in the future.

The Manitoba government is continuing to help out Manitobans by lowering prices at the pump. But uncontrolled spending is hurting future generations by saddling them with billions and billions in debt and interest payments. That's from people that know what's going on.

Here's another one. This is from my constituency, from Terry Astleton [*phonetic*]: Manitobans pay close to the highest personal income taxes in the country. The carbon tax has caused economic issues with all these increases that are causing record inflation. Yet another carbon tax raising the rates even higher than that.

I don't know when it's going to stop. And again, I think it's important for us to bring to Manitobans what we need to do and how do we make it stop.

Let's talk about the environment. Let's talk about the \$10 million that's going to fix the mess that the City of Winnipeg caused with over 200 million litres flowing into the Red River. But it's okay, because pretty soon we're going to be able to walk across Lake Winnipeg because of the algae bloom that has been caused by that—\$10 million is not going to touch what's going on there. But again, it will be that one taxpayer that's responsible for looking after that.

It's not so much what's in this budget, but what isn't in the budget. And again, the one thing that I must say—[*interjection*] And thank you for heckling me across the aisle because it made me think of one more thing. We don't have to worry—you know what? A lot of things to members opposite don't matter outside of the city of Winnipeg.

So, you know what? Again, are we looking to bring back—you know what? Just to give you what it's—what that amount of sewage that went into that river means, and going into Lake Winnipeg to pollute it, is it is 80,000 hogs—80,000 hogs defecating in that river for one year. I would ask the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Kostyshyn) if he agrees with that statement or not.

But, again, like I said, it's not what's in this budget, it's what's not in this budget. There was no



mention of moving forward with MDC. As I have been and I have given one of the members across two prospects on MDC from my constituency, and guess what? They have heard nothing, and all we want to do is protect jobs and create more jobs.

Community safety officers: are they in, are they out with this budget? Let's give the police the opportunity to do the work that they can and to get the criminals off the street.

I look at the \$300 tax credit for putting a camera or, I don't know, a spike belt on your front step. That \$300—people—again, is making people afraid, it's making them stay in their homes and it's not allowing us to look at the real problem, and that's the criminals and the root causes of their actions. But by spending \$300 on a camera is not going to take these people off the street. We—sorry. Okay.

You know, the other thing, and these people sat in my office and talked about it, was the health-care workers that we had coming in from the Philippines. And again, across the aisle they talk about health care and what they're going to do for health care. But we haven't seen anything about that.

What we have seen is 64, now, health-care workers that have come from the Philippines, that are happy to be here—and, again, one of my constituents who is from the Philippines saying to me, there's hundreds more that want to come, but the problem is, is that we have been told by the members from the other side—didn't work. It was a complete waste of time. I don't know when we can call even one health-care worker coming to this province, working for us, a waste of time.

Where and when are we going to get these health-care workers?

I also want to talk about the flat tax, or this great tax that supposedly includes 83 per cent of the houses in Manitoba. I don't know if my constituency is a lot different than any other constituency, but the Koko Platz area of Portage la Prairie, where there's a large amount of middle-class people living in Portage la Prairie, you'd be hard-pressed to buy a house under \$350,000.

Where did this—and again, the number keeps changing. I've heard 80 per cent; I've heard 82 per cent; I've heard 85 per cent. Where has this number come from? If we want to attract health-care families to Portage la Prairie, how do we do that when this government across is going to increase their taxes on the houses they want to live in? This government wants

to pick and choose where and when these workers come from. For—yet, doctors have to pay for any other secondary properties they have.

\* (11:50)

In fact, I just got a call from my landlord yesterday, and he said, would you mind thanking the NDP for me? Because of what they've done on the rental facilities, your rent is going up. It wasn't that it was going down. It's going up.

