

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. 5 - 10 a.m., Friday, November 24, 2023

ISSN 0542-5492

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-Third Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALTOMARE, Nello, Hon.	Transcona	NDP
ASAGWARA, Uzoma, Hon	Union Station	NDP
BALCAEN, Wayne	Brandon West	PC
BEREZA, Jeff	Portage la Prairie	PC
BLASHKO, Tyler	Lagimodière	NDP
BRAR, Diljeet	Burrows	NDP
BUSHIE, Ian, Hon.	Keewatinook	NDP
BYRAM, Jodie	Agassiz	PC
CABLE, Renée, Hon.	Southdale	NDP
CHEN, Jennifer	Fort Richmond	NDP
COOK, Kathleen	Roblin	PC
CROSS, Billie	Seine River	NDP
DELA CRUZ, Jelynn	Radisson	NDP
DEVGAN, JD	McPhillips	NDP
EWASKO, Wayne	Lac du Bonnet	PC
FONTAINE, Nahanni, Hon.	St. Johns	NDP
GOERTZEN, Kelvin	Steinbach	PC
GUENTER, Josh	Borderland	PC
HIEBERT, Carrie	Morden-Winkler	PC
JACKSON, Grant	Spruce Woods	PC
JOHNSON, Derek	Interlake-Gimli	PC
KENNEDY, Nellie	Assiniboia	NDP
KHAN, Obby	Fort Whyte	PC
KINEW, Wab, Hon.	Fort Rouge	NDP
KING, Trevor	Lakeside	PC
KOSTYSHYN, Ron, Hon.	Dauphin	NDP
LAGASSÉ, Bob	Dawson Trail	PC
LAMOUREUX, Cindy	Tyndall Park	Lib.
LATHLIN, Amanda	The Pas-Kameesak	NDP
LINDSEY, Tom, Hon.	Flin Flon	NDP
LOISELLE, Robert	St. Boniface	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Malaya, Hon.	Notre Dame	NDP
MOROZ, Mike	River Heights	NDP
MOSES, Jamie, Hon.	St. Vital	NDP
MOYES, Mike	Riel	NDP
NARTH, Konrad	La Vérendrye	PC
NAYLOR, Lisa, Hon.	Wolseley	NDP
NESBITT, Greg	Riding Mountain	PC
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, November 24, 2023

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, and 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. Good morning, everyone.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

The Speaker: Introduction of bills? Committee reports?

TABLING OF REPORTS

The Speaker: The honourable Minister of Housing—no, sorry. The honourable Minister of Housing, Addictions and Homelessness.

Hon. Bernadette Smith (Minister responsible for Mental Health): I'm pleased to table the following report in the House today: Mental Health and Community Wellness Annual Report for the year ending March 31st, 2023.

The Speaker: Further tabling?

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care): I'm pleased to table the following reports. The Manitoba Health Annual Report for 2022-2023; the Manitoba Seniors and Long-Term Care Annual Report for 2022-2023.

Thanks.

Hon. Tracy Schmidt (Minister of Environment and Climate Change): Honourable Speaker, I'm pleased to table the following annual reports for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2023: The Department of Environment and Climate Change; the Manitoba Clean Environment Commission; the Manitoba Hazardous Waste Management Corporation, and for Efficiency Manitoba, which also includes the Efficiency Manitoba Annual Report Supplement.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Further tablings?

Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Honourable Speaker, I'm pleased to table the following annual reports pursuant to The Statutes and Regulations Act, a copy of each regulation registered under the act after the last regulation tabled in this House and more than 14 days before the commencement of this session: The '22-23 Regulatory Accountability Report; the '22-23 Annual Report for the Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Authority of Manitoba; the 2023 Annual Report for Manitoba Justice, and the '22-23 Annual Report for Legal Aid Manitoba.

The Speaker: Any further tablings?

Hon. Jamie Moses (Minister of Economic Development, Investment, Trade and Natural Resources): Honourable Speaker, I am pleased to table the following annual reports: The Manitoba Economic Development, Investment and Trade, year ended March 31st, 2023; Manitoba Natural Resources Development, year ended March 31st, 2023; the 2022-2023 Apprenticeship and Certification Board Report; The Manitoba Opportunities Fund Limited, year ended 20–March 31st, and the Manitoba Development Corporation, year ended March 31st, 2023.

The Speaker: Any further reports? Seeing none, ministerial statements.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

The Speaker: The honourable Minister—[interjection]—all right. The required 90 minutes' notice prior to routine proceedings was provided in accordance with rule 27(2).

International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Minister responsible for Gender Equity): Tomorrow is the international campaign known as 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence, and it begins tomorrow.

Day 1 of the campaign starts with the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

In alignment with the United Nations Secretary-General's UNiTE by 2030 initiative, which urges global action to raise awareness, advocate for change, and share knowledge to eradicate all forms of violence against women and girls, the 2023 theme focuses on investing to prevent violence against women.

Gender-based violence remains a global priority in respect of public health, gender equity and human rights. This systemic crisis affects one in three women worldwide.

While violence affects women, girls and gender-diverse relatives universally, certain groups, such as those living with disabilities, BIPOC, newcomer refugees, LGBTQ2S often encounter greater gender-based violence, alongside obstacles in having their voices heard and accessing support.

The World Health Organization has labeled violence against women an epidemic. While the term epidemic may currently evoke thoughts of COVID, the same analogy holds true for violence against women. Violence against women is a global epidemic which also manifests itself in current wars and conflicts, more often than not, waged on the—on women's bodies.

* (10:10)

Too frequently, systemic responses to gender-based violence blames and shames victims, producing harmful, minimizing narratives that only further entrenches justifying violence against our bodies. In Canada, the majority of women who have been killed are by someone they knew intimately, like the current or ex-partner, as well as by their father or brothers. So we know there is a corresponding epidemic of male violence against women, girls and gender-diverse folks. During these 16 days I encourage Manitobans to contemplate how individual actions can contribute to ending violence against women, girls and gender-diverse individuals.

The daunting task of dismantling patriarchy, misogyny and ending violence is often left to women. To that end, and in keeping in line with the international campaign of investing in prevention, I look forward to many male allies investing their energy, time and taking meaningful steps to end male violence.

So during these 16 days of activism, take action to dismantle systems of patriarchy and toxic masculinity that contribute to male violence, and let's create a society that is safe for women, girls and gender-diverse peoples.

Miigwech.

Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland): Tomorrow is the international day for the elimination of violence against women, where we take a stand against gender-based violence in our province and across the world. On this side of the House, we believe women and girls deserve to be free from violence, sexism and discrimination. They are deserving of respect and inclusion to ensure they are receiving the necessary resources and opportunities.

It is also vital we take the time to recognize the impacts of domestic violence, and that we as legislatures do everything we can to empower and support survivors.

The previous PC government was dedicated—and remains to be dedicated—to prevent and end gender-based violence here in Manitoba. We have signed on to the gender-based violence national action plan and have provided \$2 million to our women's research centres this year, as well as \$7 million towards the Family Violence Prevention Program.

We are proud of the front-line workers who are involved in ensuring women and girls are protected in our province. It is no easy task, but we committed—commend the hard work and dedication that goes into providing essential services to uplift women.

More work still needs to be done, but we will push for a path forward where we will all have equal opportunities. Together we can ensure this future will be a reality in our home province of Manitoba.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The honourable Minister of Agriculture. Notice—[interjection] One second. The required 90 minutes' notice prior to routine proceedings was provided in accordance with rule 27(2).

Holodomor Memorial Day

Hon. Ron Kostyshyn (Minister of Agriculture): I rise today solemnly to observe of the 91st anniversary of the Ukrainian famine of 1932, as-known as the Hololomar [*phonetic*], which Manitobans commemorate annually on the fourth Saturday of November. From 1932 to 1933, Ukraine experienced a human-made famine that led to the deaths of four to five million men, women and children.

The famine was part of Soviet leader deliberate plan to suppress the people of Ukraine. Wheat and other grains were confiscated from farmers and labourers. Although some of the food was sold and exported, much were more simplified left to be rotted away, and not used for human consumption. Those who have resisted were imprisoned, deported or executed; and those who remained were forcibly starved to death.

The very word Holodomor translates to extermination by hunger, and reflects their cruelty at that period.

Honourable Speaker, the 'ensurance' death and destruction affected Ukrainian families for generations, including many who sought refuge in Manitoba. Despite the painful experiences, many Holodomor survivors in Canada shared their experiences to ensure that this will not be repeated.

Out of these painful experiences, Canadians and Ukrainian heritages have built strong and vibrant communities throughout Manitoba and across Canada.

Canada is home to one of the largest Ukrainian populations outside of Europe, in Canadian heritage, to have made valuable contributions to life in Manitoba and across our country.

Estimate has suggest that one in seven Manitobans of this—is of Ukrainian heritage. These strong links prompts the Manitoba government to be the first jurisdiction to pass legislation officially commemorating Holodomor and acknowledging the act of the genocide in 2007.

The Holodomor remembrance is especially important as Ukraine once again faces the challenge of sovereignty and the freedom and external forces. In response, Ukrainians are demonstrating the strength in their spirit and in their resolve of independence.

Manitobans are also stepping up and they are responding to the calls for support and they are welcoming new neighbours from Ukraine. And

Manitoba, as always, are opening up their hearts and homes in overwhelming numbers.

Mr. Speaker, on this solemn occasion, we remember the past and the present challenges faced by people of Ukraine. I ask those present to remember the Holodomor and to keep the people of Ukraine in our thoughts, in our prayers.

Dyakuyu; slava Ukraini. [*Thank you; glory to Ukraine.*]

Thank you so much, ladies and gentlemen.

Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye): Honourable Speaker, today I rise in solemn observance of Holodomor Memorial Day, which takes place globally on the fourth Saturday of each November. This year, that day is November 25th, tomorrow.

As someone of Ukrainian descent, having great-grandparents that left the Ukraine only a short time before the famine, this is something that deeply resonates with me.

Holodomor is the Ukrainian term for death by hunger. It refers to the genocidal starvation of millions of Ukrainians in 1932 to 1933, as a result of Soviet policies that targeted the resisting Ukrainian peasantry.

You might ask: Why attack a group of innocent people? Today, we can ask the same question of Russia, who had launched another unprovoked attack on Ukraine in February of last year, a war in which Ukrainians are bravely fighting.

The answer to this question lies in the fact that Ukrainians were seen as a threat to Soviet ideology and state-building aspirations. I would also argue that the same can be said of Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine today.

The fears and pain felt by Ukrainians during Holodomor have resurfaced with Russia's invasion of Ukraine. This pain and fear can also be felt here in Canada, which is home of the second largest Ukrainian 'diaspora' in the world, and especially here in Manitoba, which is home to approximately 12 per cent of that population.

Many Manitobans identify as Ukrainian, including myself, which is why I can confidently say that Manitobans feel deep empathy for Ukraine and will do all that we can to support those who are currently fleeing the war.

Manitobans stand with Ukraine and are urging Russia to stop its illegal war against Ukraine.

Ukrainians are our brothers, sisters, cousins, friends and neighbours. We are deeply connected to each other. When Ukrainians mourn, so do Manitobans.

Before I resign my time, please join me in having a moment of silence to remember and honour those who lost their lives during Holodomor and the current war in Ukraine.

* (10:20)

The Speaker: Is there leave to do a moment of silence after the member from—sorry—*[interjection]*—Tyndall Park has spoken? *[Agreed]*

MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): I seek leave to respond to the minister's statement.

The Speaker: Does the member have leave? *[Agreed]*

Leave has been granted.

MLA Lamoureux: Today I rise in remembrance of those from Ukraine; those who suffered the horror of the genocide, the Holodomor. We have a very strong presence of Ukrainian heritage here in Manitoba and are fortunate that our active Ukrainian community continues to educate us through commemoration such as today's memorial day.

Honourable Speaker, the famine imposed on Ukraine began through waves of deportation of Ukraine's farmers, and deportation and executions of Ukraine's religious, intellectual and cultural leaders.