Rural properties, like I said, are hard to find. Oakville—has anybody been to Oakville? Anybody know on the other side where Oakville is? Two on the other side know where Oakville is, so that's a pretty good sign. Two—surprised the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Kostyshyn) didn't know where Oakville was, but—Oakville, Manitoba—and if you want to have a look at this, it's in point-to-point sales. Oakville, Manitoba, currently has for sale houses of this value: \$542,000, \$825,000, \$399,000, \$284,000, \$425,000 and \$565,000. Are those people going to pay less tax? Absolutely not. Those people were forgotten. Those middle-class people that we want to come into our area have been forgotten.

When we talk about these increases and how we're going to do things like that and how we're not going to attract middle-class people to Manitoba, was the new proposed plant that's coming to Portage la Prairie, that was introduced by this Progressive Conservative government—the company called Azure, that is going to do sustainable agricultural work—were they consulted about the people that they're going to bring into this province are going to have to pay more money?

Southport Aerospace that is fighting right now—fighting—to try and solidify a 25-year flight school. It's worth multi, multi-million dollars for the Portage la Prairie economy, as well as the Province of Manitoba. Was anyone from Southport consulted about this? Did they have a chance?

Let's talk about some of these cuts. One that's going to affect my constituency is the cut to parks, to beautiful parks, and the amount of people that come to these parks from all over the world. And I'm thinking about those hunters—those hunters that come and spend thousands and thousands of dollars every year in our province going to Delta. Delta is one of the world-class facilities that is a waterfowl destination for many people across Canada and many people across the world.

Well, guess what? They might be able to—instead of maybe a full roll of toilet paper, will be able to get

a half a roll of toilet paper, because of the cuts by half to these beautiful parks. How do we get these parks, when the—how do we get any of these parks, our roads that we talk about, with a—with the infrastructure being cut by \$163 million?

Another one—oh, the Infrastructure Minister's not here, I can't ask that question. How do we—

**The Speaker:** Order, please.

A reminder, once again, that we cannot reference whether members are present or not present.

**MLA Bereza:** My apologies for that.

How do—when it comes to infrastructure, how are we going to fix the provincial highway in front of the new Portage hospital that was started, thank goodness, by this PC government, that is going to create more jobs for Manitoba? The Tupper Street overpass in Portage la Prairie is in need of repairs. When will that happen?

The one I do want to talk about and the one that was in the budget and keeps being talked about, but we're not sure if it's in or out, is the trade corridor known as Provincial Highway 227. The only way that you can get down Highway 227 right now would be with a horse and cart. What's happening? What's happening with that? Where is that road?

There was no mention of any kind regarding sport and heritage. With this, less money for festivals, museums and what our children want to do.

But let's talk about the carbon tax. The carbon tax that I read this morning in the Free Press that our Premier (Mr. Kinew) is the only one still standing in favour of the carbon tax. So let's talk about the impact of the carbon tax without any solutions.

Increased cost of living. The carbon tax can lead to higher prices for goods and services. This is not just about gasoline or home heating. This affects everyone in our province. But where it affects the most is the people that can least affect it—least afford it. And that's the people of Manitoba that are—don't have a vehicle, don't have a means in order to get to the grocery store.

The impact on agriculture. The carbon tax can increase production costs; Azure, the plant we're trying to get to come to Manitoba.

Limited impact on global emissions. The carbon tax implemented in Manitoba may have a limited impact on global emissions, as the province's contribution to overall greenhouse-gas emissions is relatively small. This can lead to a perception that the carbon tax

is imposing costs on Manitoba without yielding any significant environmental benefits.

**Impact on industry:** Certain industries will likely leave Manitoba, such as manufacturing and resources, may face increased costs due to the carbon tax.

**Limited revenue recycling; impact on trade:** The carbon tax can affect trade relationships, as it may increase the cost of exporting goods for Manitoba. This can impact the competitiveness of Manitoba businesses in the global market.

I do want to speak, Honourable Speaker, and I want to speak directly to Manitobans. And I'm hoping that the folks across the aisle can hear this too. When it comes to carbon tax, it is affecting the price of groceries. Our groceries are being impacted, and it's not because the grocers are looking for more money. The grocers are paying more money. So again, it starts with a loaf of bread or a hog or a chicken or a cow.