About six years ago, I had the opportunity to visit Ukraine, where I experienced the national museum memorial to Holodomor victims. It was truly an experience, and for me, personally, where the tragedy really hit my heart.

The museum teaches us just how horrific the famine was. It portrays the pain and suffering that millions of people were forced to endure. I remember the entrance of the museum well, and the two angels of sorrow who represent the guardians of the souls who starved.

I also think about the statue that we have the honour of having here on our Legislative grounds; the one of the young girl clutching a handful of wheat. This statue is titled the Bitter Memories of Childhood and it has been dedicated to the most vulnerable victims of starvation.

In closing, Honourable Speaker, we must continue to share these stories and talk about history and remembrance, and the hope to learn from the past. I'd

like to thank those who have joined us here today in our galleries and I'd like to thank the minister for bringing forward today's statement.

Thank you.

The Speaker: All members rise for a moment of silence.

A moment of silence was observed.

The Speaker: Thank you. Please be seated.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Manitoba Chinese Family Centre

MLA Jennifer Chen (Fort Richmond): Honourable Speaker, today I want to recognize the impactful organization from my community, the Manitoba Chinese Family Centre.

The centre became a registered non-profit in 2015 and has committed their time and energy into supporting the Chinese community in south Winnipeg.

The number of programs they offer is incredible, especially being volunteer-run. Their programs include connecting with international students; free English and cultural programs; fitness and nutrition programming; tax clinics; and Indigenous culture and history for newcomers.

Organizations like the Manitoba Chinese Family Centre are essential to supporting and welcoming newcomer families to Manitoba. Newcomers and immigrants benefit from selfless and compassionate individuals who bring people together like the generous volunteers from the Manitoba Chinese Family Centre.

I have had the honour to support the Chinese Family Centre from the beginning. One thing that makes the family centre stand out is their long-time volunteers and the participants who are committed to ensuring that everyone feels part of the family.

I hope that we are all inspired by the essential work that volunteers do every day. Without such incredible work, we wouldn't be where we are today.

I want to thank and honour the Manitoba Chinese Family Centre for carrying the true value of volunteerism and for dedicating their time to serving the Chinese community. I want to acknowledge Helen Wang and Miao Sun and the entire family centre board for their incredible work.

As the MLA for Fort Richmond, I am grateful for having the Manitoba Chinese Family Centre as part of our community.

My colleagues, please join me in recognizing the Manitoba Chinese Family Centre.

Thank you. Gǎn xiè. [*Thank you.*]

Tim Edwards

Mr. Jeff Wharton (Red River North): Honourable Speaker, I rise in the House today to honour Tim Edwards, a long-time resident of Red River North, for his outstanding contributions to his community of Grand Marais.

Tim is a recent recipient of the 38th Citizen of the Year Award presented to him by the Selkirk & District Community Foundation for his work as a volunteer serving the community of Grand Marais. His nominator, Terry Neplyk, said that putting Tim's name forward was a no-brainer.

Essentially, he's—he'd—had a huge part in our community. He volunteers for everything, any time, anywhere, any place, and he spends all of his free time as a volunteer and president of the Grand Marais rec association. He's a wonderful man, and he really is a dear friend, and I'm really glad to have Tim in our community.

Tim's involvement in Grand Marais includes president of the Grand Marais rec association, head organizer of the annual Santa Claus parade and breakfast and Safe Halloween event, spearheading renovations at the old Grand Marais curling rink and turning it into a multi-purpose room. He is also past president and director of Grand Beach area development corporation. Tim has also received the Interlake Municipal Recreation Association award in 2019.

Honourable Speaker, I ask my colleagues to recognize Mr. Tim Edwards for his hard work and dedication to his community.

And Tim is also joining us today in the gallery with his wife, Kathia, and son, John.

Thank you so much.

The Speaker: Any other members' statements?

Lac du Bonnet Lions Club

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): Lions Clubs are globally recognized service organizations that have been making significant contributions to society for over a century.

In the Lac du Bonnet constituency and in Manitoba, these clubs have been instrumental in fostering community development, promoting volunteerism and providing humanitarian services.

The Lions Clubs in the Lac du Bonnet constituency have been pivotal in community service and development. They have been involved in various projects ranging from health initiatives to environmental conservation.

The Beausejour Lions Club celebrating its 75th anniversary and the Whitemouth Lions Club marking its 40th anniversary are a testament to the enduring commitment to these organizations to serve their communities.

Other clubs in Lac du Bonnet and Pinawa also contribute significant to the Lions Clubs' mission right here in great province of Manitoba.

The Beausejour Lions Club, celebrating its 75th anniversary, has been a beacon of service in the community, and we are joined today by past president Alicia Kostinuik-Smith, who has spent countless hours in volunteering within the community. Numerous projects, including construction of a community centre, organizing annual fairs, food bank runs and provision of scholarships for local students.

Similarly, the Whitemouth Lions Clubs, marking its 40th anniversary, has made significant contributions to the community, as well. The club has been instrumental in organizing community events such as hosting the upcoming Holiday Train stop, promoting environmental conservation, food bank drives and supporting local schools.

Other Lions Clubs such as those in Lac du Bonnet and Pinawa have also been making significant contributions to their communities. These clubs have been involved in various initiatives, including the organization of community events, parades and a provision of support for local charities.

These Lions Clubs have been instrumental in our communities, and their enduring commitment to service is evidenced by their numerous initiatives and projects. The Lions Clubs in the Lac du Bonnet constituency are indeed a testament to the power of service and volunteerism.

Honourable Speaker, Lions Clubs, hear them roar.

Réseau Compassion Network

MLA Robert Loiselle (St. Boniface): Merci, l'Honorable Président. J'ai l'honneur de prendre la parole dans la Chambre aujourd'hui pour parler du travail extraordinaire du Réseau Compassion Network, aussi connu sous le nom du RCN.

Créé par les Sœurs Grises en 2000, le Réseau Compassion est maintenant responsable de 13 organismes de santé et de services sociaux au Manitoba, dont des organisations importantes comme l'Hôpital de Saint-Boniface, le centre St. Amant, Sara Riel, le Centre Flavie, Actionmarguerite et l'Hôpital Sainte-Rose, pour n'en nommer que quelques-uns.

Le Réseau Compassion offre de nombreux programmes et services différents à toute personne dans le cadre de notre système provincial intégré de santé et de services sociaux.

À titre d'exemple, le Réseau Compassion a récemment ouvert Les Suites Marion. Ce nouveau complexe d'habitation mixte de 48 unités situé à Saint-Boniface offre 20 options de logement très abordables et des services de soutien pour les personnes confrontées à d'autres obstacles de logement.

Il est important de noter que le Réseau Compassion fait ce beau travail en partenariat avec les organismes de son réseau, notamment Sara Riel, St. Amant et Abri Marguerite, ainsi qu'avec son partenaire communautaire l'Accueil francophone.

Cette approche assure que les personnes vivant avec des problèmes de santé mentale, de déficience développementale, et les nouveaux arrivants puissent tous atteindre leur plein potentiel dans un endroit abordable, sûr et de qualité qu'ils peuvent appeler leur chez-soi.

Je sais aussi que le Réseau Compassion travaille d'arrache-pied pour trouver d'autres moyens de mettre leur solide réseau au service de notre communauté.

Je tiens à remercier le Réseau Compassion Network d'avoir rappelé aux Manitobains et à ce gouvernement à quel point le pouvoir de la compassion a un impact.

Je vous invite à vous joindre à moi pour les féliciter de leur travail maintenant inspirant au sein de notre communauté.

Translation

Thank you, Honourable Speaker. I am honoured to rise in the House today to speak about the extraordinary work of the Réseau Compassion Network, also known as RCN.

Created by the Grey Nuns in 2000, Réseau Compassion Network is now responsible for 13 health and social service agencies in Manitoba, including such important organizations as St. Boniface

Hospital, St. Amant Centre, Sara Riel, Centre Flavie, Actionmarguerite and St. Rose Hospital, to name but a few.

Réseau Compassion Network offers many different programs and services to anyone within our integrated provincial health and social services system.

For example, Réseau Compassion Network recently opened Les Suites Marion. This new 48-unit mixed-use housing complex in St. Boniface offers 20 very affordable housing options and support services for people facing other housing barriers.

It is important to note that Réseau Compassion Network is doing this great work in partnership with the organizations in its network, including Sara Riel, St. Amant and Abri Marguerite, as well as its community partner Accueil francophone.

This approach ensures that people living with mental health issues or developmental disabilities and newcomers can all reach their full potential in an affordable, safe, quality place they can call home.

I also know that Réseau Compassion Network is working hard to find other ways to put their strong network to work for our community.

I want to thank Réseau Compassion Network for reminding Manitobans and this government just how impactful the power of compassion can be.

Please join me in congratulating now them on their inspiring work in our community.

English

RCN is quite busy today planning with Actionmarguerite, Sinkew [phonetic] centre, Riverview and Villa Youville in St. Anne how we can continue taking better care of our seniors. I believe RCN deserves a big round of applause.

4-H Canada 110th Anniversary

Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland): It was my great pleasure on November 3rd to attend the 110th anniversary of 4-H Canada in the town where 4-H Canada first started.

Roland, Manitoba is located in the southwest corner of the Midland constituency, and is recognized as the birthplace of 4-H Canada.

This is where the first organizational meeting for a Boys and Girls Club was held in 1913, and founded on the concept of teaching youth agricultural skills in a fun atmosphere.

It is in Roland where the beautiful official 4-H museum in Canada is located, and has over 220 historical pieces from across North America, including uniforms, quilts and artwork.

Although much has changed since that first meeting in Roland 110 years ago, one thing has not; and that is the commitment to community and to youth, and the values that 4-H embodies in its members.

In celebration of this milestone on November 3rd, I joined volunteers and 4-H'ers in Roland to kick-start the live social media event to show our 4-H colours movement across the country.

I would like to congratulate the hard work and dedication of all the volunteers who planned and took part in not only this event but the many events that happened across this province of Manitoba and across the country. And I'd also like to recognize the many members on this side of the House that attended various 4-H events across this province.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Petitions? No. Trying to give the government a little break. All right, orders of the day, government business—no.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Economic Development Secretariat Government Decision to Dissolve

Ms. Heather Stefanson (Leader of the Official Opposition): The economic development secretariat of the provincial government had attracted interest in dozens of businesses wanting to come and invest hundreds of millions of dollars here in the province of Manitoba, creating tens of thousands of jobs here in the province.

Why is it, then, that the Premier, as one of his first things that he did when he was sworn in, why is it that he disbanded that and fired those individuals in that department?

Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier): Actually, it was the Leader of the Opposition who fired those people, on her way out the door.

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

Ms. Stefanson: The Economic Development Secretariat was on track to bringing tens of thousands of jobs to Manitoba with hundreds of millions of dollars in investment.

Why was it, then, that the Premier—that Michael Swistun, a proud Métis and a senior civil servant in charge of the Economic Development Secretariat was fired by the NDP Premier?

Mr. Kinew: Let the record show that it was the Leader of the Opposition and her former clerk that fired all the people that she's referring to. However, I would point out the following: As part of our approach of putting Manitoba back on track to creating thousands of good jobs, within the first month we've already unlocked half a billion dollars in new investment in Manitoba Hydro.

We did this by working together with people and, most importantly, in the process creating 5,000 good-paying, blue-collar jobs for the people of Manitoba.

And you know what, Mr. Speaker—Honourable Speaker? We did that without creating extra layers of bureaucracy like the PCs did.

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

Ms. Stefanson: Well, and I thank the Economic Development Secretariat for the incredible work that they did so now this Premier can go out and make those announcements.

But on his way into office, within hours of the Premier being sworn in, he went and he disbanded the Economic Development Secretariat. He fired Michael Swistun, who was the senior person involved in that, a senior Métis civil servant.

Why did the Premier disband the very economic horse that pulls the social cart in our province?

Mr. Kinew: You know, what we did is cut through another unnecessary layer of PC bureaucracy, just like we did when we disbanded the diagnostic and surgical task force.