Here's just a prime example: electricity to heat barns, heat a hog barn. While we were in Brandon at the Royal Manitoba Winter Fair and sitting with one of the winners, he was telling me that he did look at the ability to go to electric—to stop heating with propane and going to electrical power.

First of all, he was told by Manitoba Hydro it would probably be six months to a year, because they'd have to design it, because they would have to come from a bigger grid, because of the amount of electrical power that they would need. But here's the kicker—here's the kicker of why we want to keep businesses in Manitoba, and how can we do that, when this farm was quoted \$125,000 per mile, for over 20 miles, in order to switch to electrical power.

Nobody is going—nobody in here is going to stand up and say that climate change and the climate isn't real, of what's happening out there. But let's have alternatives for these people that are being affected. That one taxpayer in Manitoba that is being affected every day—every day, by—every day—

**The Speaker:** Order please.

I'd just like to remind all members that exhibits are not allowed in debates in this House. In the—this place, members use their words, not waving things around. I've seen a few examples of this taking place, and I just want to make sure that members are aware that waving something around is an exhibit and is not allowed. And that applies equally to all members.

So just keep that in mind while you're in debate. Thank you.

\* (12:00)

**MLA Bereza:** Honourable Speaker, my apologies for that, because I did see others being—I apologize. I thought it was okay to do that; my apologies for doing that.

In conclusion, what I want to say is that there is one taxpayer in Manitoba. Those taxpayers we have to look after. We cannot tax them to death and chase them—

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

### Introduction of Guests

**The Speaker:** And before I recognize any further members, I want to draw all members' attention to the public gallery where we have seated Niverville High School, 30 grade 9 students under the direction of Danielle Marion, and they're in the member for Springfield-Ritchot's (Mr. Schuler) constituency.

Welcome.

\* \* \*

**Hon. Glen Simard (Minister of Sport, Culture, Heritage and Tourism):** Honourable Speaker, Manitobans and esteemed members of the Chamber, I stand before you proudly representing Brandon East. Our budget brings a message of new energy—one people, one future, one Manitoba.

It is a commitment to revitalizing and unifying our province, communities and Legislature. For the past 27 years I've dedicated myself to the people of Brandon, serving as a French-immersion teacher at École Harrison, alongside my wife Lori, in Brandon, where we've been able to raise our family.

While I originally come from St-Lazare, Manitoba, I'm proud to have raised my family in Brandon. Years of volunteering with the sport community gave me a unique insight to the needs and concerns of Brandon East, but also the wider Westman area.

It is a unique honour to follow in the footsteps of previous NDP MLAs and all MLAs in Brandon who have used their time in this House to advocate and work for the Wheat City.

This is a new day and it's thanks to Manitobans. They've given us a clear mandate to work to solve some of the greatest challenges of our time. We've heard countless stories of exhausted nurses, struggling families and businesses still recovering from the global pandemic.

Our government is already hard at work to make amends for the previous government's ignorance and build a stronger future for our province. Our budget does just that. Manitoba is not just a place on our map. It is our home, where we live, work, play and volunteer.

In recent years our community, province and country have faced unprecedented challenges, forcing us to adapt to new realities. In my past life as an educator, I experienced these challenges first-hand as we navigated through the complexities of the pandemic, dealt with divisive rhetoric and—triumphant in a historic election. By embracing unity and rejecting division we emerge as a stronger province with an eye towards a shared purpose of a brighter future.

In our collective journey, I've witnessed the resilience of my teaching colleagues as we've innovated and inspired, risen to the occasion despite the challenges. These challenges meant realizing more could be done for students if predictable and stable funding of our education system was a reality.

The repercussions were felt deeply in Brandon, where we witnessed the damaging effects of policy choices that led to reductions in crucial positions and programs, leaving our students and educators to bear the brunt.

The elimination of teaching and other specialist positions reflected a dire situation that could no longer be ignored. Our democratically elected school trustees' decisions were gut-wrenching, driven by a provincial mandate that handcuffed their ability to fund programs locally.

In my own community, we certainly saw the effects as well, with the loss of the assistant deputy minister of francophone education.