Over the PC's time in office they created layer upon layer of bureaucracy, which 'seeked' to create financial benefits for their insider friends but got in the way of delivering results for the people of Manitoba.

Case in point: When it comes to EDBS, Manitoba already funds Economic Development Winnipeg to have offices at Portage and Main. Why did we need to hire the Leader of the Opposition's friends and pay for a separate set of offices at a Portage and Main office tower?

NDP Election Platform Request for Funding Plan

Mr. Jeff Wharton (Red River North): Honourable Speaker, this NDP Premier likes to say, and I'll quote, the economic horse pulls the social cart.

Well, Honourable Speaker, he fired the horse, loaded up the cart, slammed the door on the barn on all new business in Manitoba.

Can he explain how he plans to pay for health, education and the social services that Manitobans need, want and deserve?

* (10:40)

Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier): Honourable Speaker, one of the challenges that the hard-working people of Manitoba have faced under the PC's two terms in office is that the economic horse of this province was trapped in layers and layers of PC mud.

The unnecessary bureaucracy that the former government created, which seek to benefit their friends, got in the way of the private sector, got in the way of blue-collar Manitobans getting to work.

We've already shown in one month that we're going to deliver results, and we are going to continue creating thousands and thousands of good-paying jobs over our time in office.

Mr. Wharton: The economic development board had a plan to grow the economy and create \$3 billion of new tax revenue—that's right, Honourable Speaker—for all levels of government in Manitoba.

This NDP Premier only has a plan to slow the economy and spend \$3 billion that, guess what, he no longer has, because he has no plan.

He shut down the economic development board, sent the economic horse packing to over 500 kilometres of Bipole III pasture land, Mr. Speaker. Now he's defunding the roads budget and promising a big deficit: no surprises there.

So, will he cut—what he promised is, would he cut raising taxes? Or how is he going to pay for it?

Mr. Kinew: Well, it's clear from the convoluted question that the PCs need a roadmap when it comes to the economic horse. And it's a good thing Manitobans elected our team, because we're implementing the roadmap as we speak.

Now, the PC members opposite might not think it's a big deal to buy a separate duplicate set of offices at Portage and Main, but the hard-working people of

Manitoba know that that office space is expensive. We already have great folks at Economic Development Winnipeg with offices at Portage, Main, doing the very same important work that they're now shouting about us to duplicate and create another layer of bureaucracy.

My only question for the opposition benches is: When did they start to stand in the way of a government cutting taxes, and start to advocate for additional bureaucracy?

The Speaker: The honourable member from Red River North, on a final supplementary.

Carbon Tax on Home Heating Bills Request for Manitoba Exemption

Mr. Jeff Wharton (Red River North): We know this NDP Premier has—and his Finance Minister have trouble with math. We know that; they've proven it, Mr. Speaker. The economic development board could've helped them with that.

So, here's some easy math for the members opposite. The federal carbon tax will cost Manitoba families, seniors on fixed incomes and single parents over \$300 to heat their homes this winter, going up to \$700 by 2030. That's right, Mr. Speaker: \$700.

Can this NDP Premier and his minister tell Manitobans today why he flip-flopped and refused to stand up to Justin Trudeau and cut the carbon tax for the good of all Manitoba families?

Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier): You know, I want to point out that the question is out of order, because it's on a new topic, but I'll seek to provide an answer anyways.

In a few minutes, the Minister of Finance (MLA Sala) is going to share some very, very troubling information about Manitoba Hydro's financial situation. The question that the members opposite need to answer is: Why was there no indication in the first-quarter results of Manitoba Hydro about the very, very damaging situation they left this Province's books in?

The good news, however, for the people of Manitoba, is that the Manitoba NDP team is hard at work on your side saving you money and returning the provincial books to balance.

Manitoba's Economy Role of Labour and Immigration

Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz): It is an honour and privilege to stand in this Chamber today and speak for the first

time in QP. First, I would like to congratulate all members, and to the member of Notre Dame on her appointment as Minister of Labour and Immigration.

It is concerning that this government's Throne Speech did not speak of immigration. So I ask the minister: Why was immigration not addressed in the Throne Speech?

Hon. Malaya Marcelino (Minister of Labour and Immigration): I'd like to also welcome our new member from Agassiz in her important role as Labour and Immigration critic.

The Immigration and Labour department is very, very important to this province. We are going to be delivering, making sure that we have a pathway for many newcomers to come through this province, especially in our rural and northern areas, and we will be doing so making sure that we have enough immigrants to help us power through the next challenges of—for this province.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The honourable member from Agassiz, on a follow-up question.

Ms. Byram: We all know that strong economic growth relies on a strong workforce.

What is this government's plan to address that labour shortage here in Manitoba?

MLA Marcelino: I'd like to thank the member for the question.

There is so much to discuss on this point, and I have already invited the member opposite to be able to collaborate with me on this very topic. I've already visited, actually, her area and visited the town of Neepawa and met with councillors there and the vice mayor and also very, very capable CAO there to find out what they've been doing there in Neepawa to really, really bring in immigration numbers and a very, very strong labour force.

This government is committed to working together with different departments, so that we can make sure that we have many newcomers to fill in those labour shortages. And I look forward to meeting those challenges in the coming years together.

The Speaker: The honourable member from Agassiz, on a final supplementary.

Ms. Byram: Well, thank you, minister, and I would also like to say thank you for the invitation to meet and I look forward to that opportunity.

And I do want to mention that the PC government created and implemented the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program years ago, which has—which is a proven pathway for newcomers to enter the workforce while contributing to our economy and the growth of our communities.

What will this government do to continue attracting skilled workers to the province of Manitoba?

MLA Marcelino: Unfortunately, this previous PC government did a very, very poor job on this file. This PC government completely ignored this file.

We are seeing out-migration rates in this province—highest out-migration rates in two decades, because of how much this previous government ignored this file.

We are going to get this right. We are going to make sure that we focus on the right kind of immigrants to come to our country, and we are going to be able to make sure that they provide the labour force needed here in this province.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Zebra Mussels Found in Clear Lake Request for Spread Prevention Plan

Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain): Honourable Speaker, this week Parks Canada announced the presence of zebra mussels in Clear Lake in Riding Mountain National Park. But not a peep from this city-based NDP government. Area municipalities, cottage owners and boaters are concerned.

Will the Minister of Economic Development, Investment, Trade and Natural Resources tell the House today how much the resort area of Clear Lake contributes to our economy?

Hon. Jamie Moses (Minister of Economic Development, Investment, Trade and Natural Resources): I'm pleased to first of all rise to respond to my first question as the Minister of Economic Development, Investment, Trade and Natural Resources.

* (10:50)

Honourable Speaker, I think I share disappointment and concern with all Manitobans with the new discovery of zebra mussels in Clear Lake. It's as—an inevitability that we were fearful of when zebra mussels were first discovered in Manitoba.

And so, at this point, I want to make sure that all Manitobans can do our part to make sure that we are preventing the spread of zebra mussels in all 'aquatic'—

aquatic invasive species by cleaning, draining and drying all of their watercraft as they're leaving so that we can limit the spread of zebra mussels across Manitoba.

The Speaker: The honourable member from Riding Mountain, on a supplementary question.

Mr. Nesbitt: Honourable Speaker, the answer is over 50 million, by over 250,000 visitors each year. Zebra mussels were detected in Manitoba in 2013 under the former NDP government. Under our PC government, the number of inspection and 'decontamination' stations were increased, an across-the-province AIS advisory committee was set up and public 'education' on the harm zebra mussels cause to ecosystems, boats and water intakes was stepped up.

Will the minister commit today to increasing watercraft inspection stations across the province to prevent the further travel of zebra mussels in Manitoba?

Mr. Moses: We know that Clear Lake is in a national park, so it is Parks Canada's responsibility, and my department of economic 'development', Investment, Trade and Natural Resources is working collaboratively with them. We've reached out to make sure that we are working together to prevent the spread of zebra mussels in Clear Lake and across Manitoba.

That work has already begun and we're going to continue to work collaboratively. And I want to make sure that—working collaboratively with all Manitobans.

That's why I encourage all Manitobans to clean, drain and dry their watercraft to limit the spread of zebra mussels in Manitoba.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The honourable member from Riding Mountain, on a final supplementary question.

Mr. Nesbitt: Honourable Speaker, Clear Lake drains into the Little Saskatchewan River, which then, in turn, flows into the Assiniboine River. When—not if—zebra mussels leave Clear Lake and move downstream, the detrimental effects will be felt by water users in the communities of Minnedosa, Rapid City, Brandon, Portage la Prairie, Winnipeg and all points in between.

Will the Minister of Environment and Climate Change (MLA Schmidt) commit today to increase testing of all rivers, lakes and reservoirs downstream of Clear Lake with regular reporting to the public?

Mr. Moses: I thank the member opposite for this question. This is a serious issue, and we know it could have real impacts.

And that's why Manitoba has already spooled up our incidence response protocol. We are taking this issue very 'seriously'—seriously, and working collaboratively with Parks Canada on it.

And that's why I want to make sure all Manitobans are doing their part: that they clean, drain and dry their watercraft so that we can all do our part to limit the spread of zebra mussels and all aquatic invasive species.

Thank you.

CentrePort Development Project Infrastructure Commitment Inquiry

Mr. Trevor King (Lakeside): Honourable Speaker, I too am very honoured and privileged to be able to rise in the House for the very first time on behalf of my constituents of Lakeside, as well as the province of Manitoba. And I too want to congratulate the new members and, of course, our honourable Minister for Municipal and Northern Relations and Indigenous Economic Development for his appointment by the Premier (Mr. Kinew) to his role.

Honourable Speaker, last year, our PC government transferred an additional \$120 million to municipalities for water and wastewater projects.

Because we know you can't grow the economy without growing communities, this is on top of the \$407 million budgeted this year and \$380 million spent the year before on municipalities—

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

Hon. Ian Bushie (Minister of Municipal and Northern Relations): It gives me great pleasure to rise to answer my first question in question period as the Minister responsible for Municipal and Northern Relations.

I too would like to congratulate my colleague and welcome him to the Chamber for his first question in question period.

And Mr. Honourable Speaker, it's a new day. It's a new day here in Manitoba. And I was honoured to be reached out to by many, many municipalities all across this great province in honour of celebrating this new day in this new government because it felt neglected under the former PC government. And that is something we will never do to municipalities. We respect them with great detail.

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

Mr. King: Honourable Minister, last year the PC government committed \$40 million towards building a new water infrastructure in the city of Winnipeg to open up the CentrePort lands to build housing and expand industry and business park developments that are key to the growth of Winnipeg and our province.

Will the minister commit today to the City of Winnipeg that this project will not be delayed by the current government?

Mr. Bushie: Provide predictability, multi-year funding for municipalities: That's a simple ask that they've asked year after year after year.

Honourable Speaker, we will deliver on multi-year funding model. We will deliver our predictability. So, year after year, they can count on predictability for their infrastructure project, something that, year after year, this former government never, ever did. *[interjection]*

The Speaker: Wait a minute. Order.

Mr. King: Can the minister provide an update on the progress on these planned developments in Thompson and how the provincial government will be encouraging and supporting their development?

Mr. Bushie: I know the member's question is jumping all over the map, which is something that—on this side of the Chamber, we will do time and time again is represent all municipalities, all across this great province.

Mr. Deputy—Mr. Honourable Speaker, all they could count on for predictability for this government, year after year, was freeze after freeze after freeze to their funding, and that's shameful.

Carbon Tax on Home Heating Bills Request for Manitoba Exemption

Mr. Richard Perchotte (Selkirk): Honourable Speaker, I'm proud to rise for the first time in this House. The NDP government is simply blowing hot air when it's something that their proposed air-to-air heat pump program will be unable to do in the depths of winter. Even Manitoba Hydro recommends not operating below -10°C.

When will the NDP actually give Manitobans the support they deserve and join the other provinces in calling on Ottawa to remove the carbon tax on natural gas home heating?

Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro): Honourable Speaker, I'm very pleased to have this opportunity to stand up to respond

to this question, this important question that fundamentally is about energy affordability in this province.

Our party is committed to partnering with the federal government to help bring in ground source heat pumps to help reduce the costs of home heating for Manitobans in this province. That's something we're incredibly proud to have done. We're going to keep working to improve affordability in this province, something the last government never did.

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

An Honourable Member: Selkirk.

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

Mr. Perchotte: Honourable Speaker, the N-D-'plee' plan is no silver 'buille.' With over five months of falling below -10°, air-to-air heat pumps don't work. The ground source heat pumps become prohibitive. Even Manitoba Hydro states operating costs for natural gas heating, they'll be a lot cheaper than geothermal.

When will Ottawa's tax be removed by this government?

MLA Sala: Again, I appreciate the question. To clarify for the member, we are referencing ground source heat pumps, not air source heat pumps; there's a very important difference there.

We know that ground source heat pumps will offer Manitobans an incredible opportunity to lower their costs of heating in this province. We're proud to partner with the federal government to deliver those here in Manitoba.

We will fight to make energy more affordable for Manitobans.

* (11:00)

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

Mr. Perchotte: Manitoba Hydro has come out and stated the cost of operating the heat pumps, whether ground source or otherwise, is less effective than natural gas. Heat pumps are a tool, not a solution, and Manitobans are looking at paying an additional \$1,700 in the future.

When will this government listen to the constituents of our province?

MLA Sala: Again, I appreciate this important question about energy affordability, something that Manitobans never saw the previous government focus on. In fact, the member should recall this government spent an inordinate amount of time trying to figure out how to raise electricity prices on Manitobans as quickly as possible.

That's a shameful record, Honourable Speaker. We're doing the opposite. We're going to make energy more affordable at home through home heating, and we're going to save Manitobans money at the pump every time they go. We've outlined that in our Throne Speech.

If the members opposite want to support affordability, we look forward to them supporting our Throne Speech.

Nurse Labour Shortage Request for Plan to Address

MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): When it comes to nurses, and the important role they play in our health-care services, from hospitals to care homes to community clinics and more, we have a severe shortage. We need more nursing spots at our post-secondary institutions. We need to recognize credentials of nurses here in Manitoba, and we need to incorporate how immigration can be used to assist in dealing with our nurse shortage.

What is this government's plan to deal with this issue in both the short and long term?

Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier): I want to thank the member for Tyndall Park for once again raising a question on the top priority of the people of Manitoba, which is fixing health care. We know that—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew:—the members opposite are trying to shut down the substantive question that is about to receive a substantive answer, but I would encourage them to listen. Again, with the—

The Speaker: The honourable First Minister.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Kinew: So do I have—do I—does my time restart? Okay.

So, I want to take this opportunity to thank the member for Tyndall Park for raising a substantive question on the No. 1 priority of the people of

Manitoba, which is health care. She raises some important points about the need to retain, train, recruit more nurses, all of which are areas where we are taking action already.

But I'll add one additional area of consideration for the member that we are acting on, which is to reduce the bureaucratic overload built up by the PCs and reinvest decision-making power at the front lines, at the bedside, and show the nurses that we respect their expertise.

That's why in our great Throne Speech we said that, instead of more agency nurses, we're going to give nurses more agency.

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

Nurse Training Seats Wait Time for Program

MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): Last weekend I had a town hall in my constituency, and it was shared with me that many people wanting to study nursing here in Manitoba are having to wait four years just to begin the nursing program.

Can this government indicate when this backlog is going to be cleared?

Hon. Renée Cable (Minister of Advanced Education and Training): Thank you for asking my first question. I'd like to—*[interjection]*

Like all Manitobans, health care is a top priority over on this side of the House, so I can appreciate the frustration from the folks who are waiting to get in, and I want to reassure the member that we are having regular conversations with institutions about opening more seats and about supporting students as they find their way through post-secondary.

And I'd like to extend an offer to Manitobans that the door is open, and we want as many people through post-secondary as possible. We're going to make it happen.

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

Internationally Educated Nurses Rapid Accreditation Plan

MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): I'd like to thank the minister for her response, as well as welcoming her to her role here in the Legislature.

Manitoba is falling behind on accreditation for internationally educated nurses compared to other

provinces. We know there are thousands of people who are trained and capable, and want to work in our health-care system.

So I'm hoping that the minister responsible could explain what their rapid-accreditation plan will look like for those internationally educated nurses who may be interested.

Hon. Malaya Marcelino (Minister of Labour and Immigration): Like to thank the member for that question. This is a very, very important issue that faces many Manitobans who are already internationally trained and are already here in the province, and are ready to work.

We did have commitments about this during our campaign over the past fall, and we are diligently working with different departments to make sure that we will have these programs in place to reduce the barriers to accreditation for various folks already here in the province with these skills.

And I look forward to sharing those details with the members as they get to be rolled out soon.

Manitoba Hydro's Finances Release of Quarterly Report

MLA Eric Redhead (Thompson): This morning, Manitoba Hydro published its second quarter report for the 2023-2024 fiscal year. This report raises serious concerns about the lack of accountability and transparency from the previous government when it came to managing the books.

Will the Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro please provide more details for the House, and what we have learned from this report?

Thank you.

Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro): Thank you to my colleague for that important question.

The previous government budgeted that Manitoba Hydro would profit \$450 million this year. Today, I'm tabling Hydro's Q2 report showing that, as of September 30th, Hydro is projecting a loss of \$161 million.

What's disturbing is that the previous government knew—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

MLA Sala: —that their rosy—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: The honourable Minister of Finance.

MLA Sala: What's disturbing is that the previous government knew that their rosy pre-election budget was removed from reality, Honourable Speaker. That's why they sat on Hydro's Q1 report while making fake, desperate promises.

Luckily, Manitobans elected a new government. We say no more games, no more empty promises: that's our commitment.

Tourism Industry in Manitoba Request for Government Support

Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye): My question is for the Minister of Sport, Culture, Heritage and Tourism. As a new MLA, I'd like to thank the minister on his recent appointment.

Tourism produces more than \$1.5 billion in revenue for Manitoba. Why has this government excluded tourism from their Throne Speech?

Hon. Glen Simard (Minister of Sport, Culture, Heritage and Tourism): I'd like to thank the member opposite for the question about tourism.

The reason I want to thank you for that question about tourism is a very important part of what makes Manitoba great. We have been seeing that Manitobans have been spending more than ever within our province, celebrating our great culture, celebrating our great events that happen all over the province, from the places where I come from and the places that everybody comes from.

There's nothing more important to this government than the people of Manitoba and the tourism that it provides. Fantastic place to live; love being in this place. And isn't this great, living in Manitoba?

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

Mr. Narth: Honourable Speaker, there is no mention of tourism in the Throne Speech. Yet tourism has been added to the name of the Ministry.

Will this NDP government actually support tourism, or is it all just virtue signalling for special interest groups?

* (11:10)

Mr. Simard: Will we support tourism? Of course. Like when I was campaigning in Brandon East, it was an easy sell. Turn this government over back to the people you trust. That's why I'm standing here with 19 members who were here last year and 100 per cent of them are back.

The people of Manitoba trust us to work for them. The same thing in our tourism industry. The very first thing that I did as Sport, Culture, Heritage and Tourism Minister is go and see them at their awards and celebrate the great work that all the people in Manitoba are doing for our province, highlighting the beauty of Manitoba.

And I just can't wait to keep working with them.

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

Mr. Narth: The previous Progressive Conservative government was committed to annual funding for tourism.

Why won't this NDP government commit to supporting the funding model which allows for stable and consistent growth within our tourism industry?

Mr. Simard: The previous government made millions and millions of eleventh-hour promises, knowing they couldn't keep them. What we're promising to do is to discuss, to meet and to talk with the people in the tourism industry to see what they need and to listen to what they want.

That is what we are. We are one Manitoba. We are a listening government. We will engage with the people. We will ask them what they want—and not only, on *va le faire en français [we will do it in French]*, in English—and very happy, again, to say, we are a listening government.

We are people that are here, that will listen, that will make sure that our government responds to their needs. And you don't do that by shutting them out; you do that by bringing them in.

Seniors Hearing Aid Program Government Funding Inquiry

Mr. Derek Johnson (Interlake-Gimli): Honourable Speaker, one of the critical programs that the Seniors and Long-Term Care, as a distinct department, initiated, was the Manitoba Seniors Hearing Aid Program: \$12.6 million put directly towards solving a problem that affects thousands of Manitoba seniors.

The response was unprecedented and seemingly simple measure like this can improve the quality of lives for thousands of Manitobans.

Speaker, will this government continue to expand the Manitoba Seniors Hearing Aid Program, or they will cut it too?

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care): Honourable Speaker, I thank the member opposite for that question.

Seniors care, seniors' rights, seniors' needs are top priority for our government. And you know, having worked in long-term care, personal-care homes with seniors in communities myself as a new nurse, that was partially where I started my career actually, many years ago, this is a really important personal issue to me, as well.

And so, our government certainly looks forward to continuing to strengthen the health care that seniors access across our province.

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

Self- and Family-Managed Home Care Government Funding Inquiry

Mr. Derek Johnson (Interlake-Gimli): Honourable Speaker, Manitobans know what's best for themselves and their families when it comes to their care. Self- and family-managed home care allows individuals and families to make their own decisions on how they want to be cared for.

In the '22-23 Budget and the self and—budget, the self- and family-managed home care received an additional \$12.6 million followed by another \$1.3-million increase in '23-24.

Speaker, will this government give our seniors a choice to determine their own care by continuing to increase funding to the self- and family-managed home-care program?

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care): Honourable Speaker, home care used to be a gold standard that was set by Manitoba.

The previous PC government obliterated home care in our province. The previous PC government not only neglected home care in our province, they cut home care across our province. They mistreated the health-care workers that we count on to show up for seniors and those who access home-care programs across our province.

The previous government in this province owes Manitobans an apology, quite frankly.

Our government is committed to taking a different approach, one that works with health-care workers, respects the care that they provide, strengthens home care across our province and works

with them, not against them, like the former members across the House.

The Speaker: Order, please. The time for oral questions has expired.

Speaker's Statement

The Speaker: And I have a statement for the House.

First, I would like to ask for members' attention for a moment, as I'd like to offer a little clarification for the House regarding the practices governing questions in oral questions.

For many decades we have maintained a practice that a question and both supplementary questions should be on the same topic. The practice has been enforced by Speakers Rocan, Hickes and Driedger. Historically, Speakers have allowed some discretion for brief comments on related matters during questions, but the basic practice remains in place.

So I will ask all members to please adhere to this practice and ensure that their questions and supplementary questions posed stay on the same topic.

And I would also offer a gentle reminder to make sure that your questions and answers go through the Speaker.

Thank you.

* * *

The Speaker: Petitions? Hearing none, orders of the day, government business.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Government House Leader): We are interrupting the Throne Speech debate to call second reading of Bill 3, The Fuel Tax Amendment Act (Fuel Tax Holiday), and if that passes, could you please call for second reading, Bill 2, The Louis Riel Act.

The Speaker: It has been announced by the honourable Government House Leader that we will be interrupting the debate on the address in reply to the Speech from the Throne to debate second reading of Bill 3, The Fuel Tax Amendment Act (Fuel Tax Holiday), and should that pass, the House will consider second reading of Bill 2, The Louis Riel Act.

SECOND READINGS

Bill 3—The Fuel Tax Amendment Act (Fuel Tax Holiday)

The Speaker: I will therefore call second reading of Bill 3, The Fuel Tax Amendment Act (Fuel Tax Holiday).

Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister of Finance): I move, seconded by the Minister of Health, that Bill 3, The Fuel Tax Amendment Act (Fuel Tax Holiday); Loi modifiant la Loi sur la taxe sur les carburants, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been advised of the bill, and I table the message.

The Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Finance, seconded by the honourable Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care (MLA Asagwara), that Bill 3, The Fuel Tax Amendment Act (Fuel Tax Holiday), be now read a second time and referred to a committee of this House.

Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been advised of the bill, and it has—advised of the bill, and the message has been tabled.

MLA Sala: Honourable Speaker, I am so pleased to present Bill 3, The Fuel Tax Amendment Act, which was introduced to the Manitoba Legislative Assembly yesterday.

* (11:20)

The amendments in this bill will make life more affordable for Manitobans by reducing their fuel tax rates. Now, more than ever, relief is needed during these unprecedented times of high inflation. This bill implements a fuel tax holiday from January 1st, 2024, to June 30th, 2024.

During the fuel tax holiday, the fuel tax rate will be reduced from 14 cents to zero cents per litre on gasoline, diesel and natural gas used in motor vehicles. Manitobans will collectively save an estimated \$163 million during this six-month fuel tax holiday, and the average family will save \$250. Manitobans will also receive the benefit of this tax reduction immediately at the gas pump, providing direct financial relief and putting money back in the pockets of families when they need it most.

Bill 3 includes the ability to extend the fuel tax holiday by regulation for up to six months for the period of July 1st, 2024, to December 31st, 2024. This

will enable flexibility when reviewing the state of our economy early next year.

Bill 3 represents what we as a government have heard from Manitobans about the need for immediate relief during this time of rising costs and high inflation. This bill is a crucial step in our government's plan to make life more affordable for all Manitobans. I hope members on all sides of the House will support this important measure to reduce costs for Manitoba families.

Thank you so much, Honourable Speaker.

Questions

The Speaker: A question period of up to 15 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed to the minister by any opposition or independent member in the following sequence: first question by the official opposition critic or designate; subsequent questions asked by critics or designates from other recognized opposition parties; subsequent questions asked by each independent member; remaining questions asked by any opposition members. And no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

The floor is now open for questions.

MLA Obby Khan (Fort Whyte): I want to thank the minister for bringing this forward for affordability for all Manitobans.

Does the minister believe that affordability in Manitoba, that high interest rates, that inflation, high cost of living will be back under control in six months as his bill suggests?

Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister of Finance): I appreciate the question. This bill suggests that we're moving forward with improving affordability for Manitobans. That's what this bill is about. It's about ensuring that we can help Manitobans at the pump. We're going to reduce the fuel tax from 14 cents a litre to zero. That's going to help Manitobans immediately every time they go to fill up.

MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): I actually have two questions, and the minister can do his best to address one or both.

Can the minister share with us preliminary numbers in terms of how much an informational campaign would cost? And, according to the minister's department, this exemption will result in \$180 million in lost revenues. How does this minister plan to recoup the cost of this lost revenue?

MLA Sala: I appreciate the question for the member from Tyndall Park. In terms of the informational campaign, this did come up yesterday during our bill briefing, and I know that in discussions with departmental staff what I learned was that the cost of that campaign will be minimal. We can follow up with more specifics at a later date.

In terms of the costs associated with this measure, look, we're bringing this forward because we made a commitment to Manitobans that we were going to make life more affordable. We're doing that in a balanced way, a balanced approach that ensures we balance the needs of Manitobans and the need to improve affordability in this province with the overall fiscal situation that we're facing.

MLA Jeff Bereza (Portage la Prairie): As we know, there was no mention, or very little mention, in the Throne Speech regarding agriculture. Will this government include a reduction in farm equipment such as combines, tractors, et cetera, under this fuel tax for some?

MLA Sala: I appreciate this important question about the challenges that farmers are facing, and what I can share with the member opposite is that farmers don't pay tax on their fuel. They—so this reduction is being applied for motor vehicles that are on roads. Farmers on farm equipment and equipment that's used on farms are not paying those fuel taxes.

MLA Khan: It's really sad that I have to correct the Minister of Finance when he's supposed to be the Minister of Finance for the entire province. And they actually do pay tax on this; it's called dyed gasoline. It's 3 cents. If the minister knew his file or his department, he would understand that, that the farmers do pay a tax; it's a reduced tax, but it's 3 cents.

So why is this bill putting Manitobans against Manitobans when a Manitoban is a Manitoban and a Canadian is a Canadian and affordability is affecting us all? This bill is not reflective of all of them. So why is this bill not designed for all Manitobans?

MLA Sala: I have to say, Honourable Speaker, it's a strange question because, guess what? Farmers drive, too. People in this—people across the province, in rural communities, northern communities rely on vehicles to get around. They're going to benefit as well, people in every corner of this province. And I think it's especially important to point out that people in our rural communities who rely on their vehicles more than folks living in our urban centres will be especially big beneficiaries of this measure.

MLA Khan: The minister is correct that farmers do drive; people do drive cars; farmers drive cars. We were asking a specific question about farming equipment: combines, tractors. Everything that helps grow this economy that provides living wages for these farmers, this minister has left them out of this bill. They pay taxes on their dyed gas. Why does this bill not take into account farmers and their affordability and their cost of living?

MLA Sala: On this side of the House we care about farmers. We care about rural Manitobans and Manitobans living in our northern communities, and that's why we're offering a measure that benefits all Manitobans who drive. And, again, that provides especially large benefits to those Manitobans who are living in our rural communities like our farmers.

Mr. Derek Johnson (Interlake-Gimli): Can the minister please share with the House how this bill will help the commercial finish-fishing industry and who has the minister consulted with in the commercial fishing industry?

MLA Sala: This bill has been brought forward to benefit all Manitobans, Manitobans living in every corner of this province living in our cities, living in our rural communities, folks who are doing commercial fishermen; it will benefit all Manitobans who drive. We know that Manitobans rely on their vehicles a lot. We know that this will help to reduce their cost of living, and this is a measure that the previous government was unwilling to take. We care about affordability, and we're going to keep working to make life more affordable.

MLA Khan: We'll move on to another line of questioning here, and that goes to how is this tax saving actually going to be passed on to the average Manitoban at the pump? He alluded to, yesterday, in our meeting that they'll just pull up to the pump and the gas will be reduced at the pump. So can the minister offer a little bit clarification on how that process will actually work out?

MLA Sala: Yes, I appreciate the question. The savings will be delivered directly to consumers the minute that they fill up at the pump. The tax reduction will be actually taken off right at the pump, so consumers can expect that they'll pay that reduced cost for fuel every time they go to the pump.

MLA Khan: You know, and again, I'm going to have to correct the Minister of Finance (MLA Sala). It seems like he hasn't done his research before he brought this bill forward, for all Manitobans as he

claims; and yet, clearly, in the bill here it says that a motor vehicle, as defined by motor vehicle in 12.2(a) and (b) and a farm truck. So there's no mention of boats; there's no mention of farm equipment; there's no mention of tractors, of snowmobiles or ATVs. All of that is *[inaudible]*. So is the minister saying that the individual working at the cash register now has to enforce that tax on every individual? Why is this minister putting the onus on the business owner and the business operator working at the gas station to access these tax savings?

Thank you.

MLA Sala: You know, we're proud that this program is going to bring savings right at the pump. The savings are incurred right at the time of purchase. You know, I know that the member opposite may want us to consider sending millions of dollars worth of cheques out to Manitobans like they did when they wanted to advance affordability. We're bringing forward a motion here that will not be a rebate program; we're going to offer those savings right at the moment you fill up, bringing greater affordability for Manitobans.

* (11:30)

Mr. Johnson: So, can the minister please confirm that there will be savings to recreational boaters, but there will be no reduction in dyed diesel prices for farmers that put food on our table?

MLA Sala: No, what I'll confirm is that this—these savings will be incurred by people using motor vehicles on our roads. I've said that repeatedly. It's not sinking in across the way. It's going to benefit all Manitobans who drive vehicles, whether they're using gasoline, diesel or propane. It's very clear. That's going to bring a lot of savings to Manitobans.

We're here to promote more affordability, something the last government never did.

Mr. Trevor King (Lakeside): Will the minister tell us whether the municipalities will see a break-tax break—from this as well, and did they consult with the AMM on behalf of the municipalities?

MLA Sala: Appreciate the question. I think one of the great things about this bill is that it not only supports improving affordability for all Manitobans, it actually will support cost reductions for municipalities. Municipalities who are operating transit systems, they're going to see their costs go down, and that will offer them a chance to offer those savings on to their residents.

So this is a great new story for municipalities as well as small businesses in this province. If you're a small-business operator and you use vehicles to operate your business, you stand to save a lot of money. This is good for all Manitobans.

The Speaker: The honourable member for Fort Whyte (MLA Khan).

Sorry. The Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care): I just have a—*[interjection]*

Yes. Are we allowed to ask—I just—no? Okay. Thank you.

The Speaker: Just so we're all clear, the government members can't ask questions on a government bill.

MLA Khan: This minister talks about this bill being a saving at the pump for all Manitobans on the roads. And again, he clearly stated that the savings would be delivered at the pumps. So what does this minister expect the employee doing at the gas station where someone pulls up in a truck, and they're pulling their boat and their ATV and their tractor.

Is the minister actually saying that that business owner-operator is supposed to go outside and stop them, pitting Manitoban against Manitoban? We know his federal Liberal-NDP want to do this. Why is this minister—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order. Order. Order.

MLA Khan: Simply, why is the minister pitting Manitoban against Manitoban, and how could he possibly expect the employee at the gas station to enforce this poorly written bill?

MLA Sala: I want to state clearly that if there's anyone in this House that pitted Manitobans against Manitobans, it's the member for Fort Whyte (MLA Khan) in that last campaign.

To his question, again, this benefit is for Manitobans using vehicles on our roads, and that's going to benefit all Manitobans who drive. We're looking forward to bringing forward this affordability measure to make life more affordable for all Manitobans.

Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River): Manitobans and people who come from all over to enjoy the beauty of the Snoman trails throughout the Duck and Porcupine mountains in my community throughout the winter.

Is the minister expecting our gas stations to track who is buying gas by car and who is buying for their snowmobile? Because a lot of people travel to Swan River on the Snoman trails.

Can I have assurance that this minister, these people on ATVs, ATV Manitoba and Snoman will be exempt from this—or will be able to take advantage of this gas tax holiday.

MLA Sala: What's clear is that the opposition doesn't care about improving affordability for all Manitobans. They're focused on details. They're not seeing the big picture here. All Manitobans who drive on our roads stand to benefit. I encourage the members opposite to vote for this bill, to make sure that they can help to support improved affordability in Manitoba.

MLA Khan: This Minister of Finance (MLA Sala) wants to talk about affordability for Manitobans. Well, let's talk about real numbers here. They claim that the average Manitoban will save \$250 over six months. When you actually run the real numbers, and we asked the minister to share his real numbers with us. Average tank: 55 litres. That works out only to \$150 of savings over six months. Where the carbon tax is projected to go to 55 cents a litre costing the average Manitoban \$2,100. So is \$2,100 more money, or is \$151 more money than—your honour and minister.

MLA Sala: You know, I appreciate the question. Just so it's clear—and the member was in the bill briefing yesterday—the \$250 average estimated savings were produced by the Department of Finance using statistics from the Government of Canada. And so, that's what we're putting forward. That's an accurate number. He wants to debate that? That's a lot of money for the average family. I know he might not think that's a lot of money, but it is a lot of money for the average Manitoban.

MLA Khan: I'll ask the Minister of Finance again, if he is will be willing to share those numbers with us, and again, yes, \$250 is a lot of money. And—but I'll ask the minister is \$250 more or is \$22,100 more? Is a 14 cent tax savings on the fuel tax, or is 55 cents a litre on the carbon tax more savings? I'll leave that for the minister to answer.

MLA Sala: I'll admit I'm deeply confused by what was just asked there. But I will say this: I am very happy to provide the member opposite with the calculations that were produced by the Department of Finance.

Mr. Johnson: So the minister confirmed that if somebody pulls a recreational boat up to a pump and they fill it up, it will be exempt from the tax holiday. It'll be eligible for the tax holiday, but farmers, fishers or municipal equipment that's clearing snow will not get a reduction in their fuel costs. Can he confirm that?