Our budget reversed this trend. We have set a sustainable path on a new course.

L'élimination des enseignants et des autres spécialistes a réfléchi une situation difficile qu'on ne pouvait plus ignorer. Nos commissaires ont pris des décisions qui étaient extrêmement difficiles, qui étaient mises sur eux par un mandat provincial qui leur a pas permis de prendre des bonnes initiatives dans leur propre communauté.

On a vu l'élimination du sous-ministre pour les affaires francophones au BÉF, mais nous avons remis cela.

**Translation**

*The loss of teaching positions and other specialist positions has created a difficult situation that could no longer be ignored. Our school trustees made some extremely difficult decisions, which were forced on them by a provincial mandate that did not allow them to take good initiatives in their own communities.*

*We also saw the elimination of the position of deputy minister for Francophone Affairs at the BÉF (Bureau de l'éducation française), but we have restored it.*

**English**

I heard from families loud and clear, class size capacity has increased steadily, and parents want to ensure their kids are getting the support they need. We will work with school divisions to reduce class size for the youngest learners so they can get more one-on-one time with teachers and educational assistants.

Provincial leadership was required then, but despite our opposition's daily calls, such leadership was nowhere to be found, ignoring multiple requests for communications from the school boards, coupled with the attempt to centralize power and exclude people's voices from the conversation. It was not acceptable then, and is—we've reversed that trend, haven't we?

As Manitobans, we stood up against this and made our voices heard. My desire to be part of the solution was solidified in these moments where I saw the frank need to stand up to the decisions that were being made that affected my home community.

This is why I'm proud to have a Premier (Mr. Kinew) and a Finance Minister who has visited my community many, many times and engaged with Brandonites and heard their feedback before the budget. He, along with the rest of my colleagues in the House, know that it's time to make right on our promises. And it is with great pleasure that our government works towards this by decreasing classroom sizes, providing nutrition programs for K-to-12 students, increasing the presence of French teachers in classrooms and supporting Indigenous learning through the appointment of an ADM for Indigenous excellence.

Je suis devant vous avec un message clair: les citoyens du Manitoba ont choisi notre parti pour rétablir l'unité et la cohésion en gouvernance. C'est ce que nous avons promis quand on est allés de porte à porte cet automne. C'est une des premières choses que nous avons entendues, pour réinvestir dans nos communautés après des tellement longues années dans la noirceur.

**Translation**

*I stand in front of you with a clear message: Manitoba citizens chose our party to restore unity and governance cohesion. This is what we promised when we went door to door this past fall. It is one of the very first things that we heard: that we must reinvest in our communities after so many dark, long years.*

**English**

Today, I stand before you with a clear message. The citizens of Brandon East have chosen our party to bring back new energy, unity and integrity in government. It's what I promised to do when I went door-to-door this fall. And one of the things we heard on the door was the need to reinvest in our communities after so many tough years.

I've seen it first-hand, and I was glad to see a commitment for our new and better Park Community Centre included not only in our election campaign but in this budget. I'm proud to be a part of a government that listens to the needs of our communities, that engages our—in our communities and makes sure that every Manitoban has a voice.

In my new role in this place as the MLA for Brandon East, but also as the new Minister for Sport, Culture, Heritage and Tourism, I was pleased to see a commitment to grow the creative sector and invest in local artists and festivals. In my short time so far as a minister, I've been incredibly impressed by the cultural diversity across our province.

That's why we are investing in the arts sector in Budget 2024. In particular, a first-in-decades increase to our valued arts community. With increased support to the Manitoba Arts Council, Manitoba Film and Music, the Centre culturel franco-manitobain and to the home of the W-R-B, WSO, M-T-S and Manitoba Opera in the Manitoba centennial corporation.

In a letter to arts organizations just the other day, Manitobans for the Arts have touted the importance of these investments, and I quote: The 2024 provincial budget, a historic investment in arts and culture.

And we're just getting started. I'm excited for the opportunity to serve as a member of the Premier's team and to continue to help deliver results across the province.

The Premier talked a lot about giving the civil service a hug. In my own department, I've seen some of the spectacular work that our team does on a daily basis with a commitment to serving Manitobans. I hope that

I can embody that in the professionalism and commitment to this role.

I want to thank, in particular, our staff in the minister's office, who have been instrumental in keeping our office running and orienting a new MLA and minister to this building. To Tracy, Alayssa and Claudette, thank you.

This budget has certainty for workers.

\* (12:10)

I am particularly honoured to play in a role in our government's commitments to support our province's athletes. Both of my sons, Andrew and Nathan, are athletes. I've seen the positive impact that sport can have on a child's development, on their place in their community.

I am so proud that our budget has increased funding to support amateur sport. Budget 2024 builds on the more than \$13.8 million in annual funding currently provided for Sport Manitoba, with increased funding dedicated to enhancing anti-racism and anti-discrimination initiatives.

I have also under my portfolio Minister responsible for Francophone Affairs. As I've mentioned before, I came from a francophone household. I have taught in the immersion part for almost all my career in the public school system.

Nous avons investi dans la communauté francophone. Nous avons rétabli la capacité de notre gouvernement pour offrir les services aux Manitobains en français—non seulement en santé, éducation, justice, mais dans les affaires municipales, dans les immigrations. On entend: c'est un pas d'avance. C'est pour des générations que nous avons fait des investissements. Nous—être contents de servir nos citoyens manitobains en français, dans leur langue.

### **Translation**

*We have invested in the Francophone community. We have restored the capacity of our government to offer French language services to Manitobans, not only in the areas of health, education and justice, but also in the areas of municipal affairs and immigration. We have heard that it is a step forward, with investments for future generations. We are happy to serve Manitoba's citizens in French—in their language.*

### **English**

A keystone principle for improving our education and health-care systems is addressing the affordability crisis gripping my city and the rest of the province.

Affordability is not just a slogan, it's a clarion call for our residents, a message that our community is stronger when all of us can thrive.

When you walk the streets of Brandon East, you see that people are struggling. They are struggling because of—their past government ignored their needs. They allowed hydro rates to rise, froze funding to municipalities and refused to invest in health care locally.

We saw this in my own community when the Brandon Clinic shuttered its walk-in clinic. But it's clear to me that people are struggling to get by, but they're looking for help from our new government.

This week's budget outlines our plan to tackle this issue that ballooned under the previous government. We'll support families and businesses by freezing their hydro rates because they shouldn't have to worry about keeping the lights on. We'll also invest in affordable child care with the addition of new daycare at the park. And we are investing in opening a minor injury and illness clinic across the province, including Brandon.

My colleagues and I will prioritize tackling the real problems of affordability, taking purposeful action against poverty and addiction and moving towards meaningful reconciliation by including everyone in the conversation.

That's why I'm proud to support our new government's immediate move to provide 24-hour shelter services. I'm proud to see our commitment to work to eliminate chronic homelessness over the next eight years.

I am proud to stand with a budget that invests in social housing, adds more spaces for all and repairs the damages by reversing the years of neglect. I hope that I can use my experience of bringing people together, listening and understanding to serve my constituency positively.

Under the Premier's (Mr. Kinew) leadership, we have been tirelessly sharing this message and engaging Manitobans on these critical issues. I have given my heart and soul to my community, as seen on hockey rinks, volleyball and basketball courts, football fields and for the folks in Brandon least—East who are listening, the cricket fields, as well.

My involvement as an association executive member, co-ordinator and coach reflects my belief that everyone, regardless of background or financial circumstance, deserves access to high-quality and

meaningful recreation. I know that starting with this budget, we can make it a reality for so many Manitobans across this great province.

The pandemic had underscored the importance of gathering places for Manitobans and Brandonites, which is essential for our province's health and wellness. Our commitment to investment in recreational outdoor and creative spaces for both young and old remains unwavering. We see this in Budget 2024 by investing in rec centres in Lorette, Brandon and across the province.