MLA Sala: I want to use this final opportunity to say the member across and all the members across the way, this is a great opportunity to redeem yourselves; to show that you actually care about affordability in Manitoba; that if they want to show that they actually care, they will support the passage of this bill.

The Speaker: The time for questions has expired. *[interjection]* Was there?

An Honourable Member: There was two seconds.

The Speaker: Okay. Apparently, there was two seconds left on the clock, so the honourable member from Interlake-Gimli.

Mr. Johnson: So, to confirm, there will be savings to recreational boaters but not to farmers, fishers or even municipalities that are cleaning the snow to keep us safe. Can you confirm that? You've said it. Put it all in one answer, please. Thank you.

MLA Sala: What I'll confirm is that if the opposition co-operates and we're able to pass this bill, we will bring in a reduction in fuel tax from 14 cents a litre to zero cents beginning January 1st; something that will benefit all Manitoban drivers.

The Speaker: The time for questions has expired.

Debate

The Speaker: The floor is open for debate.

MLA Obby Khan (Fort Whyte): It is an honour to stand up here today and talk in this House and to all Manitobans on affordability.

* (11:40)

Affordability is affecting everybody. Whether you live in Winnipeg, whether you live in rural Manitoba, up north, down south, east, west, whether you're in Swan River, Dauphin, Neepawa, The Pas, Lac du Bonnet, all over Manitoba, everyone is affected.

It doesn't matter what job you do, you're affected by affordability. Everyone is feeling that crunch every single time they go to pump up their gas, every single time they go and put food on their table. Every single time they have to pay a bill, they are feeling that crunch of affordability.

We all know that; we all feel it. That's why we are here. That's why a lot of us got elected, was to make Manitoba better.

On this side of the House, we believe a Manitoban is a Manitoban; a Canadian is a Canadian. Whatever bill we bring forward has to represent everyone. We have to take into account all different situations, all different circumstances, livelihoods, where they come from, their background, whatever their circumstances may be.

And, obviously, this bill does not do that. It is clear that this bill is simply that it's something rushed out to make it look like this NDP government is saving Manitobans money. Plain and simple.

To look like—*[interjection]*—you're right. And I'm glad that members opposite are clapping and they agree with me. They agree that it's rushed. They agree that it's supposed to just look like it. It's a façade. It's a mirage.

It tells people this is what it is, but in actuality what it's doing is a temporary pause on the gas tax for only a select few of Manitobans. And those select few are predominantly—shockingly—this might surprise you as you look at the bill—it's for mostly who? Mostly city-based people, and Manitoba is bigger than that. And that's why this party is now referred to as the city-based NDP government.

They really only care about that. It is clear from question period that they did not take into account farmers, that they did not take into account municipalities and their equipment, that they did not take into account hobbyists, ATVs and snowmobiles. They did not take into account fisheries.

This is all of Manitoba, and yet this bill fails to deliver on the sheer premise that it is for affordability for all Manitobans. The reality is, that's not even true at all.

Now, everyone on that side of the House, you can agree or disagree. You can not like us because we're PC. You can, you know, cheer for yourselves because you're NDP, and that's fine.

But in reality, when you look at the bill yourself, you cannot look at yourself in the mirror and say this bill is for all Manitobans.

There are some people on that side of the House that have a level head, and there are some people that can understand, and I hope that those people who understand that this bill clearly does not take into account everything we've just addressed.

On this side of the House, we want affordability measures for all Manitobans. This bill should reflect all Manitobans. This bill should reflect everyone that we've already mentioned before, not just be a bill that you want to get out, that you made a campaign promise that you're going to do, and you're going to rush it through as fast as you can, and you're going to try to get as much media, as much attention, as much highlighting.

But the reality of this bill is not a representation of all Manitobans. This bill is simply pandering for an election campaign that they ran on for six months.

Now, if you want to make life more affordable for all Manitobans, right. We agree we have members in the back that are agreeing with me. They are nodding their head; they want this for all Manitobans. We agree, right?

From the government side, actually, no one is—not in agreement. No one agrees that this bill should be for all Manitobans, right?

On this side of the House, we agree that this bill should be for all Manitobans, right?

I'll ask them again: On that side of the House, do they agree this bill should be for all Manitobans? Not one person nodded their head. Not one person. Sorry, Honourable Speaker. Apologize.

So, when you look at that, the sheer fact that they won't even nod their heads and agree that the bill, in premise, should be for all Manitobans. They won't even agree to that.

So by them not nodding and agreeing and actually shouting me down and saying no, it acknowledges the simple fact that this bill was designed not for all Manitobans.

This bill was designed to make an immediate splash on a commitment that they made during their campaign that they are going to cut the tax.

Now, if this bill, in reality, was for affordability, if this bill was reality to make life easier, I ask the minister: Does he believe inflation, cost of living, cost of groceries will go down in six months? And, shockingly, there was no answer there. Another non-answer in question, which is kind of the opposite of a question. If you ask a question, you get an answer. No answer.

So if this bill was really designed for affordability for Manitobans, why is there a clause that ends this after a year? Or, sorry, six months, and then they have

the option of going forward for another six months. If this bill is really designed for affordability, then why not make it permanent? Permanent's a long time. Why not make it four years?

If—any reading economic forecasting says that inflation is not coming down any time in the near future at any rate that's going to make a real difference. So if we know that's not coming down, if we can forecast that forward, why not make this longer than a year? Why not make it three years, four years?

If the Minister of Finance (MLA Sala) is really committed on—and I—and, you know, part of me wants to believe that everyone on that side House is, even though they wouldn't agree when I asked them if they wanted this for affordability, part of me believes that they do want to make affordability measures for Manitobans. But this is not the way to go about it. The bill clearly has holes in it.

I'm asking the minister to look at the bill, to look at what we're saying and make this representative of all Manitobans. We want affordability; you want affordability; Manitobans want affordability.

So, if we want that, we ask to make amendments to this bill going forward. The amendments are not ludicrous. The amendments simply stay if you're going to have this for a short period of time and we know inflation's not going down, extend it—extend it for three years or four years. I don't know why the minister won't do that. I don't know why there's a one-year clause in here.

The logic is, if you asked any Manitoban, they've been suffering for years. This isn't going to go away in six months, but what this is going to do is it's going to pit Manitoban against Manitoban. We are not supporting everyone. This bill does not support all Manitobans.

Why would a farmer not get a break on their gas? Why would someone who pulls up with a jerry can not be afforded tax save as well? Why would a snowmobiler or an ATVer, why would've someone who fishes for their family to make a living, residential or a hobby, why would we not do—are they not suffering from affordability measures as well?

I mean, I think the answer's pretty self-explanatory, that this bill has holes in it. This bill has holes. It was a rushed bill to get it through as fast as they can. And if you want to look at that, you could actually see how fast they did this already. They brought it forward yesterday for first reading, today second reading, and then they interrupted the Throne Speech to do this

again. When in reality, these bills should be done with care. These bills should be done with consultation. And they haven't done that.

It's clear from the minister's answers they haven't reached out to all the industries. They haven't reached out to everyone that's affected by this. And yet they want to force this bill down Manitobans' throat, costing them, in a year, \$370 million—\$370 million this bill will cost the Province to afford out of the general coffers.

And yet, this minister talks about having a balanced budget. And I know the NDP are not good at math. I asked the minister; he was a little confused by my question. I said, what is greater savings? What is going to hurt Manitobans more? Is it going to be a 55 cent on the carbon tax, or is it 14 cents on the fuel tax? What's greater?

Do Manitobans want to pay 55 cents for the carbon tax coming up in the near future, or 14 cents? Fourteen; fifty-five. I mean, the math is pretty simple to me. The carbon tax is going to go to 55 cents. The fuel tax is 14 cents.

The fuel tax bill that they—and the Minister of Finance (MLA Sala) is now walking out; he doesn't want to hear this, I guess. He doesn't want to hear—or, he's getting water. He doesn't want to—the minister doesn't—the Minister of Finance won't acknowledge that 55 cents is more than 14 cents—

The Speaker: Order. Order.

I'll just remind the member that he cannot reference whether a member is here or not, so please keep that in mind, and—[interjection]—so please just keep that in mind going forward.

And—honourable member for Fort Whyte.

MLA Khan: Honourable Speaker, I apologize for referencing that the Minister of Finance had left the Chamber. [interjection]

* (11:50)

The Speaker: Order, please.

Repeating the same mistake doesn't make it go away, so please do not reference whether a member is present in the Chamber or not.

MLA Khan: Sorry, yes. Thank you, Honourable Speaker, and I apologize for that comment—double comment.

Now, as I was referring to, if this bill is really about affordability for all Manitobans, and I'll dial the

temperatures down here a little bit, the carbon tax is going to go to 55 cents in the near future. The fuel tax is 14 cents. What is going to hurt Manitobans more: 55 cents, 14 cents?

Let's dive into that a little bit more. Let's dive into the amount of—this bill severely leaves people out of it. It leaves out—again, I'll say it again—farmers, fishermen, people who want to drive their ATVs, snowmobiles, recreational, boats, it go—the list goes on—

An Honourable Member: Jerry cans. Jerry cans.

MLA Khan:—and on—jerry cans.

And the carbon tax—Manitobans don't have the luxury of not turning their heat on. We have to pay for heat. We have called on this NDP government to call on federal government to get rid of the carbon tax. Get rid of it. Other provinces are doing it. Other premiers have taken leadership.

This Premier (Mr. Kinew) has flip-flopped, shown no leadership on this. He's gone back and forth and back and forth on how he wants to handle this. The Minister of Finance says he supported getting rid of the carbon tax. Then the Premier slapped his hand and said no, you can't do that, we are in favour of it. Then the minister—then the Premier went to the conference and other premiers got in the room and he's—okay, yes, you know what? You're right, the carbon tax is a bad thing. He came out and said he's going to carve it out. Now, not.

So, the question is simple. Not whether the NDP or the PCs or the Liberals believe in making affordability measures for Manitobans, we all agree on that. It's what is the best affordability measure going forward for the—for all Manitobans. It is not this bill that has hole after hole after hole in it, and I haven't even started. I've only talked about one of them right now.

When you look at the carbon tax, it is hitting every—most Manitobans. We do not have the luxury of not turning heat on. Over—on average, 200 days a year in Manitoba below 0°C. We have to turn it on. And yet, this Premier is not taking leadership to call on the federal government to remove the carbon tax. Other premiers have done it, he won't.

When you look at this bill, which has claimed to be a bill for all Manitobans, it's not. For affordability, it's not. If it was, get rid of the time clause on there. It's not six months, it's not a year, it's minimum three to four years, or make it permanent. Get rid of that tax once and for all.

On this side of the House we're calling for that. On that side of the House, they're just pandering for more votes. They're just trying to live up to their promises that they made during the campaign, when in reality their promises are not real at all.

We know they've overpromised minimum \$3 billion in the budget—minimum \$3 billion in the budget. This tax alone will take \$370 million out of the general coffers. Minimum. How are they going to fill that? How are you going to make up for \$370 million? They have no plan. They haven't said their plan. They have no vision of what they're going to do.

They say they're going to balance the budget in four years. How?

An Honourable Member: Take it out of the roads.

MLA Khan: You're right. They'll probably take it out of the roads. But yesterday, I believe we had the Minister of Infrastructure committing to the \$500 million for the roads, so we hope to see that commitment, because \$370 million is going to be a lot of money to make up, and this bill that only represents a small segment of Manitobans, when you look at how this bill is supposed to be executed.

So, the logic here for Manitobans and everyone in the House, if you're even—were listening, is that they want this tax to be applied at the gas station. So the retailer—so you got the big company that's selling the gas to another gas station, a local distributor, a local mom-and-pop who own the shop, and they got their son working, or maybe their cousin working in the shop, or their niece or nephew working, manning the gas station, convenience store, you pull up there and the gas stay—savings should be on the gas pump. So if gas is a buck sixty, according to these guys, take 14 cents off and that is a buck forty-six. A buck forty-six. It's \$1.46. So, they're going to change the pump to \$1.46. Is that what they're committing to doing? Fourteen cents.