From behind the scenes, I played a crucial role in making Boyd Stadium at Simplot Millennium Park a reality. I worked hard to establish Brandon's first official-sized cricket pitch between two football fields that I had a part in building among eight baseball diamonds. What better example of working together?

But it's time to bring Manitoba's second largest city back into the conversation on Broadway. This budget accomplishes just that. The list is extensive. The budget delivers on our government's commitment to build a strong relationship with Manitoba communities, lifting the previous government's funding freeze, providing a sustainable annual funding increase to build projects like the Park Community Centre.

Our government has committed to laying the groundwork to train doctors at the west—in the Westman region by investing in a capital expansion to the science centre at BU. We are expanding acute care—acute-care beds by adding beds at the Brandon Regional Health Centre. We are investing \$17 million to create three new minor injury-illness clinics, including one in Brandon. Our budget provides more investments in spine assessment and surgery across three facilities, including Brandon.

There is ongoing funding for emergency ground transport, including funding a 24-7 ambulance in Brandon and the paramedics to support it. The expansion and renovation of the Brandon Regional Health Centre and the expansion of the Manitoba Western—or, Western Manitoba Cancer Centre.

The extension of the gas tax will continue to provide relief to Brandonites. We are funding \$250,000 for a two-four-seven sobering centre in Brandon. The investment of more than \$22 million and the expansion and improvement of medical transportation across the province.

Brandon University and Assiniboine Community College will receive an initial increased investment as our government respects these institutions as

crucial employers of highly skilled professionals contributing significantly to our city's cultural, economic and intellectual worth. I want to thank in particular the many members of BU and ACC community who continue to engage with us on a regular basis.

There are many more investments in housing that will improve Brandon's situation. Brandon's agriculture and contribution to the agriculture industry is a Manitoba economic powerhouse. And our government has committed to investing in agriculture science, innovation, resilience and sustainability to continue the city's economic contribution to our province to ensure you can feed your families.

We are honoured to have Manitobans' support and look to you to help drive solutions for our community. I also want to thank Mayor Jeff Fawcett, who is a tire advocate for the Wheat City. I know that he and the members of the city council are ready to work with our new government to rebuild Brandon and to address today's problems while charting a sunny future for the Wheat City.

With the investment of this year's budget, we are well on our way. It's time to bring new energy back to Brandon. We must work to build a better Brandon for everyone, from small business owners on Princess and Rosser to workers at Maple Leaf to the hard-working nurses at the B-R—the Brandon Regional Health Centre and the educators and support staff in our public schools.

We know that we can 'achieve' great things for Brandon East, for the city, for Westman and for Manitoba when we work together. After years of public service, I'm excited to play a new role in helping my community. I'm honoured to be part of a team that is bringing people together to solve challenges our province faces. I want every Manitoban to feel safe, respected and for them to know that they belong in our community.

In conclusion, I invite all of you to be part of a larger, positive conversation about bringing new energy to the province and to Brandon East.

Un avenir, un peuple, un Manitoba. Merci.

### **Translation**

*One future, one people, one Manitoba. Thank you.*

**Mr. Derek Johnson (Interlake-Gimli):** I suppose a delayed applause is better than no applause, hey? But thank you for that from my colleagues and members opposite for encouraging me to speak here today. So I

want to just thanks for the applause from the whole entire House.

So I want to start by speaking a little about some of my constituents and elected officials and all the hard work that they do as well. I have many municipalities in my constituency. I have many less than it was previous to the NDP-forced amalgamation, but there's still some left. And I want to thank them for doing the service that they do for each municipality and putting their name on the ballot.

\* (12:20)

I think we all understand, especially in this Chamber here, how important it is to bring the voice forward. And they do that with myself, and they bring their constituents' voice forward, and I want to thank each and every one of them.

My constituency, in the southwest corner where I live, is St. Laurent, which is the largest Métis community in—well, in the world, and so much so that it was recognized in the Smithsonian, and I know I've talked about that in this Chamber before.

Then I go north, up Lake Manitoba, all the way through Fairford and up to Gypsumville, Homebrook, Peonan Point, that whole area, which is some Northern Affairs communities, as well, in there, which can't go unrecognized for those officials putting their name on the ballot and representing their community as they do.

Now I go all the way east, northeast corner is Hecla. Now Hecla, which is an amazing place to visit, I'm sure most people—I would hope most people in this Chamber have taken time to go and visit Hecla, but it is, it's in need of a road, and our previous minister on the Conservative side had budgeted \$220 million towards upgrading our parks. And that road through Hecla village was one of the roads that were going to be considered.

But now I would hope the minister would get up and be frank with the community that they've cut that road. That road is not going to be built under this NDP government. I think it's very important. People come from—when you're up there you see licence plates from all over Canada and the United States to come and take in the beauty of Hecla and the original village that's there. And now that road that was planned under the PC government has been cut by this NDP government.

So, I continue down Lake Winnipeg, all the way as far south as Dunnottar and Matlock, that's some beautiful spaces there as well.

And speaking of Dunnottar, they have an outstanding council there as well. I think we all know Mayor Rick Gamble. He's been at it for a long, long time, over a quarter of a century, and he, I believe, is my longest-serving municipal official. So I want to say thank you to him for his long-term service. He says he's not running again, but we'll see in a few years when the municipal election comes around. He might change his mind. He's done so much advancements for the community over the time he's been there.

I also want to recognize a few different organizations, like East Interlake Conservation District and the good work they do; west Interlake conservation district as well.

But specifically, I want to mention the East Interlake Conservation District because the building—they were a successful applicant to the Building Sustainable Communities grant, which is being cut under this new NDP government. They do a lot of work with environment and they renovated their office space so they could have proper meeting rooms and stuff there, through the Building Sustainable Communities grant.

There's also Arborg & District Multicultural Heritage Village. If people in this Chamber haven't taken the time to visit that, it's an amazing collection of buildings from around the community that have been moved there, and Pat Eyolfson has done an amazing job at getting funding for that. And you can go and tour that for just a few dollars for a family to tour that, and it has all of the old schools set up, there's churches there. It's an amazing place to go and visit.

But that's also a successful community organization for the Building Sustainable Communities grant, and they used the money that—to renovate the museum and grounds, and including an outdoor stage. So I think members opposite really need to consider these grants that they're cutting.

Evergreen Basic Needs committee, another great organization in the community, and they have a food bank. They used this money to renovate the space and replace the flooring to make it safe for people to come in and out; you don't want them tripping when they're going into the food bank. But that's another very important community organization that will not be able to apply for funding under this NDP government from cutting the BSCs.

Now, Gimli Glider museum, I spoke of the Gimli Glider museum right here in this Chamber with a private member's statement, and Barb Gluck has done amazing—and her team has done amazing exhibit there. They actually even have the tail wing from the plane after it retired, the tail section of the plane, right in Gimli, so you can actually touch the Gimli Glider. And they have seats there. They have a section of the wall for windows so you can see through the very same windows that the people that had the emergency landing in Gimli, well, 40 years ago now, over 40 years ago. You can see the exact—where the people would've been sitting. They have the captain's suit and everything there. But that's another organization that will suffer from the NDP cuts.

Breidavik island historical library, another organization that will suffer from cuts. Meleb-Park-Cumming school district reunion committee: they upgraded the playground. I was there for that. They have a—if you're driving down Highway 7, you'll see the—you'll recognize the park by the three mushrooms that they have there. That's their statue. I think as you go across Manitoba, we recognize statues all through the province, and that's their claim to fame is their beautiful mushrooms that they have there. But that's another committee that will suffer under this NDP government from the cuts to Building Sustainable Communities.

The Arborg-Bifrost rec commission: this facility, inclusive of the arena and the hall, they were successful in getting the curling rink upgraded and the washrooms to make them accessible. That's one of the grants that went to my community. And this—the Arborg-Bifrost parks and rec commission works very hard at making these upgrades in the community. Now, that is another organization that's going to suffer under this NDP government. No Building Sustainable Communities grants are going to be handed out; it's one of their cuts.