Now, when you look at Alberta, Alberta said roughly the same thing on a fuel tax, and that wasn't the case. It wasn't 14 cents' savings at the pump. Will this minister commit to this government to actually commit to then freezing the gas price at the tanks at a 14-cent reduction? Will this gas tax get lost somewhere with the middle men? What is this province—what is this—they haven't thought it through.

So you pull up, Honourable Speaker—I don't know if I'm allowed to say that, but I'll say it: you pull up to the gas station, or anyone pulls up to the—any

Manitoban pulls up to the gas station, they're supposed to have a 14-cent reduction on there. And they pull up in their truck and they can fill up their truck at 14 cents off, and then they're going to fill up their boat.

Well, according to this bill—according to the bill, it's not covered. According to the bill, they don't get it. So are we asking your niece or nephew, or your son or your daughter, or your wife, or your mom, or dad, or your employee to go out there and say, hey, they get 14 cents off the truck, but they don't get it off the boat and they don't get it off the ATV and they don't get it off the snowmobile, or they don't get it off the snow blower that some families need to have a wage for their family. They got to go out and clean driveways.

Or, the farmer, the farmer that—we're going to sit down and eat dinner—thank God to the blessings of their hard work and their labour, we get to sit down in Manitoba and eat a proudly raised meal at our table and yet, the reality is, they're not applying this tax to them. They are not. They are simply saying, oh, a farm truck, but not your farm equipment, not your tractor, not your combine, not your sprayer; no other farm equipment. It also takes gas. But this NDP government doesn't care about that.

This NDP government doesn't care because they don't care about rural Manitoba. This NDP government doesn't care because they're trying to force this bill through when all we're saying on this side of the House is slow down, take some time. Let's look at it. How can we make this bill better for Manitobans? How can we make this representative of everyone?

Why—for the life of me, when I read this, I couldn't understand—why the farmers are not given a break. Why? So you're driving through, you've got to pump up your gas, not going to let you do the boat. You're going to put a Manitoban against Manitoban, right? Son's going to come out there and say, oh, you can't—yes, you can't pump up your boat. You can't fill up your jerry can.

The reality is that this is terrible. This is nonsensical to think that we can even go forward with something like this. What about the gas stations on the Saskatchewan border? Ontario border? What's going to happen to those gas stations? How are we going to implement the tax there? What is going to happen to the tourist that comes to spend money? Will they be eligible for the reduction if they're driving through Manitoba? Will they be able to take this tax savings, or is it only for Manitobans?

The minister's been clear, or trying to be—actually, I can't even say that. Because it's not reflective of all Manitobans. It's really not. The reality is, this bill does not cover any of that stuff. But what does cover it is if you make it a permanent measure, or a long-term measure. And this stays in place to make life more affordable for Manitobans every single day. We expand this to protect all Manitobans, to make life more affordable for all Manitobans. Not just city NDP MLAs. Not just the ones that drive back and forth for work. We're talking about the people who rely on their hard work—that we rely on their hard work, their sacrifice in Manitoba to make Manitoba better.

Mr. Tyler Blashko, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

We support affordability on this side of the House, and we support affordability for all Manitobans. Now—*[interjection]* Yes, thank you, Wayne, thank you, thank you.

* (12:00)

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

MLA Khan: Yes, you guys are awake, finally. Finally.

Some Honourable Members: More, more.

MLA Khan: More, more, more.

So when you look at everything that's been said today—

The Deputy Speaker: Order. Just a reminder to refer to members in the Chamber by their constituency or their portfolio.

MLA Khan: Thank you, Honourable Deputy Speaker. I apologize to my colleague for referencing him by his first name, but I was referring to another individual I know in the city by that name.

But regardless, I'm sure that the member from Lac du Bonnet also is—has major concerns with this, just like I would say the member from Turtle Mountain. Just like—I mean, you look around our caucus here, there are some real concerns over here, because we're not just looking at this with a—ideological, buying-votes lens like this NDP party clearly is. They are clearly looking at this for a small segment of Manitobans that they can get this bill passed through and look like they're doing something good.

But in the reality of it, I will simply restate again, if this bill is designed for affordability, then—for all Manitobans it should reflect all Manitobans, the maximum amount of Manitobans, by making amendments to this bill. This bill, if it's for affordability,

should also be extended to years, not months. Months simply shows that they are putting a pause on it because they are trying to buy votes. That's the reality of what's happening here; everybody can see it. And I know there's some good people with some good hearts on that side of the room, and they can see this. You can see through this. There's a lot of new people on that side that haven't drank the orange Kool-Aid yet, and they can understand that orange Kool-Aid's not a real good flavour; blueberry is. And when you looking at that, the reality is, on that side, you got to look at with an open heart and say, hey, if we want this for all Manitobans, let's widen this bill. I don't think that's too much of an ask. I—let's make this longer. I really don't think that's too much to ask.

When you look at what's happening in the world today, we have to pause and reflect on everything we have happening in Manitoba. Manitoba is a beautiful province. It is a province that has a proud history and a prosperous future for all Manitobans, and it's all Manitobans. We need to consider all Manitobans. What about farmers that are feeding the world? Major export here in Manitoba, farming.

An Honourable Member: Can't afford to take their crop off.

MLA Khan: Can't afford to take their crop off.

An Honourable Member: Can put your car gas in your combine.

MLA Khan: Can't put your gas in the combine.

We have to look at how we're supporting all Manitobans, Honourable Deputy Speaker.

Now, there are other issues in here when it refers to the roadway. We'd like clarification on what the roadway actually—you know, in the highway vehicle act, a motor vehicle, we believe, can be expanded. There are a lot of amendments that can be done in here, and we need to look at those. We need to look at all the situations that Manitobans are facing and understanding how we can support all Manitobans.

What about infrastructure? Infrastructure, I mean, no one on the other side even might not know what infrastructure is. But what about infrastructure, development, building? Shockingly, it was largely, if not completely, left off the Throne Speech and from what I recall. How are they going to pay for infrastructure upgrades? Maintenance? Going forward on this, how are they going to look at that? And not only that, they're taking \$370 million out of the general coffers. A lot of that money goes to pay for roads, goes for

upgrades, safety, maintenance; \$370 million, they're taking. Now, that \$370 million, I want to tell you, I want to remind you, is they're taking right out of Manitoba general coffers to pay for it.

When you look at a carbon tax, where are we asking them to pause that? Where does that money go?

An Honourable Member: Don't send it to Ottawa.

MLA Khan: Goes to Ottawa. We're saying don't send the money to Ottawa; keep the money here in Manitoba to support all Manitobans.

And yet they want to pay Justin Trudeau. They want to keep the Liberal-NDP coalition alive—

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

I ask that the member stick to the content of the bill.

MLA Khan: Thank you very much for the reminder, Honourable Deputy Speaker.

The carbon tax is a real issue for affordability, just like the gas tax is. I've addressed this before; we'll address it again. Carbon tax is going to go to 55 cents in the future—near future. Fuel tax is 14 cents. Mr. Deputy Speaker, 55, 14. You pay the carbon tax; that goes to Ottawa. You cut the fuel tax here in Manitoba, you are cutting \$370 million out of our general coffers here in Manitoba.

What is their plan to address that? The reality is they don't have a plan. The reality is, is they are just saying what they think looks good in the media, but in reality it is terrible for Manitobans. It is absolutely terrible.

When I talked about the construction and infrastructure, what about all those workers that are working on the roads for us? What about the companies that are building those roads? What about all the trucks, the cement mixers, the rollers, the graders, packers? What about those people that are paying for fuel on those? They're all left out.

This bill does not cover all of Manitoba. It is plain and simple that this bill is being forced through. All of those companies out there that make Manitoba better, that make the roads safer, that work day in and day out for making Manitoba better, they're left out of this bill. All of those farmers that are working to feed Manitobans, to feed the world, are left out of this bill. All of the fishermen who are out there—and women—are left out of this bill.

Why? Why are—will they not make amendments to making this bill better? Why will they not extend

this time clause? If they were really in it for Manitobans, they would put—either make this permanent, or extend it for years to come. And they are not going to do that. That should be plain and simple, clear to you, that they're just doing this for their sound clip.

They're forcing this bill through that's going to put Manitoban against Manitoban, that's going to put the person working at the gas station at risk, in their crosshairs, because they did not give due diligence to this. And there are some reasonable people on that side—I like to believe there are some reasonable people on that side. They can go back after this and talk to their leader and the Minister of Finance (MLA Sala), and say hey, you know what? We might not like those people on the other side, but they made up some good points.

And that's the reality of what we live here. That's the reality. Hey, that's the reality of what we live here. We are here—[interjection]—no, I'm a realist, is what I am. The member from Thompson wants to call me a comedian. And the reality is, I'm not a comedian; I'm just being real.

And the reality is this bill is putting Manitoban against Manitoban. What I'm simply saying is, hey, here's some reasonable thought here. You can take this back and say, maybe we should make some changes. Maybe we should make this for everyone, not just for a small segment of people. That is what affordability measures are; that is how we're going to make Manitoba better; that is how we are going to work forward for a prosperous Manitoba.

Now, all of this could've been avoided with one move, and one move only. And that was this leader of the NDP government, this new Premier (Mr. Kinew) of this NDP government, standing up like he said he would to Justin Trudeau and the Liberal-NDP coalition and simply doing what he said he would—not flip-flopping.

If he simply said, like other leaders across Canada did, that we are not going to pay the carbon tax. A Canadian is a Canadian. Obviously this government's forgot a Manitoban is a Manitoban. Whether you're in the Maritimes or you're in BC or you're in Saskatchewan or you're playing in Manitoba, affordability is the relevance of what I'm talking about, and the carbon tax is what's making life more unaffordable for everyone.

* (12:10)

If they wanted to do it, they could have simply done it. And this leader could have done it, but this leader, what he's really made of, and what's that made of, is he is, I will quote a famous saying: He is flip-flopping like a pit bull on a dock.

And that's what he's done. That's what this government has done. This bill does not reflect all of Manitoba. This bill is not reflective for a real affordability measures. This bill leaves out a lot of people, but in reality what this bill is, it's just an empty line of promises that they cannot commit to.

Thank you very much, Honourable Speaker.

MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): Thank you, Deputy Speaker, and let me just start off by welcoming you to the chair as Deputy Speaker.

I am going to keep my remarks very short here this morning, but I do want to just get a few words on record about the legislation before us.

And first and foremost, I always appreciate bill briefings with ministers. I want to encourage the minister and his department to continue on with the bill briefings. They are always very informative and helpful before coming into the House to debate the legislation.

At this point in time, I do still have a lot of questions about the legislation. And I'm looking forward to it, in fact, going to committee, because I think it's important we hear from Manitobans directly on what they have to say about the legislation.

I am a little unclear still. A lot of questions were asked here in today's question period about who was consulted and we actually didn't hear anyone who was specifically consulted.

A big one that concerns me is AMM. A very specific question was, was AMM consulted and there was no response to that. So that leads us to believe that they weren't, but I am hoping that the minister can in fact confirm this for us.

I am a little bit curious about costs, Deputy Speaker. Again, the minister, he did answer my question and said that the informational campaign would be low in cost. But I think that it's valid for us as opposition to have the costs in front of us before we can agree to them.

So I am hoping—and the minister did say he would get back to us about those costs—that that information will be shared with us. We know that a lot of costs and money can go into big billboards across the province.

They can go into bus benches and recycling bins, and we just want to know the costs that will be associated with this campaign because, at the end of the day, the idea of this legislation is to save Manitobans money, so let's make sure that these costs are in fact not doubling back and costing Manitobans more money.

Another concern is just the 180 million that is going to be lost in revenue over the six months. I just want to have a better understanding of where is this money going to be made up from? Is something going to have to be cut in order for us to implement and be able to sacrifice 180 million in revenue? And if the government could explain this to us, it would be really appreciated.

When I was going through some news articles about this this morning, Deputy Speaker, I noticed that some environmentalists have expressed concerns and I am hoping that these environmentalists, they will come out to committee when the bill is brought to committee, and share with us what these concerns are in more detail.