Gimli New Horizons 55+ Centre: this is a necessary replacement for shingles on one of their buildings so their roofs don't leak. This is for seniors, housing for seniors, that were successful in getting a Building Sustainable Communities grant, and it's going to be cut under the NDP government. Interlake pioneers, as well: a roof replacement, new shingles for their facility.

The list goes on and on. I'm halfway through my time already; I'm not going to get through all of them. But St. Laurent and District rec commission: there's Big Tree Park. Even our members that work in this building—Denise right outside—in room 266–269, that buzzed us into this Chamber, and she remembers that tree when she was a child. This tree has been around for hundreds of years, and the park that is built around it was done by this Conservative government when we were there. But all of those possibilities are cut, cut from this NDP government.

God, there's so many good projects that we did. Lake Winnipeg Mission Camp Society as well. Poplarfield Community Centre: they renovated the community hall for new windows and doors and cladding; that's another community that is not going to get funding from this NDP government because they cut Building Sustainable Communities.

The RM of Gimli: they built a trail between different recreation amenities so people can walk and go from amenity to amenity. They can walk safely on the trail where kids can go from the skate park to the arena—

**The Speaker:** Order, please.

The hour being 12:30, when this matter is again before the House, the honourable member will have nine minutes remaining.

The hour being 12:30, this House is adjourned, and stands adjourned until 1:30 on Monday.



# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, April 5, 2024

## CONTENTS

<b>ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS</b>			
<b>Introduction of Bills</b>		Provincial Nominee Program Applicants	
		Byram	1046
		Cable	1046
Bill 29—The Body Armour and Fortified Vehicle Control Amendment Act		Mental Health and Addiction Treatment Services	
Wiebe	1039	Lamoureux	1047
		Fontaine	1047
Bill 30—The Unexplained Wealth Act (Criminal Property Forfeiture Act and Corporations Act Amended)		Mental Health and Harm Reduction Branch	
Wiebe	1039	Lamoureux	1047
		Fontaine	1047
<b>Committee Reports</b>		Youth Mental Health Strategy	
Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs		Lamoureux	1047
Third Report		Fontaine	1047
Sandhu	1040	Universal School Nutrition Program	
		Moroz	1048
		Altomare	1048
<b>Members' Statements</b>		Riding Mountain Constituency	
Youville Community Health Centre		Nesbitt	1048
Moyes	1041	Naylor	1048
Lon Schwartz		Skilled Trades Workforce	
Jackson	1041	Perchotte	1048
RCAF 100th Anniversary		Sala	1048
Pankratz	1042	Unexplained Wealth Act	
Pitura Seeds STARS Fundraiser		Oxenham	1048
Stone	1042	Wiebe	1049
Harry Schellenberg		School Expansions in Brandon	
Schmidt	1042	Jackson	1049
		Altomare	1049
<b>Oral Questions</b>		University of Winnipeg Cyber Attack	
Price of Provincial Carbon Tax		Cook	1049
Ewasko	1043	Cable	1049
Kinew	1043	Brandon Manitoba	
CFS and Social Services Agencies		Balcaen	1049
Stone	1044	Naylor	1049
Kinew	1044	Highways and Roads	
Archives of Manitoba		Guenter	1050
Khan	1045	Naylor	1050
Simard	1045	Highway 227 in Lakeside	
Interlake-Gimli Constituency		King	1050
Johnson	1046	Naylor	1050
Naylor	1046	New Agriculture Offices	
Bird Flu Outbreaks		Narth	1050
Bereza	1046	Kostyshyn	1050
Kostyshyn	1046		

Surgical and Diagnostic Service Providers

Cook 1050  
Sala 1051

Action on Climate Change

Khan 1051  
Schmidt 1051

Education Property Tax

Stone 1051  
Kostyshyn 1051

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

**Budget Debate**  
(Fourth Day of Debate)

Oxenham 1052  
Stone 1053  
Schmidt 1055  
Bereza 1060  
Simard 1063  
Johnson 1066

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