And I think, just personally, my biggest thought behind this legislation is, if this legislation is here to help the affordability of Manitobans, how does it help those who need the assistance the most?

Oftentimes, those who are filling up at the pumps are not those who need the most assistance. And it's great. If we can generally help all Manitobans, that is the goal. We want to be able to do that.

But I think that maybe there are ways to do this perhaps through Winnipeg Transit or through other cost initiatives.

With those few words, I am going to cede the floor here, but I do want to encourage anyone who may be watching, who may be following along with debate, please come out to committee. Share with us your thoughts, what you have to say about this legislation.

Thank you, Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I welcome you to the Chair as well, along with my colleagues who've already done the same.

I'm a little disappointed, I suppose, that I have to stand up today. I thought I'd be speaking to the Throne Speech. I know the Minister of Finance (MLA Sala) was demanding during question period that we move forward with the Throne Speech, and then his House leader got up about 25 minutes later and interrupted

debate on the Throne Speech, so I guess they're not having caucus meetings about what they're going to be prioritizing during the day. I was hoping to be able to speak to the Throne Speech. They don't want to pass their own Throne Speech, which is an interesting position for a new government.

The Speaker in the Chair

Also an interesting position for a new government is to try to disenfranchise farmers. Farmers in our province, of course, who not only feed Manitobans, but feed the world by extension of the work that they do.

Now, I will probably have to remind some members of the new government about the record that the NDP had previously when it comes to farmers in this province. The last time that the NDP were in government, they actually put a moratorium on farming in the province on a certain sector of farming in the province of Manitoba.

There was, of course, many hearings that happened here at the Legislature. Hundreds—maybe almost thousands—of people came to the Legislature to protest the fact that the NDP was stopping farming in the province of Manitoba.

Now, one might have hoped with the new government that there'd be some graciousness and there'd be some opportunity for a new setting of a relationship, but I would think that farmers, being the people that they are, would have wanted to give a chance to this new government, and to sort of see if there was a new tone from an NDP government. And yet, the first bill that they call for debate is a bill that disenfranchises farmers from the benefits of the bill, that separates out farmers, who are all of those farmers who have memories of the NDP putting a moratorium on farming when they were last in government, now see as the very first bill that they call for debate, a carving off so that farmers don't get the benefit of this tax holiday, such as it is, Mr.—or, Honourable Speaker.

So, I worry about the tone that this now sets for the farmers, who, of course, has already been mentioned by my friend from Fort Whyte, are significant contributors to the GDP of the province generally. But the tone that it sets for a government that says that there are some kinds of Manitobans and other kinds of Manitobans. Certain Manitobans who are going to benefit, and other Manitobans who are going to be excluded.

Very concerning start for the government.

Now, maybe they have an opportunity to make that correction. It's never too late to admit that you have made a mistake, Mr. Speaker, but we didn't hear that from the Minister of Finance (MLA Sala) when he was answering questions from my colleagues on this side.

They had the opportunity to stand up and say, well, we may have just omitted this. Maybe, in our rush to bring forward this bill, we've made a mistake. We'll bring forward amendment. We'll make sure that farmers are included. We'll make sure that fishers and the 'fishing' industry is included, and others that may have been excluded are also part of the bill and get a benefit. But they didn't do that, and the Finance Minister didn't make that declaration here when the questions were put forward, and he had the opportunity to do that.

So their very first act as a government, in terms of a bill that they're debating, is to separate Manitobans and to say that rural Manitobans, farmers, aren't going to benefit from this.

Now, one would hope that the new old Ag Minister—the former Ag Minister who's now the new Ag Minister, who was part of the government that put a moratorium on farming when he was last in government under the former NDP government—might, you know, go to his caucus colleagues and say, hey, I think we've made a mistake here. I think that we, in our rush to bring forward this bill, we didn't understand that we were going to be isolating farmers from this benefit, and let me, as the Ag Minister, explain to you the great benefit of farming.

That would be the responsibility of the Ag Minister to do that within the caucus and the Cabinet of the new government, and maybe he's off doing that right now to the caucus of the NDP. And it would be something that he should do. Because he should have a memory, because he sat—he might have been the Ag Minister at the time, but he certainly sat in the government that put this moratorium on farming in the province of Manitoba.

So, I hope that that is happening within the caucus. I see some discussions now. It might be that the NDP members are having that discussion. Well, I see one of the new members, the new member for Rossmere (MLA Schmidt)—a known farmer herself, I'm sure—is shaking her head and saying no, she's not going to—*[interjection]*

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

* (12:20)

Mr. Goertzen: Oh. Well, we're—

The Speaker: Order. Order. Order. Order.

The member from Steinbach has the floor.

Mr. Goertzen: I know the member for Rossmere (MLA Schmidt), who's been here for about five minutes in the House, is now trying to be the Speaker and to try to school everybody on rules, and maybe might want to confirm. I suspect that she probably, at this stage of her early part of her career, knows as much about the House rules as farming.

But the issue around farming, Mr. Honourable Speaker, is that we cannot isolate and separate farmers, that they should absolutely see the benefit. But this is a pattern, a very early pattern, from the NDP government, because they are isolating Manitobans when it comes to the benefit of getting the carbon tax off of home heating.

We saw early on, the Finance 'minner' kind of put his foot in the water and say that there should be equality across Canada, that the same benefit that's being afforded to Maritimers should also be afforded to those who live in Manitoba and the rest of Canada. He kind of tepidly went in that direction, and then I guess he got a phone call from the new Premier (Mr. Kinew), and the Premier called him up and brought him into the office of the Premier and scolded the new Finance Minister and said, no, you went too far. We can't be trampling on Ottawa, we can't be challenging the Prime Minister, we can't be going and saying that Manitobans have the same right of affordability as others in the Maritimes. And the Finance Minister, being new, probably didn't feel he could, you know, go forward and push back against the Premier, and so he went quiet. He went quiet.

And the Premier came out and said, no, we're not going to go in that direction. We're not going to talk about the carbon tax being removed. Maybe he got a phone call from the federal NDP leader—I don't know—where all those discussions happen. But as an early act, the Premier said, no, I'm not going to stand up for Manitobans; we're going to let Trudeau do this. We're going to let him just have a benefit for the Maritimes and not stand up for Manitobans.

And it's unfortunate because in the same way that they're saying that farmers aren't equal, that aren't equal to the rest of Manitobans, in the same way they're saying that, they're saying that Manitobans aren't equal to those who live in the Maritimes. Just a really bad start for this new government and this new Premier. But, again, they are new. And I think we're

trying to give a little bit of latitude and understand that there is an opportunity. There's an opportunity here to still do the right thing.

Members will know—and the bill will go to committee and there'll be an opportunity not just to hear from Manitobans, but also to bring forward amendments, to bring forward changes, and I'm sure that the Minister of Finance (MLA Sala) will be able to recognize his mistake, to recognize that he separated Manitobans, that he has not included farmers and bring forward a friendly amendment to ensure that all Manitobans have equal access to this benefit. And once he does that, of course, he'll probably feel the same obligation to ensure that he goes to Ottawa, or calls Ottawa, and to make sure that we get the same affordability measures as those in the Maritimes are getting. He would know that that would be his responsibility, to not divide Manitobans, to not at this very, very early stage try to say that there are different classes of Manitobans.

I would encourage the new Finance Minister, who I, you know, I've had some good conversations with and I quite like personally, and I don't think that he's a bad person; he just made a mistake early on in his current tenure as the Finance Minister. And I know he got the phone call from the Premier and was told, like, don't be talking about what's going on in Ottawa. Don't be pushing back on the Prime Minister. Leave him alone, like, let him divide Canadians, the way he's doing it. We don't want Mr. Singh to be coming from Ottawa and pushing back on us. So the Finance Minister, even though he started to stand up for Manitobans early on, he then backed off a little bit. And I get it. There's pressure in the new government and there's pressure from the new Premier.

But here's an opportunity. This is his bill. I mean, this is his bill, Mr. Speaker—or Honourable Speaker—his opportunity to say now to Manitobans that we're not going to separate Manitobans. We're not going to say that farmers aren't as important as others, that those in the fishing industry aren't as important as others—the opportunity to ensure that there is equality. And once he's done that—and he can do that at committee, and this bill will go to committee at some point, I'm sure, soon. Once he's had that opportunity, then he'll be able to—because he'll have more confidence as the new Finance Minister, he'll have made this decision. People will applaud him for improving the bill.

He'll be able to confidently go to the second-floor Premier's office, to knock on the door and say to the

Premier (Mr. Kinew), now—now that we've demonstrated that we can treat Manitobans equally, we can do the same thing by going to Ottawa. We can stand up to the Prime Minister and say that the benefits shouldn't just go to those in the Maritimes. It shouldn't just be for those in the Maritimes. It should also be for those in Manitoba, and those in Saskatchewan, and those in Alberta, and those in British Columbia and across the country.

He has that opportunity. So I would say that I'm actually trying to do a favour to the new Minister of Finance (MLA Sala). I'm actually on—I'm on his side. Help me help you, I'm saying to the new Minister of Finance. I want to give him a solution to a problem that he's created, and by extension solving another problem that was created by the—well, created by the Prime Minister and, by extension, supported by the new Premier.

So I'm trying to help this new NDP government. Because it's wrong to start off to say that farmers aren't important. In the same way that the former NDP government said we're going to put a moratorium on farming in the province of Manitoba. That was wrong, and it seems that they've forgotten that lesson. They've forgotten the lesson of the importance of all Manitobans, of all Manitobans in every part of our province.

But because I want this Legislature to work, and because I'm trying to be magnanimous, I'm saying to the new Finance Minister he'll have an opportunity when this bill goes to committee—when the bill goes to committee, to bring forward an amendment. I'm sure he'll hear from presenters about this concern. Bring forward the amendment. We can improve the bill.

And then with that newfound sense of confidence that he'll have, he'll go to the Premier's office in the front of the building at room 204, he'll knock on the door and he'll say, Mr. Premier, now that we've changed this bill, now that we've improved it, now that we understand that there should be equality, that a Manitoban is a Manitoban is a Manitoban, in the same way, a Canadian is a Canadian is a Canadian. And now we have to go to Ottawa. And now we have to have the fortitude of our convictions, and we have to say to the Prime Minister, it's not good enough to just have benefits in the Maritimes.

And I would say to him, he'll get praised across the country for that. I don't know why I'm giving him

such good advice, Mr. Honourable Speaker. My colleagues are going to say, stop, stop giving him such good advice. It's just where I am in my political career now. I want to help him. I want to help him in his new role, because I kind of like him. He's kind of a nice guy.

But—so this is his opportunity. This is his opportunity now, when the bill goes to committee, to do the right thing: to ensure that he doesn't send the signal to farmers in Manitoba that they're lesser than, that they're not important. That they're not contributors to the province. I suspect it was a mistake. You know, a new minister, he's sitting there, he's writing the bill out; he's writing the bill out and he's making some notes and that, and he just—he forgot.

He forgot about farmers. Now I know the member for Rossmere (MLA Schmidt), who apparently is a noted farmer, she was saying earlier on in her heckling early on, probably you know, failed; well, and wants to be the Speaker as well because apparently knows all the rules—probably failed to say this to the Finance Minister.

Well, now everybody seems to be on the same side. Now it seem that everybody—everybody seems to agree that we need to ensure that every Manitoban is treated equally. So in the time that we have remaining, I hope that the Minister of Finance has listened to my words carefully, that he's willing now to agree that all Manitobans should be on a level playing field. That farmers are important. That those in Rossmere are important. That those who live in south Winnipeg are important, south Manitoba are important.

Every Manitoban should be treated equally when it comes to this particular bill, when it comes to the carbon tax. And I ask the members to do that now in this House.

The Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

The Speaker: The question before the House is second reading of Bill 3, The Fuel Tax Amendment Act (Fuel Tax Holiday).

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?
[Agreed]

The hour now being 12:30, the House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. Monday.

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